Re-tracing the Tragedy Track
(PhD Phil)

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Abstract

In the middle of the Great Depression, driven by the stories journalist Ernestine Hill had been filing from Alice Springs, the Packer and Murdoch newspaper organisations funded an expedition to the Tanami Desert in the Northern Territory to determine if these stories of a gold rush had any merit. The Sun-Telegraph Expedition in 1932 drew together an odd group of characters: a journalist working for the Packer organisation, F. E. Baume; a geologist from the University of Adelaide, C. T. Madigan, who later went on to map the Simpson Desert; and Melbourne photographer, Franz Marcard. The three travelled halfway across the Tanami to investigate this so-called 'gold rush'. Baume would later write a book, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites* (1933), from the journey and investigation; and over one thousand acres of desert – tribal lands and sacred ground of Indigenous land owners – would soon be 'pegged out' by prospectors, then sold as mostly non-existent goldmines. Tales of Indigenous resistance to the prospectors dominated headlines at the time as the possibility of finding gold began to diminish. There were others who ventured here too to establish cattle stations and eventually an 'aboriginal reserve' on this land, which became Yuendumu. The land had been occupied until then and for thousands of years by distinctive Indigenous nations.

In this 're-tracing' of the Tragedy Track story, many Indigenous people recall their stories of life on the track: of harsh justice for themselves, their relatives and forbears; the loss of precious water supplies and access to tribal lands. They recall working long hours for meagre rations and the devastating separation from their own children by government appointed so-called 'Protectors'. The Coniston massacre is not a distant memory and remains a wound in this landscape and history.

This PhD aims to 'write back' then, to the more mainstream stories of discovery and gold rush, and the subduing of the First Nation peoples of this region by government officials and prospectors. It writes back with new critical materials

and interpretations of this first media story of the making of a track through the Tanami Desert. In doing so, it also follows the many overlooked or forgotten sidetracks which cross this road's path: these delivering no less significant stories of encounter between Indigenous and white colonisers and even researchers. The PhD and accompanying radio documentary draw here on Indigenous oral histories collected by the author in the region, as well as other historical and anthropological accounts associated with the region's transformation and ultimate settlement and division by the white colonisers. This becomes then a newly *annotated* history where it may be possible to hear a more critical articulation of this place across time. Explored through the lens of cultural geography, postcolonial theory and the history of Australian anthropology – an historical tracing and re-evaluation of anthropological encounters and 'research' in the Tanami as I sift through the historical evolution of racial discourses applied to Indigenous in this region, for example – a new multi-stranded *multi-vocal* story is sounded in both the radio documentary and the thesis. This creates, I hope, a new map and even key to the stories of the Tanami.

List of illustrations

Appendixes (attached to document)

1. Map of Tanami track and location of Yuendumu (current)

2. CD containing audio and multimedia

Re-tracing the Tragedy Track audio (mp3)

3. USB containing audio and multimedia

Multimedia (mp4) as part of the 'gallery' on the ABC *Hindsight* page

Photographs (as jpegs) also part of the gallery on the ABC *Hindsight* page

Re-tracing the Tragedy Track audio (mp3)

Candidate declaration

This statement is to certify that this work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. All work contained in this document is original and my own, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Susan Angel

June 2018

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Valerie Napaljarri Martin
and to all the people of Yuendumu.

Acknowledgements

In 1999 I was in a news agency in Alice Springs with Tom Kantor, then manager of Warlpiri Media. He handed me a dusty book that was for sale on a shelf in the back of the store – a commemorative edition of a book published in 1933 – *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*. "Check this out," he said, raising his eyebrows. "You won't believe it!" And he was right. It was difficult to comprehend these stories and images were from a mainstream newspaper and the stories were presented as objective fact. I carried the book around for a decade before I began the arduous task of deconstructing the colonial stories and myths that were part of the book. I'd like to thank the late Tom Kantor for introducing me to the wonderful people of the Central Desert. Wherever you are now, thank you brother.

This work could not have been written nor the documentary made without the irrepressible, wildly intelligent and very amazing Valerie Napaljarri Martin, a senior elder Warlpiri woman and friend for over 15 years. I dedicate this work to her and her family.

To all of the people in Yuendumu, who have always shown my daughters and I kindness, patience and tolerance, even when times were tough, thank you. I hope I have got the story right. Francis Jupurrurla Kelly allowed me to record part of his story for the documentary and was supportive of the project. Much gratitude.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Virginia Madsen for her extreme patience and support during the writing of this work and the making of the documentary.

Thanks also to Michelle Rayner, Lorena Allam and the team from ABC Radio National *Hindsight* program for commissioning the documentary. Thanks also to my dear friend Barbara Heggen for going beyond the call of duty. Harriet Angel for her meticulous read-through, for chats and support and Adam Finlayson for his meticulous proofing.

My dear friends and mentors, Dr Marcus O'Donnell and Dr Camilla Couch (wonderful woman). Thank you!

And of course thanks to my immediate family: mother, Jan Collins, sisters Jane Latella and Louise Collins, and the late Viviennne Thicknesse and Brian Thicknesse.

My beautiful daughters Harriet and Esther Angel have travelled many of these bumpy roads to Yuendumu and beyond and will again. Thank you.

Introduction / Chapter 1

Laying the groundwork: re-tracing the Tragedy Track

1.1 Introduction

> "There is a growing recognition in Australian ethnography that accounts of Aboriginal histories have to some extent been ignored."[1]

Re-tracing the Tragedy Track is an hour-long feature documentary and is the creative practice component of my PhD research. This introductory chapter is concerned with the making of this radio documentary (Angel 2011), the historical and intercultural stories the documentary explores, as well as the narrative strands underpinning this one-hour feature journey program. This chapter is divided into several sub headings: pre-production, production, and post-production. It will briefly touch on the historical, archival and ethnographic research that informed the documentary and, will also provide a brief outline to chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

I will open this exploration with my own personal relationship with the Yuendumu community, specifically with Valerie Napaljarri Martin, and how I came across the book, *Tragedy Track,* and then sought to retell and re-trace the story of this road from a contemporary and intercultural perspective.

A brief outline for the remaining PhD chapters will be found at the end of this chapter.

1.2 1999: Moving to Yuendumu

In 1999 I drove from Sydney to Alice Springs to enquire about work opportunities. I was an ex-journalist looking to engage in media related projects in the Central Desert. At this time, I made contact with Indigenous and non-Indigenous arts and media people who worked primarily with Indigenous communities. The central contact I made was with Tom Kantor, media manager for Warlpiri Media. Not long after I had returned to NSW, a position managing the media centre in Yuendumu became available. Tom Kantor was also preparing

[1] D. Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert" (PhD dissertation, Australian National University, 2001). p. 8.

to leave. I had followed the fortunes of the Warlpiri Media Centre (then called WMA and now called PAW Media) during my undergraduate degree in Communications at Canberra University. At this time, I was very interested and engaged in researching the postcolonial history of Australia and the country's relationship with its Indigenous people and what appeared to be obvious inequities for Indigenous people from land rights to health rights. I was appalled by the lack and misrepresentation of Indigenous people in the mainstream media, their lack of agency, and the media's almost casual use of stereotypes to reinforce alterity – otherness. Studying journalism at Canberra University I focused on the issue of Aboriginal land rights and how little attention this issue was given in the mainstream media.

In my final year of a Communications degree I began researching the impact of satellite communication on remote and Indigenous people in the NT, particularly on remote communities. In my research, I came across the work of Canadian anthropologist Eric Michaels, who was working in Yuendumu.[2]

From the mid 1980s Michaels worked closely with traditionally raised Warlpiri man, Francis Jupurrurla Kelly. Together, the two introduced video and filmmaking to the Yuendumu community. They did this at the time of the introduction of the Broadcasting in Remote Areas Scheme (BRACS)[3] and the creation of a pirate TV system in Yuendumu. Eric Michaels' anthropological fieldwork was collaborative (see Chapter 7). While researching the advent of commercial and non-commercial mainstream TV on the local population with the introduction of BRACS, and the possible repercussions of Western cultural flood with the arrival of satellite, Michaels became an active participant and

[2] Michaels, an Institute Research Fellow [AIATSIS] appointed in 1982 to assess 'the impact' of bringing television to remote Aboriginal Australia, located his enquiry at Yuendumu where he became integrally involved in projects leading to the establishment of the WMA. Michaels' published works depict a culturally distinctive Warlpiri approach to video production and viewing. "Indeed, Michaels contributed to the establishment of a whole way of speaking about Indigenous media practice in Australia that continues to have considerable currency today. At the core of this way of speaking sit the concepts of political resistance and cultural maintenance." M. Hinkson, "New Media Projects at Yuendumu: Towards a History and Analysis of Intercultural Engagement," *The power of knowledge, the resonance of tradition* (2005).

[3] A good description of the BRACS (Broadcast in Remote Communities Scheme) can be found at http://www.ourlanguages.net.au/language-centres/item/remote-indigenous-broadcasting-services-formerly-bracs-now-referred-to-as-ribs.html

collaborator with Francis Kelly and others in making hundreds of hours of video footage the community could replay as TV over the BRACS system. Michaels proclaimed this method, allowing the Warlpiri to discover the medium and use it according to their cultural needs: one can argue strongly that this meant the Warlpiri were able to discover and invent video and television for themselves and they did so according to their specific cultural values.[4]

Anthropologist Dr Melinda Hinkson from the ANU has researched Warlpiri culture, society and history extensively and has spent a great deal of time in Yuendumu. In a paper on media projects in Yuendumu in the 90s, Hinkson unravelled some of the history of media technologies and Warlpiri engagement with these, while not essentially disputing the importance of Michaels' work with the Warlpiri and his collaboration with Francis Kelly. In *New media projects at Yuendumu: Towards a history*, she explained this intercultural engagement, making the point that Michaels' work, although championing the Aboriginal "invention" of television and the Warlpiri's reconceptualisation of broadcast video and recording, could still be understood as an "intercultural practice": indeed, in her view it's this interculturality that has missed any kind of analysis. As Hinkson writes: "The rhetoric of self-determination was highly charged. This rhetoric put the control of Aboriginal futures unambiguously in Aboriginal hands." However, she continues, "[there] was an associated tendency in much writing of the period to overlook or play down the role of non-Aboriginal advisers, co-ordinators, and managers who replaced the superintendents in the domain of community development".[5]

Hinkson argues that the intercultural nature of the work between Michaels, Kelly and the other Warlpiri participants, indeed the wider community, should not be overlooked. This she says, was a significant component of the success of the media organisations in the NT, and involved an active collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. She stresses moreover, that where this didn't

[4] E. Michaels, *The Aboriginal Invention of Television* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1986).

[5] Hinkson, "New Media Projects at Yuendumu: Towards a History and Analysis of Intercultural Engagement". p. 165.

happen, the media organisations concerned usually ground to a halt. I quote her in more length here:

> "Acknowledging the intercultural reality of Aboriginal media practice requires a more complex set of interpretations and responses. It requires, first, an understanding that in their interactions with and use of new media Aboriginal people are engaged not simply in the politics of resistance, but rather something more multifaceted and ambiguous. It requires an understanding that media practice occurs side-by-side and at times in spite of competing interests, demands and responsibilities. Through their interactions with new media Warlpiri are caught up in and take hold of a dynamic world, at the same time as their own modes of engagement with that world are altered. In this sense new media enact a contradictory process: they are drivers of social transformation while also providing new mechanisms for holding together social relations, but in new ways, across an expanding social field. These circumstances throw up new choices and new challenges which Warlpiri, like the rest of us, have to negotiate."[6]

Despite wanting to work in Yuendumu in the late 80s, in the end I chose a much more mainstream media job with ABC radio, as a journalist/reporter. Nevertheless, I travelled numerous times over the ensuing years with the aim of getting to Alice Springs and then onto Yuendumu. Almost 15 years later I finally did make it to this desert community though, becoming co-manager of WMA, Yuendumu in 1999–2000.

1.3 Making *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* with Valerie Napaljarri Martin

Valerie Napaljarri Martin is a senior woman in the Warlpiri community. She is of Anmatyerre and Warlpiri descent, and can speak three Indigenous languages as

[6] ibid. p. 166.

well as English. Valerie was educated in traditional Warlpiri language and culture and was also sent, as a young woman, to Darwin for further English education. In her early 30s, after Eric Michaels left Yuendumu (and passed away at a young age), Valerie became along with Francis Jupurrurla Kelly one of the main gatekeepers of Warlpiri Media. With the arrival of Tom Kantor, Valerie became his collaborator, translator and interlocutor. She was also to become a key communicator between the WMA board and the Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers at the media centre.[7]

I met Valerie in 1999 through Tom Kantor when I worked as a co-manager for Warlpiri media in Yuendumu. This was during a period of transition from Tom Kantor's time at WMA/PAW and the arrival of long-term manager, Rita Catoni. Valerie had worked for Warlpiri Media for a number of years when I met her and we formed a working relationship and a friendship. Valerie has worked as a translator and media worker for many Warlpiri Media Association productions. WMA is now known as PAW Media and Valerie's nephew is now on the board of directors.[8]

The documentary *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*, produced and broadcast on ABC radio in 2011, was the outcome of several years research and investigation into the history of the Tanami Track, and encompassing the popular history as outlined in *Tragedy Track,* written by F. E. Baume and published in 1933.[9] I first encountered *Tragedy Track* during my brief time in Yuendumu between 1999 and 2000, while working for WMA/PAW Media. *Tragedy Track* had been republished around this time as a collection of journalistic essays and reprinted in a special anniversary edition for Northfields mines, owners of the prosperous Granites goldfields. The book raised many questions for me about the nature of this newspaper expedition. It also raised questions about popular journalism and its impact on shaping perceptions, fixing ideas, concepts and stereotypes about

[7] There is a small section on Warlpiri Media in a later chapter. There isn't a lot of available information about Tom Kantor other than being a nephew of Rupert Murdoch http://www.thepowerindex.com.au/rich-crusaders/eve-kantor/201202261084 Tom Kantor had a strong relationship with the Warlpiri and he created and managed many innovative programs during his time in Yuendumu. He is remembered fondly by many of the Warlpiri he trained and worked with.

[8] WMA PAW website http://www.pawmedia.com.au/

[9] F. E. Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites* (Sydney: Frank C. Johnson, 1933).

Aboriginal Australians … I will explore this further in Chapter 6. The compilation of news stories and essays in the book were written in the middle of the Great Depression during a period of drought. There is no doubt that the media stories were also heavily influenced by predominant European philosophical and colonial views of Indigenous peoples at the time (pre and post Charles Darwin), and these philosophical ideas were entangled and later enshrined in federal and state government policy. I will explore the philosophical trends in perceptions and control of Indigenous people in the first two chapters of the thesis.

The underpinning narrative strands of the radio documentary, however, are based almost entirely on contesting and contrasting the news stories from the 1933 book, *Tragedy Track*. I use in this exploration ethnographic stories from the past and my experiences from a contemporary road trip that re-traced the 1933 expedition. Questions raised in the documentary and which I was keen to explore include: did the 1933 newspaper articles and expedition misrepresent, stereotype and malign the Indigenous people of the NT? What stories were included, and what were omitted, and why? Who has the right to tell the stories of the Indigenous people today, and what are the ethical issues surrounding such a retelling? My own subject position as a white non-Indigenous woman must also be made abundantly clear.

My radio documentary attempts to juxtapose the past and the present to tell this complex story in time and space.

1.4 *Tragedy Track*: the story

> "In 1932 a group of three men funded by the Murdoch and Packer families travelled along the Tanami track north west of central Australia to tell the stories of a gold rush. A photographer, a journalist and a geologist sent their findings and stories from the field to the cities: the stories were syndicated around the country and published in the main newspapers of the day.

The gold rush and its failure became synonymous with the 'tragedy track'. But what remained were haunting images and stories of desert people embattled by government patrol officers, prospectors and station owners.

80 years later, on the eve of the 'track' being paved, a group of three women – a journalist, a photographer and a Warlpiri broadcaster and translator – re-trace the track of that expedition to the Granites gold fields to tell contemporary stories of the Tanami desert and the road that changed the country's history.

The journey begins in Alice Springs and travels 800 km of the Tanami track along a bumpy and soon to be tarred road that for the past 100 years has been the main road for people from the centre to Halls Creek.

Stories and anecdotes along the track map the country and its little-known history. How did one road open up the heart of this desert country and change the lives of those who had lived there? The storytellers discover the Tanami track becomes a metaphor for great loss, for movement and now, for change".[10]

1.5 *Tragedy Track*: background to the book

In 1932 a journalist, F. E. Baume, working for the Packer organisation (Clyde Packer) wrote and published *Tragedy Track*. The book consisted of a mix of Baume's newspaper stories and journal/essay writings about his treks to the Centre. He recorded local narrative views of early colonial prospectors, goldminers, rouseabouts, station owners, bounty hunters and other assorted misfits. These stories served as precursors launching a long career, in first

[10] S. Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track.* Podcast audio, *Hindsight*, 50 minutes, 2011, http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/hindsight/re-tracing-the-tragedy-track/3673122

newspaper, and later television, journalism. Baume died in 1967 in considerable debt: he was, allegedly, addicted to gambling.[11]

The original book, *Tragedy Track*, begins its pages with F. E. Baume along with Franz Marcard and C. T. (Cecil Thomas) Madigan travelling along the Tanami Track in the Central Australian desert to investigate the rumoured gold rush. Driven by the stories journalist Ernestine Hill had been filing from Alice Springs for over a year, the Packer and Murdoch newspaper organisations decided to join forces to fund the expedition. The desire was there to see if the rush was happening and the collaboration was also sparked by vested interests in the expedition: both had purchased shares in the goldmining venture.[12]

In a syndicated story in the early 1930s, *The Daily Telegraph* proclaimed: "Gold Rush: Granites Shares in Keen Demand".[13] This article actively encouraged public acquisitions and in so doing kept a rapt depression-era audience captivated. The paper wrote: "Seven public companies have already been floated to acquire options or take up leases at the Granites goldfield in Central Australia. In every case the shares have been readily taken up, and most are at substantial premiums on the stock exchange."[14]

Within this context of quick money to be made, the *Sun Telegraph* began its media blitz about the Granites goldfields. (See Chapter 6 for a breakdown of the newspaper stories of the day.) The *Sun Telegraph*, Packer and Murdoch families, denizens of today's media, led the first newspaper/media expedition of its kind in Australian history and one, despite its omission from anthropological or historical research, significant for its popularist and colonialist representation of the Indigenous people that had spent centuries living and harvesting this land.

Baume, Madigan and Marcard were employed by Frank Packer to validate the stories that were coming from the field – specifically, the reports from

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[11] Baume would later gain brief infamy for his role as 'the beast' on the Australian TV show, *Beauty and the Beast.* Baume was the first beast.

[12] F. E. Baume documents this in *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*. Also, more on Baume at http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/baume-frederick-ehrenfried-eric-9456

[13] F. E. Baume, "All Feel the Lure of Gold: Centralia Is the Adventure Call," *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 October 1932.

[14] ibid.

correspondent, Ernestine Hill (see chapters 3, 4 and 5 for more about Ernestine Hill and her accounts of the Granites gold rush). I quote Baume:

> "Why was the Madigan expedition, of which I was a member, sent to the Granites – a spot 63 miles S.E. of Tanami and 380 miles N.W. of Alice Springs? The Managing Editor of Associated Newspapers (Mr R. C. Packer), after due consideration with Mr Keith Murdoch, Managing Director of the Melbourne Herald group, felt that the investing public was entitled to a better and more authoritative description of the field than could be – or would be – given by an individual mining company. The rise of the Granites shares was too swift, too mysterious, too quiet to be all that it might have been. Hence the independent inquiry."[15]

Once on location, Baume's stories outlined the obstacles the colonisers faced in pioneering mining in this region. Not unexpectedly, we find the narrative to be a one-sided perspective of the coloniser's journey: even as Baume's stories describe vividly the rugged landscape, the obstacles faced by prospectors, and the fierce resistance by Indigenous inhabitants.[16]

Baume's version of the Coniston 1929 massacre is told from the viewpoint of local police and prospectors, and conflicts markedly with the Indigenous stories and oral history accounts. His description of the Indigenous murdered at Coniston station remains firmly colonial, with the local Aboriginal population represented by stereotypes. We can read Baume as ultimately legitimising the massacre.[17] In Baume's account, it is the failed prospectors who take centre stage, talking directly to Baume of their adventures and tales of woe in the search for the seemingly out of reach gold. Travelling with his trusty typewriter along the Tanami Track, Baume comes over in these travelogues as the mythical correspondent journeying to dangerous and unknown lands. And yet, like much of the other popular journalistic travel writing of the time, in these

[15] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.
[16] ibid.
[17] ibid.

peregrinations, he also brings with him the dominant views of the society he represents (see chapters 6 and 7).

These 1930s newspaper stories of the gold rush, initially written by Ernestine Hill, then later by Baume, ran on the front pages of the major dailies for months prior to the expedition departing from Alice Springs, and for the six weeks of the expedition itself (see Chapter 6). The stories 'covered' the gold rush (10 to 100 men were arriving in Alice Springs each week over a period of several months) and its claims of substantial gold discoveries, climbing gold stocks, a 'work for the dole' scheme (to lure unemployed out to the goldmines) and the frightening spectres of the 'natives'. The 'rush' saw over one thousand acres of desert pegged out by prospectors, with thousands of shares in the mines sold. The stories of Indigenous resistance to the prospectors, on sacred and tribal lands, dominated the headlines also as the possibility of finding gold rapidly began to diminish.[18]

Baume, Marcard and Madigan's six-week journey produced the popular non-fiction text, *Tragedy Track*, a series of journalistic essays and photographs of this trip to the Centre and to the Granites goldfields. Baume's account is a record of this ill-fated journey, and a snapshot of the predominant views and values of colonial prospectors, adventurers and missionaries of the time. While other expeditions such as the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land in 1948 collected visual and oral artefacts – bones, tools and other collectibles[19] – The Sun-Telegraph Expedition collected popular representations: stereotypes, images and myths that have become over time part of "the racial arsenal inscribed in this legal fiction (of *terra nullius*)."[20]

[18] "Gold Rush: Granites Shares in Keen Demand," *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 November 1932; "Dangers of Waterhole," *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 1932; "Pursued by Blacks," *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 October 1932; "Spear Raid by Blacks," *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 November 1932.

[19] M. Thomas, "In the Wake Of: The Arnhem Land Expedition"," *Explore* 30, no. 1 (2009).

[20] J. Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention" (PhD unpublished thesis: Department of Media Music and Cultural Studies , Macquarie University, 2016).

1.6 The contemporary road trip

The retelling of the 1932 expedition from Alice Springs to the Granites goldfields involved re-tracing the original expedition, though a road trip, along the Tanami Track. In re-tracing this journey, in collaboration with Valerie Napaljarri Martin, I have attempted through documentary means to juxtapose the sentiments of the past with other intercultural stories from the past and the present. I have hoped to reinvigorate the story and shed new light on the past in its connection to the present. It is from this new journey, with Valerie as a guide and narrator along the Tanami, that I recorded stories of the present and re-imagined the past.

"The road trip" is a documentary device I employed here to allow contemporary storytelling 'on the road'.[21] Journalistic and chronological style narrative is interspersed in this account with newspaper headlines (as spoken audio), pioneer voices of the past, and Indigenous voices of the present, as I attempt to bring the past and stories of the past into direct dialogue with the present. Stories change what we know about the country and the linear nature of the map. Here I have hoped to challenge the older more popular stories, while also incorporating a different idea of space and the spatial construction of reality.[22] The collision of genres – road story, historical narrative, investigative journalism, biographical and personal journey, the stories of place, and the interpretations of these stories – were all integral concepts in the pre- and post-production of the radio 'feature' for ABC RN's *Hindsight*.

[21] For postmodern explorations of the 'road trip', I drew on the Bakhtin chronotope found in Katie Mills, "Revitalizing the Road Genre," in *The Road Movie Book* (2002); Julia Alexandra Ganser and Markus Rheindorf Pühringer, "Bakhtin's Chronotope on the Road: Space, Time, and Place in Road Movies since the 1970s," *FACTA UNIVERSITATIS Linguistics and Literature* 4, no. 1 (2006); Janet Wolff, "On the Road Again: Metaphors of Travel in Cultural Criticism," *Cultural Studies* 7, no. 2 (1993).

[22] Re space and spatial thinking of place, see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, vol. 142 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); E. W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory.*(Verso, 1989); E. W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Places* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996).

1.7 Research

While the road trip took place over only two weeks, thanks to a four-wheel drive and modern technology, the research for the expedition took much longer: over 12 months. The logistics of the road trip were largely organised during a reconnaissance visit to Alice Springs in April 2011. On this occasion, I conducted preliminary interviews with historian Dick Kimber while beginning research at the Strehlow Centre in Alice Springs.[23] Through conversations with Valerie Napaljarri Martin, I was able to ascertain who would be available for interview in Yuendumu (of those who could remember stories of the Tanami Track over the past 50 odd years). Over a short period of time in Alice Springs, I Interviewed both local historian Dick Kimber, and Michael Cawthorne, then the manager of the Strehlow Centre. I began researching the archives at the Strehlow Centre for Strehlow's notes when he was a patrol officer for the Native Affairs branch for the Northern Territory Administration.[24] (More on his notes and role can be found in the body of the text.)

1.8 Planning

The plan for the production was to record part of the road trip from Alice Springs to Yuendumu with photographer Nina Berry, and then meet Valerie in Yuendumu for the longer second leg of the trip. This second part was to cover interviews and translations in Yuendumu with senior Warlpiri elders. We would then travel to the Granites mine and record stories along the way about this place with a range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who lived and worked at the Granites mines. I planned to juxtapose these stories in the radio documentary with historical and archival material from the original expedition.

[23] Strehlow Centre, Alice Springs. Dick Kimber is a preeminent historian who resides in the Alice Springs region. He has written several books and is an expert on the Tanami Desert and first contact. He is a close friend of senior Warlpiri lore men and is highly regarded by the Warlpiri elders (see Chapter 5).

[24] Strehlow's diaries and extensive paperwork are held by the Strehlow Centre. I was particularly interested in his papers and diaries from his time as a patrol officer in the Tanami region of the NT.

I also determined the story should be told in a multi-narrative form: the archival stories and a contemporary road trip re-tracing an early expedition along the road using oral history and ethnography techniques to tell stories of the road from the past and present. It would also be intercultural and have a relationship with place, space and time.[25]

When researching for a radio documentary feature based on the re-tracing of an expedition in the Australian outback in 1933, it became more and more apparent that the story of an Anglo-European search for gold and the removal of Indigenous people from their homelands was a complex story of colonial conquest with many sidetracks. These include the stories of mining history during the Great Depression; the loss of non-Indigenous lives along the road due to inhospitable conditions; the forced removal of Indigenous people from their traditional lands; and other stories of this place in other times. Interrogating the gold rush story also exposed a history of perverse and quixotic government policy based on the pseudoscience/philosophy of social Darwinism and eugenics. It opened the road to the politics of early Australian anthropology and its intersection with government administration. The thesis looks more specifically at these aspects as context to the documentary, as it was important to frame the documentary within the context of a multi-layered historical account, told in an intercultural way. Just as good history requires more than one empirical voice or source, this documentary too, as an example of postcolonial research, required more than one narrator.

1.9 The road trip: contemporary storytelling 'on the road'

Re-tracing the 1933 gold rush to the Tanami Desert (along the Tanami Track) with a senior Warlpiri woman, Valerie Napaljarri Martin, allowed us to traverse our own 'on the road' story. This became part of a 'living narrative' bringing time and history and place into different juxtapositions. Two key questions arose in

[25] More about ethnography and the cultural history of sound as well as a brief exploration of cultural studies notions of space and place in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

the making of the documentary: Is the road part of the larger picture of colonisation? And who tells these stories? I attempted to look at what the country meant to Indigenous people before the white men and their industry (pastoral and mining) arrived, what happened when they did arrive and the direct impact on the Indigenous owners of the land. The documentary was told in a journalistic and chronological style narrative but it also used inter-textuality: newspaper headlines became audio (as voice-overs) pioneer voices of the past, three women telling the story of three men. The history of the road and a 'road trip' was an obvious way into the story, but the documentary also attempted to disrupt the straightforward chronological narrative of a journalism style documentary by colliding genres – road story, historical narrative, investigative journalism, biographical and personal journey, the stories of place – and providing the interpretations of these stories within juxtaposed places in different historical times, leaving place and space (along with history) open for reinterpretation. All these questions and suppositions will be examined in depth in the thesis.

1.10 Gold mining in the Tanami and the work of Derek Elias

> "For Warlpiri the landscape of the Tanami Desert is covered with places that mark the events and histories of the extraordinary beings and ancestors of the Jukurrpa whose essences remain in these places, the land and the worlds above the surface of the earth."[26]

In Derek Elias's groundbreaking work on goldmining in the Tanami and its impact on the Warlpiri, he explored Warlpiri understanding of time and place not just from a well versed anthropological perspective, including economic and colonial and postcolonial theories and perspectives. He directed his attention specifically to the contested ground of space and place:

[26] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 79.

> "The current setting of place as a contested ground between Western and Warlpiri institutions needs to be approached with a background understanding of how the landscape of the Tanami Desert has changed since colonization. The change in the dominant economic mode of production in the Tanami Desert from one of hunting and gathering to one which was dependent on the instruments of welfare and colonialism also affected not just the history of place in the Tanami Desert but also its reproduction."[27]

Elias examines the complex relationships between Warlpiri people and their land. In his thesis, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert", Elias examines these relationships with land, and the patterns of ownership, tenure and kin. Elias sets out to specifically define 'rights in place' as a key "to answering the question of whether there were estates and, if there were, how boundaries of such estates could be determined".[28] To do this he relies not only on historical evidence, but also ethnographic data to "[mark] the first-in-depth survey of accurately plotted site information amongst Aboriginal people of Australia's interior deserts".[29]

Elias's thesis is profoundly important to my thesis. Elias's focus on place is also a focus for my work. His examination of Warlpiri sociocultural concepts since colonisation, and his in-depth examination of the role of gold exploration, mining and royalty payments since this time are pivotal to my understanding of Warlpiri context.[30] For Elias, the Warlpiri people continue to follow a cultural order of place, which has, he writes: "reinforced claims of knowledge and authority over decisions regarding the ownership of place". Further, the data in his thesis illustrates the fact that, in regard to the contemporary development of goldmining in the Tanami desert, "the grounds upon which land tenure is negotiated and informs boundaries between people and places demonstrates

[27] ibid.
[28] ibid.
[29] ibid.
[30] ibid.

that indigenous principles which are responsive to changes in history, demography and political economy remain in operation".[31]

I have relied on a great deal of Elias's anthropological work, and while I don't reproduce any of his detailed study, I do rely on his historical and sociocultural analysis that is featured in his thesis.[32] Another academic thesis, which also came to have a profound impact on this dissertation, is the scholarly work of Jillian Kramer's, which I will be referring to throughout this thesis.[33]

1.11 *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*: documentary making within a cultural studies context

In this PhD, I will be analysing the historic preconditions and context that led to the 1933 gold rush; the conditions that existed at the time for Indigenous people, and how the search for gold and the building of the road was part of a broader context of early 20th century colonisation at the time – and simultaneously, taken as an unassailable right by 'white men', the prospectors, miners, officials and media of the day to *take* and *conquer*.

I will also address (in Chapter 6) how raciality and racial violence, scripting Aboriginal people as threats, is part of a historic colonising discourse that has allowed for the dispossession of Indigenous people in violent and cruel ways condoned and indeed justified by both government and anthropology. Here the work of Irene Watson unpicks these historic discourses of race and violence: "[e]arly colonial frontier violence was pitched against first peoples' laws and cultures, a foundational violence which established a colonial sovereignty".[34]

I propose to use the lens of history and post/colonial discourse based on Foucault's theory of discourse, knowledge and power to examine how the

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[31] ibid.

[32] For further reading of extensive work in land tenure in the Tanami see Derek Elias, "The Measure of Dreams. Customary Land Tenure and Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea," *Anthropological Perspectives* 3 (2007).

[33] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention".

[34] I. Watson, "In the Northern Territory Intervention, What Is Saved or Rescued and at What Cost?" *Critical Indigenous Theory* 15, no. 2 September (2009). pp. 45–60.

newspapers propagated deficit discourses of Aboriginal people. As Kramer finds in her work, the propensity for the media to misrepresent Indigenous people as 'non-human' and 'primitive' rendered white law as an arbitrary tool of dispossession. This in turn became an example of what Foucault calls 'biopower'.[35]

I will also look towards discourse theory as a tool to examine the 1933 book, *Tragedy Track*, as well as the newspaper stories of the time (see Chapter 6).

How the non-Indigenous 'whitefellas' perceive the Indigenous Aboriginal people of Australia – and the shame and guilt of the past silencing and immobilising generations and leading to the current policy vacuum – is discussed at length by Stephen Gray in his book, *The Protectors: A Journey Through Whitefella Past*.[36] This book looks at the events leading up to the first government ordinance acts against Indigenous people in the NT. The role of the anthropologists / administrators, the protectors and the patrol officers is looked at here in detail. Gray dramatises the events and people, including Baldwin Spencer, Cecil Cook and others, who had a significant impact on the past and subsequently later policy relating to Indigenous people. It's this history I am attempting to unravel with the help of the numerous scholars before me, who have looked directly at the impact of 'whitefella' anthropologists and administrators.

I also attempt to examine how the journalists and writers of the early 20th century constructed aboriginality. Assisting me here are a number of thinkers and writers: for example, the vividly explored "Thinking the unthinkable: the imaginary white savage of T. G. H. Strehlow" by Shane Hersey.[37] Hersey examines the early colonial writings of anthropologists Strehlow, Spencer and Gillen, in Australia. Their writing created the imaginary Aboriginal savage, Hersey concludes, which was more akin to their own projected 'other': "Spencer, Gillen, Strehlow created the personalities that they were comfortable with, then

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[35] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 28.
[36] Gray, S. *The Protectors: A Journey through Whitefella Past.* (Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2011).
[37] Hersey, S. "Thinking the unthinkable: the imaginary white savage of T. G. H. Strehlow," *Compr(om)ising Postcolonialisms: Challenging Narratives and Practices*. (Sydney: Danagarro Press, 2001). p. 139.

projected that image onto Aboriginal people with whom they came in contact … [T]hey created, supported and documented that collective imaginary savage."[38]

These were not real representations and part of what Stephen Muecke, who derived his work in part from Edward Said's Orientalism, has described as "Aboriginalism". Hersey adds: "That is, just as the West imagined the Orient and within it the Oriental, so too people like Spencer, Gillen and Carl Strehlow imagined the Aboriginal savage."[39]

In this context, the focus in unravelling the discourse of gold, mining and Indigenous is directly on the book, *Tragedy Track*. To this extent this PhD reflects on the subjective nature of journalism and storytelling, and I rely on colonial discourse theories to unravel how and why the negative discourse of race and race war began and its frightening and seemingly never-ending impact.

1.12 Chapter outline

Chapter 2: Political, historical and anthropological context for re-tracing the 'Tragedy Track'

Chapter 2 is a detailed historical account of the underlying philosophical and political context for the newspaper expedition on the 'tragedy' track – the Tanami road – in 1932. This chapter covers a wide range of philosophical ideas and debates that were seemingly embedded in colonialisation such as 'the dying pillow' and 'doomed race' theories. These were frequently used as justifications for economic contingencies and for dispossession of Aboriginal people from their lands. This chapter looks at the rise of assimilation and integration as forms of regulating the lives of the Indigenous in the NT specifically – and for this thesis the Central Desert – and it examines how government policy and anthropology became entangled and continued to influence how decisions were made that impacted on the lives of the desert people.

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[38] Hersey, S. "Thinking the unthinkable: the imaginary white savage of T. G. H. Strehlow," *Compr(om)ising Postcolonialisms: Challenging Narratives and Practices*. (Sydney: Danagarro Press, 2001). p. 7.
[39] ibid.

Chapters 3 & 4: History of early contact

The first contact between the Tanami desert dwellers – mostly Warlpiri – and colonial explorers and prospectors occurred during the latter's quest for gold. Early 20th century prospecting in this richly complex Indigenous cultural interior created the first roads and these first roads lead to displacement, loss and movement of the Warlpiri from their traditional homelands. I follow the main tracks of the explorer and prospector Alan Davidson, the explorer Michael Terry, who drove the first truck into this desert country, and then the arrival of media and later the anthropologists along this very same road.

Chapter 5: The road to Yuendumu

Anthropologists like T. G. H. Strehlow followed the 'Tragedy Track' to check on the conditions of Indigenous people living at the goldmines and in proximity to pastoralists. Like anthropologist Olive Pink, Strehlow, acting as a government patrol officer, began his assessment on the dislocation and plight of the Warlpiri. Along with Pink he advocated for an Indigenous "reserve" which later became the mission station of Yuendumu. In Yuendumu, my collaborator and informant Valerie Napaljarri Martin and I spoke to elders about their memories of the road and of other tracks. They tell, in their own words (translated and verbatim), stories they remember of the road and other secret tracks they travelled to escape Strehlow's 'wagon'.

Chapter 6: Deconstructing *Tragedy Track*

In this chapter I specifically examine the newspaper stories that Baume wrote for newspapers in 1933 about the Tanami Track. These media stories – widely distributed around the country – became his book, *Tragedy Track*. I use critical discourse theory and critical discourse analysis to unravel and expose the dominant colonial discourse of gold in the 1930s. I also turn to the newspaper and media stories published and broadcast during my research visits to Alice Springs in 2011. Has the contemporary discourse, representation and stereotypes of Indigenous people in Alice Springs today changed since 1933?

Chapter 7: Audio documentary and the colonial context

This chapter also looks at radio and radio documentaries using postcolonial, cultural theory, anthropology and critical geographical critique. It offers a trans-disciplinary approach to postcolonial radio storytelling. For example, I discuss *Return to Arnhem Land* (Thomas 2007a), the recent work of historian and independent producer Martin Thomas. In this documentary, we become witness to an audio event where the past and present seem to collide: ancient songs recorded on wire tape in 1948 are returned to the original descendants. Thomas makes us privy to this mediated yet contested exchange.

Chapter 8: Conclusion: telling stories with the shapes of time

Contemporary storytelling on the road, the 'road trip chronotope' as described by Bakhtin,[40] and mapping place through storytelling in 'third space', are different cultural studies concepts which I use to examine the documentary *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*. How do these ideas work in the postcolonial critique? In my conclusion, I also look briefly at critical geography theory, particularly the "Trialectics of Space" and third space theory through the work of Lefebrve, Soja, Jamieson and the critical contemporary theory of spatial justice.

[40] Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M*. Translated by Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist. University of Texas Press, 1981.

Chapter 2

Political, historical and anthropological context for re-tracing the 'Tragedy Track'

> "The distance – of the road from Yuendumu to the Granites – is something like 700 kilometres and Lajamanu is not on Warlpiri country. Yuendumu sort of is, but it is pretty well in no-man's land between Anmatjere and Warlpiri country – and in those days the authorities (the Welfare Department, all under the Protector of Aborigines). Precursor to today's "closing the gap" initiative was: "what are we going to do with all these Aboriginal people? We should put them on missions and ration stations and look after them." It was all part of the 'dying pillow' mentality, and we had the taking away of children. I believe there was some people taken away during the Stolen Generation episode but there are also a few that were successfully hidden from the authorities, part Aboriginal people, that have survived to this day. The authorities don't seem to have learnt anything from those mistakes of the past."[41]

The history of the Tanami road and the Granites goldfields needs be told within a broader historical context. This history of the road is bound to the history of colonisation in Australia, the influence of politicians, police, administrators, scientists, anthropologists and the policies and legislation that arose from the meetings of these elites. How settlers, explorers, pastoralists and prospectors interacted with the first people, the Indigenous of the Tanami, was influenced by what went before in all colonies throughout Australia. There is no question that violent confrontation accompanied whitefella expansion, and this is well documented.[42] So too is the predominant thinking of the day, evident in the 'dying pillow' and 'doomed race' theory of segregation that evolved and strengthened over the early period of colonisation.[43] This chapter examines this

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[41] Frank Baarda quoted in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

[42] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". Russell McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997); Robert and Amanda Nettelbeck and Rick Hosking Foster, *Fatal Collisions: The South Australian Frontier and the Violence of Memory* (Wakefield Press, 2001).

[43] Gillian Cowlishaw, "Euphemism, Banality, Propaganda: Anthropology, Public Debate and Indigenous Communities," *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1 (2003); Geoffrey Gray, "'The Natives Are Happy': A. P. Elkin, A. O. Neville and Anthropological Research on Northwest Western Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies* 50, no. 51 (1996); *A Cautious Silence: The Politics of Australian Anthropology* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007); McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*; Derek John Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding," *Scientia Canadensis: Canadian Journal of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine* 17, no. 1–2

prevailing ideology, the power relations and policy that effected Indigenous people throughout the country, and specifically in the NT where Indigenous were confronted, and forced to adapt to these policies and laws in the late 19th century until well into the second half of the 20th century. The legislative and policy environment in which explorers and settlers encountered the NT and the prevailing ideology in which colonisers and colonised interacted had a long and lasting impact on the lives of Indigenous of the NT and, specifically for this analysis, the Warlpiri of the Central Desert.

Focusing on McGregor's historical analysis of the 'doomed race' theory of segregation as well as the work of Markovich, Ranziji, Keith McConnochie et al., Coughlan, Peterson, Gray, Mulvaney, Cowlinshaw, Marcus, and others, I will now examine the history, psychology and role of anthropology in the historical and social context of colonisation in the Territory in the late 19th century and up until the 1940s. Through revisiting a multitude of policies, restrictions and regulations during and around the time period the Tanami Track was built, I hope to address how the building of the road impacted on the people in the area. This road was the 'track' to the goldfields, built essentially for goldmining purposes, but the road takes us along other trails and paths: colonial trails aimed at dispossessing the First Peoples from their lands will lead us to violent massacres and the tracks where people fled from patrol officers.

Frances Coughlan in her MA thesis has documented conflict between Aboriginal people and pastoralists beginning in the 19th century over land and access to water.[44] She documents that thousands of Aboriginal people were being killed in the late 19th century. This conflict over land use was one of the principal reasons behind segregation policies being enforced. As Markovich writes in 2003: "In the early days of white settlement, colonial Australian governments were predominantly concerned with distancing the Aborigines from the settlers. The

(1993); Henry Reynolds, *Frontier: Aboriginies, Settlers and Land* (Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1987); *The Law of the Land* (Australia: Penguin, 2003); T. Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[44] Frances Coughlan "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs" (Unpublished thesis, Master of Arts. Aboriginal Studies, School of Humanities, La Trobe University, 1991).

earliest 'legislative' forms of segregation policy are evidenced by an 1816 Proclamation by NSW Governor Macquarie".[45]

Markovich here also highlighted three distinct policy phases relating to the treatment of Aboriginal people, in particular children, from the earliest days of colonisation. These periods are described as segregation, absorption or merger, and assimilation. Segregation (under a protectorate) began in the earliest days of Macquarie when proclamations were established banning Aboriginal people from British settlements. Segregation in all states began with 'protectorate missions' and also enshrined in British legislation the edict that Aboriginal people must be civilised and brought to the Christian faith. All three periods detailed by Markovich will be examined in this chapter with a focus on the legislation and policy development in the NT and the philosophical and historical ideology underpinning these periods.

2.1 The 'dying pillow' and 'doomed race' theories: justifications for the period of segregation

Early 'protectorate' legislation was developed by the states and the Commonwealth to enforce segregation as we have encountered.[46] The underlying ideological narrative was one that was applied to all Indigenous people throughout the world and was referred to as the 'dying pillow' theory and also 'the doomed race' theory. These protectorate policies took the form of segregation; and the legislative measures have been described as intending to "smooth the dying pillow".[47] I note that Pattel-Gray further describes this as

[45] David Markovich, "Prohibited Acts, and Intentions Not Motives. 'Genocide, a Crime of Which No Anglo-Saxon Nation Could Be Guilty'," *Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law* 10, no. 3 (2003). p. 10.

[46] *Protection of Aboriginal Children Act 1844* (NSW); *Aboriginal Orphans (Ordinance No 12 of 1844) 1844* (SA) [the NT was administered by SA until 1911]; *Aborigines Protection Act 1869* (Vic) with a subsequent amendment in 1886 and the *Aborigines Act 1889* (Vic); *Aborigines Protection Act 1886* (WA) with a subsequent amendment in 1892 and the *Aborigines Act 1889* (WA); *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897* (Qld); *An Act to make Provision for the better Protection and Care of the Aboriginal Half-Caste Inhabitants of the Colony 1897* (Qld); A*borigines Protection Act 1910* (Cth).

[47] The first 'protection policy' to quell violence and reduce disease was initiated in 1860 by then Chief Protector of SA, who had control over the northern part of Australia. The aim of the policy was to watch over the 'interests' of Aboriginal people and to 'smooth the dying pillow'; in Bolton, G. C. 'Aborigines in social history: an overview', in Ronald M. Berndt (ed.), *Aboriginal Sites, Rights and Resource Development*, Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1982. p. 59.

"simply a shift from outright extermination and enslavement towards more subtle, and less obvious, forms of repression".[48]

Frances Coughlan's writing on the town camps in Alice Springs documents four periods of time characterised by particular policies toward Aboriginal people.

The first she labels 'dispossession', which includes 'pacification or extermination'. She writes, this "[i]s the period of invasion and occupation by non-Aboriginal settlers". The law and the police were there, according to the South Australian Commissioner of Police in 1888: "to protect the settlers from outrages of the natives."[49] The other periods Coughlan illustrates are the periods of protection, assimilation, and the 'fourth' period of policy dealing with Aboriginal people: 'self-determination'. (I will not be addressing this last period). The protection policy period became implicitly connected to the 'dying pillow' or 'doomed race' theories outlined further in this chapter. After the first SA policies were introduced in the early 20th century the other states followed with similar policies.[50] These expressed the erroneous notion that extinction of 'full-blood' Indigenous people was simply a matter of time. Social Darwinists regarded Aborigines as 'primitive' and in a state of 'barbarism' – headed inevitably toward extinction.[51] From the late 19th century to the 1930s the broad policy direction of state and territory governments in 'settled' parts of Australia had been to isolate so-called 'full-blood' Indigenous people onto reserves. Nevertheless, some of the people labelled 'half-castes' were considered to be Aboriginal, and were forced to reside on reserves, while others were interred as children in missionary schools, or sent to one of several compounds, including the Kahlin compound in Darwin and the Bungalow in Alice Springs. Coughlan sees this

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[48] Pattel-Gray, *The great white flood: racism in Australia; critically appraised from an Aboriginal historico-theological viewpoint*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998.

[49] Hartwig quoted Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs".

[50] Protection legislation was passed in Victoria (1869), Queensland (1897), WA (1905) and NSW (1909). These laws designated territory for Aborigines to settle. One of many aims was to reduce the burden on the ration system. T. Rowse, "Indigenous Citizenship and Self-Determination: The Problem of Shared Responsibilities," *Citizenship and Indigenous Australians: Changing conceptions and possibilities* (1998).

[51] Peggy Brock, "Aboriginal Families and the Law in the Era of Assimilation and Segregation, 1890s–1950s" in *Sex Power and Justice Historical Perspectives on Law in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995).

period of protectionism as beginning in what would eventually become the NT around 1910:

> "It was a neat solution, hampered only by the threat of growing numbers of Aboriginal people of mixed origin. Under the name of Protection, legislation in the Northern Territory from 1910 segregated Aboriginal people on isolated settlements and missions out bush away from non-Aboriginal society; restricted liaisons between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in an attempt to prevent the conception of children of mixed origin; and from 1915 in Central Australia, removed children of mixed origin from their families, and reared them in an institution in Alice Springs, known as the Bungalow."[52]

All protection schemes in all states and territories attempted to define legally who was 'Aboriginal' and who was not. There were a number of reasons for this based on psychological, economic and philosophical and religious ideologies. State and Commonwealth administrators resorted to complex schemes based on skin colour as an indication of biological descent.[53]

> "The process of drawing a line between colonised and coloniser fulfilled both administrative and ideological functions. In administrative terms, the division guided the making of decisions as to who would be subject to the 'protection' legislation in the various jurisdictions. Ideologically, the division between conqueror and conquered evinced the success of the colonisation process."[54]

To understand these periods the very first protectionist policies and the overarching philosophies relating to race and colonisation that would come to influence the nature and practice of segregation and so-called 'protection' need to be further interrogated. Frances Coughlan describes this period as 'the third

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[52] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs". p. xvii.

[53] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

[54] John and Heather Douglas Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies* 28, no. 81 (2004). p. 49.

policy'.[55] She sees it as being related to "the realisation that Aboriginal people were not, in fact, going to die out". Coughlan points to the NT policy of assimilation post 1937, which she describes as 'segregation on missions'. She argues that this form of segregation, under the name of assimilation, continues today.

> "The Lutheran Hermannsburg mission, the Catholic Santa Teresa mission, and some of the government run settlements in Central Australia, for example Papunya and Yuendumu, went so far as to remove children from their families and grow them up in segregated dormitories in order to break down traditional Aboriginal family and culture. This policy of assimilation, later referred to as integration, continued officially until 1972. It can be argued, as we shall later consider, that integration in a new form continues today, under the name of self-determination."[56]

2.2 Social Darwinism and the 'doomed race' theory in Australia and the NT

> "Colonial policies of protection were initially applied with the expectation that there would be a decline and eventual extinguishment of the 'native'. They would all die. When native populations, however, successfully resisted extinguishment, protectionist policies were replaced by policies of assimilation, which assumed not that the natives would all die, but that cultural annihilation would occur. These policies more or less continue in various guises."[57]

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[55] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs". p. xvii.
[56] ibid.
[57] Irene Watson, "In the Northern Territory Intervention What Is Saved or Rescued and at What Cost?" *Critical Indigenous Theory* 15, no. 2 September (2009). p. 51.

In *Imagined Destinies*,[58] Australian professor of history and academic author Russell McGregor sketches out the very first notions of the doomed race theory as they applied to Aboriginal Australians and as they first appeared in Enlightenment thinking. He also charts the doomed race theory which in turn is embedded in 'scientific eugenics' thought of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, arguing that over the course of the first half of the 20th century, "racial science drifted more toward a polygenist perspective, and with this came an increasing emphasis on social and cultural differences being causally related to biological differences".[59]

The Enlightenment theory of 'doomed race' that McGregor examines can also be found in the very early work of Tench.[59] McGregor argued that Tench was in line with the Enlightenment thinking of the time:

> "[by] the late 18th century the Enlightenment idea of progress had crystallized into an assumption that societies followed a natural development sequence, from a state of savagery (characterized by hunting as a mode of subsistence) to one of barbarism (characterized by nomadic pastoralism) to civilization distinguished by agriculture and commerce."[60]

Tench, a young man on the First Fleet, kept vivid eyewitness accounts of both expeditions to Botany Bay and the settlement at Port Jackson. McGregor argues that Tench, along with other writers of the time, presupposed that savagery gave rise to civilisation: "through a natural sequence of progressive development".[61] To Tench, in his account of colonial Port Jackson, Aboriginals were flighty and feckless: "Aboriginals … were like savages", he wrote, in being easily swayed by

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[58] Russell McGregor is an Associate Professor of History at James Cook University in Queensland. His research has focused on the history of settler/colonised Australia including detailed analysis of early policies and philosophies. His book *Indifferent Inclusion: Aboriginal People and the Australia Nation* was the winner of the 2012 NSW Premiers Award for Australian history.

[59] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 2.

[59] Watkin Tench, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson, in New South Wales: Including an Accurate Description of the Situation of the Colony, of the Natives, and of Its Natural Productions* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). p. 281.

[60] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

[61] ibid.

"the impulse of the moment".[62] While subscribing to the superiority of his own race and the 'inferiority of Aboriginal savagery' Tench also believed there was a universality to human nature, and this aligns with Enlightenment principles of reason, progress and the unity of mankind.[63]

McGregor finds that running simultaneously with Enlightenment ideas "of natives and savagery" was a taxonomy, a "science of race". This was largely based on Linnaeus's taxonomy of 1735, which divided humanity into four races.[64] Differing opinions of racial taxonomy were contested in the late 18th century of course. One such challenger was Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, the renowned 18th century naturalist and anthropologist who saw the 'hand of god' in racial variations and subscribed to the view that all races descended from a Caucasian Adam and Eve.[65]

But the monogenist perspective could also imply that racial variation indicated a varying difference in 'worth'. More extreme views were held by some polygenists who saw differences between races as signifying they were from different creations. The monogenist view with its variations in worth hierarchies held sway however: representing people in categories between superior and inferior. These views were concurrent with the contested 'science' of phrenology: "phrenology played a significant part in fostering the notions that Aboriginal mental powers were limited and their prospects for improvement slight", wrote McGregor in his critique.[66]

The path of the 'doomed race' theory from the pseudoscience of the 18th and 19th century, from eugenicist and phrenonological, to a variety of Christian suppositions of Aboriginal degeneration – 'the fallen state of man' theory – and the social application of Darwin's eponymous 'survival of the fittest' theory, are traced at length in McGregor's work.[67] The theory of 'doomed race' that

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[62] Tench, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson, in New South Wales: Including an Accurate Description of the Situation of the Colony, of the Natives, and of Its Natural Productions*.
[63] ibid. p. 281.
[64] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 7.
[65] ibid.
[66] ibid.
[67] ibid.

McGregor outlines was used by a wide group, from colonial magistrates to Christian missionaries to colonial administrators such as the colonial explorer and imperial administrator, George Grey.[68] He put forward his proposals for 'civilising the Aboriginals'. Grey believed that Aboriginal people could be civilised, and that prejudice toward them could be overcome. McGregor finds these ideas were largely misplaced and, "far from losing ground" these prejudices only seemed to become more realised and apparent. Arguments began in earnest around 'how to civilise' – whether it should be through the process of segregation, or through assimilation with orphans housed in "orphan asylums mixing with children from other races". Throughout these discussions, Christian interventions or 'solutions' were usually regarded favourably.[69]

Amongst the intelligentsia and 'thinkers', a general pessimism was exhibited in "Aboriginal capacities to advance".[70] The doomed race theory began to surface in the early 19th century too as diseases such as smallpox struck many tribes in and around Sydney, and this had been occurring from the late 18th century on. This idea of the 'doomed race' also ran parallel to the "declining faith in Aboriginal abilities".[71] This could be regarded as 'the hand of god' phenomena. One of the best-known proponents of this theory was Polish explorer Paul Strzelecki.[72] He viewed the decline of Aboriginal populations as the result not just of famine, disease wars or firearms, but of a decrease in the birthrate accompanying the spread of venereal disease amongst Aboriginal women.[73]

Despite these kinds of intellectually narrow and morally perilous findings, McGregor encounters the proponents of the 'doomed race' theory as 'humanitarians' who saw the situation as inevitable, but who tried to put pressure on the government to step in, and at least to make the process "less painful".[74] However, by the beginning of the 20th century Aboriginal people had

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[68] G. Grey, *Journey of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia During the Years 1837, 38 and 39*, vol. 2 (London 1841).
[69] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.
[70] ibid.
[71] ibid.
[72] P. E. Strezlecki, *Physical Descriptions of New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land* (London 1845).
[73] ibid.
[74] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

been stereotyped as primitive Stone Age curiosities and legislation was completely paternalistic and 'protectionist', even if the aim of segregation was, as we have seen, 'to protect'.[75]

The Age newspaper, in an editorial and story from January 1888, expressed the popular social Darwinist sentiment in this way:

> "It seems a law of nature that where two races whose stages of progression differ greatly are brought into contact, the inferior race is doomed to wither and disappear … The process seems to be in accordance with natural law, which, however it may clash with human benevolence, is clearly beneficial to mankind at large by providing for the survival of the fittest … [I]t may be doubted whether the Australian Aborigine would ever have advanced much beyond the status of the Neolithic races in which we found him, and we need not therefore lament his disappearance."[76]

I will examine the role of the media in perpetuating inaccurate stereotypes in chapters 6 and 7.

Kramer in her work on the NT 'intervention', or Emergency Response, and tracing the work of Reynolds, Cunneen and Rowley, finds the governors of each state during this period of protectionism "[c]olluded with pastoralists and phrenologists to institute new regimes of governmentality that mobilised both scientific racism and colonial law".[77] She outlines how the construction of Aboriginal people as criminals and primitive allowed for the wholesale taking of land. She also acknowledges the work of Said here: "[i]n line with the colonial project, phrenologists used scientific-juridicial technologies to rationalise white

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[75] Rob Ranzijn, Keith R. McConnochie and Wendy Nolan, *Psychology and Indigenous Australians: Foundations of Cultural Competence* (Australia: Palgrave Macmillan 2009).

[76] *The Age*, 11 January 1888 quoted in ibid. Also cited in Attwood, Bain and Andrew Markus. *The struggle for Aboriginal rights: a documentary history*. Allen & Unwin, 1999; and Pascoe, Bruce *Convincing Ground: Learning to Fall in Love with Your Country.* Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007. p. 68 (amongst others).

[77] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". pp. 2–132.

'positional superiority' and reinforce white sovereignty." Darwin's work, she believes, "added an additional paradigm to galvanise state genocidal practises".[78]

Inherent contradictions are evident in what colonial expansion represented in terms of Enlightenment concepts: individualism, ideas of humanity and rights such as freedom are confused in a brew that created the raison d'être for total usurpation of another group of people from their lives and homes.[79] Social Darwinism became, in this confused mix, a convenient explanation for Aboriginal peoples' demise and an idea about the nature of humanity and human society attractive to hierarchical and power-conscious colonial societies of the 19th century. This poor version of a 'science' drawn from Darwin's theories (social Darwinism) buttressed the formulation of policy for Aboriginal Australians from the turn of the 20th century, and became the intellectual premise for the taking over and control of the traditional lands of the Indigenous for mining and pastoral concerns. As Ranzijn, McConnachie and Nolan proposed, this 'worldview' had no real scientific basis:

> "The attitudes of the nineteenth-century psychologists were products of the prevailing Western European worldviews of the time, which included a belief that non-Europeans, and particularly the 'darker' 'races' in colonized areas, were inherently inferior and doomed to die out because they could not successfully compete for survival with the 'superior' Europeans. This illustrates how powerful worldviews really are, even (or perhaps especially) those with no real scientific or rational basis."[80]

Social Darwinism, extrapolated from Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest, portrayed separate races as different species that evolved through the process Darwin outlined as 'natural selection'. Cultural differences produced by genetic differences could also be explained in this pseudoscience through the 'laws of evolution': the survival or disappearance of cultures determined by

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[78] ibid. p. 32 and Said, 2003 p. 7.
[79] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.
[80] Ranzijn, *Psychology and Indigenous Australians: Foundations of Cultural Competence*.

Darwin's 'natural laws' being essentially that the fittest or strongest are the survivors.[81]

In Australian government and intellectual circles in the late 19th century, a concept of 'unilinear' evolution developed along these social Darwinist lines: it posited that 'primitive traces' were in the 'early stages' of an evolutionary line. From this concept we can see how some religious, government and academic figures extrapolated the 'dying pillow' phenomenon: that Aboriginal people would succumb to the laws of natural selection and all that was left was for the government to "smooth the dying pillow".[82] In the early 20th century, the Anglican Bishop of Queensland, Bishop Frodsham, is believed to be the first to use these words which would appear to support the idea of an inevitable dying out of Aboriginal peoples. If we read the last part of this quote, however, he does not appear to be entirely accepting of this fate, seemingly decided in advance for them:

> "The Aborigines are disappearing. In the course of a generation or two, at the most, the last Australian blackfellow will have turned his face to arm mother earth … Missionary work then may be only smoothing the pillow of a dying race, but I think if the Lord Jesus came to Australia he would be moved with great compassion for these poor outcasts, living by the wayside, robbed of their land, wounded by the lust of a stronger race and dying."[83]

It's relevant to note here that some theorists point to the notions of the 'dying pillow' and 'doomed race' justifications for segregation as existing in a much earlier policy period. Robin Holland in her Honours thesis for Queensland University argues how the perception of Aborigines becoming a 'doomed race'

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[81] ibid.

[82] ibid.

[83] Anglican Bishop of Queensland in the early 20th century, Bishop Frodsham quoted in Keith Cole, "A Critical Appraisal of Anglican Mission Policy and Practice in Arnhem Land, 1908–1939," in *Aborigines and Change: Australia in the '70s* (Canberra: 1977).

became embedded in Australian social and cultural beliefs during the decades of 1850 to 1870.[84]

A. P. Elkin in *The Australian Aborigines* stated: "[w]e find as early as 1843 some sentimental regret was expressed for the tribal remnants. A writer in that year wrote in the *New South Wales Magazine*; 'I wish to see our means applied to rendering the current of events by which the grave is closing on our sable brethren, smooth and regular'."[85] The expression to "smooth the dying pillow" became the rationalisation to justify the enforced regimes of 'protection' and the death of Aboriginal people throughout Australia.[86]

Kramer takes a much harsher view of social Darwinism and its use as a justification for some of the worst crimes of colonisation in Australia: "[i]n accordance with *terra nullius*, Social Darwinism produced scientific-juridicial rhetoric that sanctioned Indigenous deaths. His (Darwin's) relegation of Indigenous people to the status of animals in the process of extinction ensured that deaths due to murder, brutal conditions, introduced diseases, slavery and punishments such as flogging went unaddressed."[87] In a chapter, '1880–1960 Legislating Racial Purity, the White Australia Policy and Social Darwinism', she delves further into this brutal history by examining the role of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 which became the White Australia policy. She finds the Act deployed a number of discriminatory measures "that installed a baseline of white race privilege" with profound impacts for Aboriginal people.[88]

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[84] Holland, R. C., "The Impact of 'Doomed Race' Assumptions in the Administration of Queensland's Indigenous Population by the Chief Protectors of Aboriginals from 1897 to 1942" (Queensland University of Technology, 2013).

[85] Adolphus Peter Elkins, *Anthropology and the Australian Aboriginal* (1938).

[86] C. D. Rowley, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society; Outcasts in White Australia; the Remote Aborigines* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1972). p. 103.

[87] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 32.

[88] ibid. p. 33.

2.3 Government policy in the NT

The timeline of policy and acts governing Aboriginal people in the NT began in earnest with the *Northern Territory Aboriginals Act 1910* (SA).[89] Following numerous reports and proclamations, the SA government passed the Act on 7 December 1910. This act was closely modelled on the Queensland Act (1897) and WA Act (1905). The Northern Territory Aboriginals Act applied to all those defined as 'Aboriginal', including those of mixed descent. It made provision for the establishment of reserves, to which those subject to the Act could be removed, and to "prohibited areas". The Chief Protector now became the legal guardian of all Aboriginal children and relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and conditions of employment were also regulated. In 1911, the Commonwealth government assumed control of the NT. Following this takeover by the Commonwealth, a number of other policies were introduced including the 1911 Aboriginals Ordinance Act which incorporated the *Northern Territory Aboriginals Act 1910* (SA). Along with the provision for reserves and the establishment of prohibited areas, it gave the Chief Protector the new and extraordinary power to take any Aboriginal person into custody.

2.4 Baldwin Spencer: the anthropologist as administrator

> "Spencer found in evolutionary biology a framework within which to make sense of Indigenous, as well as non-human, life. That is, Spencer's genuine concern for the protection of Australia's Indigenous was framed within a sense of the evolutionary inferiority of their way of life."[90]

The Chief Protector of Aboriginals (Commonwealth) was a role similar to that of the protectorates created by the states, and it required the Chief Protector to assume the care, custody and control of Aboriginal people. The powers to

[89] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.
[90] Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*.

assume this responsibility came from the Aboriginal Ordinance Act of 1911 as I have mentioned, and this remained the main form of legislative control until 1957.[91]

The first Chief Protector was Herbert Basedow, who took the position in Darwin from 1911. Basedow only stayed in the position for a few months. His replacement was Baldwin Spencer, who agreed to a one-year term as Chief Protector in 1912.[92] Conditions at the time in the Territory for Indigenous people were reported as harsh. Displacement of many from traditional lands occurred as pastoralists moved in to excise land for cattle-stations and explorers excised land for mining. Many Aboriginal people were forced to live on the fringes of towns such as Alice Springs or worked and lived on cattle stations such as Mount Doreen and Coniston Station (see my Tanami Track documentary, also Chapter 4). Baldwin Spencer was sent to report on the conditions for these people. His report was 'protectionist' in that it advocated for reserves and encouraged Aboriginal people to live on these reserves. He specifically outlined proposals to control Aboriginal employment, by fixing minimum wages and establishing conditions for this employment. However, his overriding recommendation was for the confinement of people on reserves, who could then be released for agricultural labour or other kinds of work such as mining.[93] A biologist and anthropologist, Baldwin Spencer also followed his predecessors in Aboriginal administration in believing that Aboriginal extinction was a "likelihood".[94] "Eminent scientist as he may have been, Spencer's efforts as Chief Protector of Aborigines were in many ways continuous with the work of his administrative predecessors", commented McGregor.[95]

Leading up to Spencer's appointment as Chief Protector, numerous bills had gone before the SA parliament primarily to control Aboriginals in the territory, and most used the 'dying pillow' or 'doomed race' theories in their protectionist justifications. The central theme was the apparent need to prevent or control

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[91] "Preliminary Report on the Aboriginals of the Northern Territory," in *Bulletin of the Northern Territory* (Melbourne 1913).
[92] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 72.
[93] "Preliminary Report on the Aboriginals of the Northern Territory".
[94] Baldwin Spencer quoted in McGregor, 1997 p. 62.
[95] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 62.

relationships between Aboriginals, Europeans and Asians, as well as controlling opium use amongst the Indigenous and the regulation of employment. Based on principles of 'morality' and the distinction of the Indigenous people, the regulations attempted to prevent interracial cohabitation and fraternisation. Thus we see how "[r]egulation of employment and repression of interracial sexual activity remained the paramount official concerns throughout the final decade of South Australian administration".[96]

2.5 Spencer's expedition

Spencer differentiated himself from past and future chief protectors, however, in that he had spent considerable time in the 'field' as a biologist, explorer and anthropologist. Oxford-educated and Chair of Melbourne University's biology department from 1887, his first expedition was with the WA Horn Expedition in 1894. This was a scientific expedition documenting the biology, geography and ethnology of Central Australia. On this expedition he met Frances James Gillen, a well-known critic of the abuse directed towards Aboriginal people from the police, in Alice Springs. Gillen was also recognised for his good relationship with Arrernte people. The two worked together in 1896, and subsequently published *Native Tribes of Central Australia* in 1899.[97] This book, recognised as one of the founding texts of modern Australian anthropology, was criticised however by the missionary and anthropologist Carl Strehlow, who disputed Spencer's observations of the Arrernte tribe.[98] Although Gillen was regarded as a "remarkable explorer", he too was of the belief that the Aboriginal race was doomed.[99] Spencer and Gillen were to embark on frequent expeditions over a number of years and published extensively. In 1904 they published *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*.[100]

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[96] ibid. p. 63.
[97] Spencer and Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (Macmillan, 1898).
[98] Sam D. Gill, *Storytracking.* Oxford University Press, 1998.
[99] Spencer and Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (Macmillan, 1904).
[100] ibid.

In 1911, at the same time the NT was handed back to the Commonwealth (from SA), Spencer was sent by the Commonwealth government on an expedition to make enquiries about the conditions for Aboriginal people in the Territory. He went on to publish another similar book, the *Native Tribes of the Northern Territory of Australia* in 1914.[101]

Spencer's views regarding the 'doomed race' and 'dying pillow' theories were also influenced in 1911 by a paper given by Archdeacon C. E. C. Lefroy from the Church of England. [102] According to this paper, 'The Future of Australian Aborigines', Lefroy argued that "since the coming of Europeans, the Aboriginal population had been reduced by three-quarters", through "cruelty, negligence and the communication of disease and moral corruption". Nevertheless, he had added: "But … the trend could be reversed …" Lefroy argued for Indigenous reserves for the "uplifting of a race which was Australian long before we were …"[103] Lefroy's paper was presented to a meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in January 1911 and Spencer was one of a number of scientists who then became enthusiastic about Lefroy's ideas.[104] Indeed, we might see Lefroy's paper as pivotal in this resolution at the meeting for an 'organised scheme for the future of Australian Aborigines'. The 'scheme', of which Spencer was involved as one of the committee members, was to be a considered approach by both state and federal governments for the 'future of the Australian Aborigine'. McGregor argues that "gradualism and cautious intervention in the traditional moral order were the hallmarks of Spencer's scheme". Still, according to McGregor, Spencer continued to hold very patronising and simplistic views of Indigenous intelligence as 'child-like' and 'primitive', and these views were widely published at the time.[105]

Australian anthropology of the late 19th century was also shaped by the works of Dr John Wild, Assistant Secretary of the Royal Society of Victoria. He delivered

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[101] Baldwin Spencer, *The Native Tribes of the Northern Territory of Australia* (1914).
[102] C. E. C. Lefroy, "The Future of the Australian Aborigines," in *Report of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Australasian Association for the advancement of science* (1911).
[103] ibid.
[104] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 73.
[105] ibid. p. 77.

his paper, 'Outlines of Anthropology', at the first meeting of the Australasian Association of the Advancement of Science, and this was influenced by Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' theory.[106] Other anthropologists such as A. W. Howitt advocated for a study of Aboriginals to understand how primitive man evolved, while Ramsay Smith in a 1913 meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science proclaimed that "nature had side-tracked" Aboriginals in Australia and as such they remained in primitive conditions.[107] McGregor sums up these views:

> "for the scientists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries one of the most appealing features of evolutionary theory lay in its capacity to encompass the entire range of human attributes in a single bio-social law. Thus a specialist in kinship systems, like Howitt, could weave a racial theme through his analyses; while on the other hand a specialist in anatomy, like the Adelaide scientist Dr William Ramsay Smith could write authoritatively on both Aboriginal physical characteristics and cultural practices."[108]

In other writings, Ramsay Smith declared the Australian Aboriginals "ape-like characters".[109] Benjamin Miller, in his examination of the work of David Unaipon, found that despite this blatantly racist view of Aboriginal people, Ramsay Smith was untroubled by the unethical appropriation of the writings and stories of Aboriginal author, musician and polymath David Unaipon as his own. He published Unaipon's work under his own name in the 1920s.[110]

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[106] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding". pp. 14–22.

[107] Russell McGregor, "The Doomed Race: A Scientific Axiom of the Late Nineteenth Century," *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 39, no. 1 (1993).

[108] ibid.

[109] *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

[110] Benjamin Miller, "Epistemologies: Whiteness, Mimicry and Assimilation in David Unaipon's 'Confusion of Tongue'," (2005), https://thealtitudejournal.files.wordpress.com/2008/07/34.pdf Benjamin Miller questions the blatant literary appropriation and the misleading and faulty contracts between Unaipon and his publishers surrounding a 1930 publication, *Myths and Legends of the Australian Aboriginals*. This publication, claimed to be by Scottish anthropologist William Ramsay Smith and English publishers Harrap, contains 28 stories edited from Unaipon's manuscript. There is no mention of Unaipon. Smith's changes to Unaipon's stories often alter the tone and meaning of the text. That the stories were originally Unaipon's is proven through an analysis of Unaipon's manuscripts, housed at Sydney's Mitchell Library.

By the beginning of the 20th century then, as we see in these and other accounts, Aboriginal people had been stereotyped as "primitive stone-aged curiosities"[111] and legislation was introduced as overwhelmingly protectionist. Worse, the *Aborigines Protection Act 1909* established what Aboriginal activist and intellectual Gary Foley has called the first Australian 'concentration camps': to provide a place for the doomed race to die off, he wrote. Right up to the 1930s and 1940s Foley maintains that essentially eugenic philosophies were embedded in government programs, policies and ideology, and these were propelled into existence from a flimsy basis of pseudoscience:

> "In the 1920s and 30s Australia's Aborigines were a treasure trove of curiosity for scientists and academics who believed that here was the 'missing link' species that would advance the cause of Social Darwinism. Consequently, thousands of Koori peoples in communities all over Australia, were subjected to the whims of 'scientists' interested in such things as similarities between Aborigines and chimpanzees, brain capacity and cranium size (one study in 1920 concluded that, 'the average brain capacity of Aborigines was between the normal medium intelligence of twelve or thirteen-year old children'). This Australian fascination with racial theories, phrenology and eugenics, closely mirrors a similar obsession with identical notions by German society of the same period in relation to the Jews."[112]

And indeed, we find that eugenic societies such as the Galton Society in the US had a direct impact on the study of anthropology in Australia – but this will be discussed later in this chapter.

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[111] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.
[112] Gary Foley, "The Enlightenment, Imperialism, and the Evolution of Museum," http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/essays/essay_3.html

2.6 Spencer and protectionism

Spencer's term began on 15 January 1912. From early on, Spencer declared that Aboriginals in the Territory had a greater chance of survival if remote parts of the Territory were declared reserves: "[i]f the Aboriginals are to be preserved, and if any serious effort is to be made for their betterment".[113] The reserve concept, and indeed development of this concept, was taken up in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia. By 1938, 28 years later, portions of land *had* been set aside for Aboriginal people. This is regarded as part of the protectionist policies of the time. But, according to Mulvaney, Spencer's role and its importance – to advise on welfare and administration – has been largely under-examined by historians.[114] Mulvaney notes how Spencer was the first anthropologist to take on such a pivotal role. And "his brief" – "to advise the government on Aboriginal welfare and administrative matters" – could have altered the course of history. "Historians," he asserts, "have neglected this significant development." It's worth quoting him here in full:

> "It was the first occasion upon which an academic with anthropological expertise (the foremost authority in Australia) was appointed to formulate policy. The government paid all the considerable costs involved. Spencer's report was tabled in parliament in 1913, after a change in government to an administration unsympathetic to his costly recommendations, and only months before the war swept its consideration into oblivion. Although its precepts combined bleak social evolutionary theory with paternalism, his recommendations included the creation of several large Aboriginal reserves. If implemented, this policy might have altered the course of Aboriginal history and European settlement."[115]

While Spencer advocated for reserves he also focused on implementing aspects of the Act that controlled employment conditions. He issued licenses to

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[113] "Commonwealth Government Records About the Northern Territory," ed. National Archives of Australia (Australian Government).
[114] D. J. Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology: Foundations and Funding," *Aboriginal History* 17 (1993).
[115] ibid. p. 173.

employers, fixed minimum wages and legislated for conditions of employment. These conditions, while offering some minor progress, were extremely stringent for Aboriginal people. If an Indigenous worker was employed by/for settlers on pastoral lands, the pastoral owners/employers were not required to give them a wage. Instead, provisions for themselves and their family were offered: that is, basic rations.[116] Later, at the Granites goldfields, a wage was paid but the workers only received a portion of this and the rest was handed to the Protector for investment. Many workers never saw any of this money.[117]

Spencer oversaw the confinement of Aboriginal people in towns like Alice Springs and their release provisional to working. By the 1930s this included a two-kilometre prohibited zone for Aboriginal people around the township of Alice Springs, and from 1916 the entirety of Darwin was declared a prohibited zone.[118]

Spencer also held very peculiar ideas about interrelationships between Indigenous and Chinese peoples. The Chinese he regarded as morally bankrupt. McGregor wrote how for Spencer, "[t]he sexual issue led off in a multiplicity of directions: the half-caste problem, venereal disease, the doomed race, violent conflict, Asiatic vices, alcohol and opium abuse, prostitution, unstable domestic arrangements, racial impurity, and plain old fashioned revulsion against carnal immorality".[119] All of these themes recurred throughout the correspondence with other NT officials. In the early 1900s gonorrhoea was prevalent throughout the Territory and was reported as evidence of the immorality of Indigenous people influenced by "asiatics". Further, a 1908 report by Dr Cecil Strangman in Darwin, pointed out that white men were deliberately infecting Aboriginal women.[120] Strangman claimed that the numbers of half-caste children were

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[116] Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*.
[117] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".
[118] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.
[119] ibid.
[120] Cecil Strangman report cited in ibid. and Andrew Chua, "The Racial Politics of Public Health in 1910s Darwin Chinatown", *Journal of Northern Territory History* 21 (2010). pp. 59–78.

becoming a problem and he attributed blame to Asiatic males: "[r]elationships between the two should therefore be strongly discouraged".[121]

As John Mettam argues in his thesis on Commonwealth administration of the NT:

> "Punitive restrictions based solely on race were imposed immediately [after] the Commonwealth assumed control. The intention and the effect was to drive out large numbers of the Chinese residents who had come to the Territory during the more liberal immigration regime of South Australia."[122]

Andrew Chua argues that the move to keep the Chinese out was also prompted by a political imperative to bring the entire NT into the fold of the White Australian nation.[123] Spencer echoed this idea, as cited in McGregor: "Picturesque as they look, I would like to deport the whole lot of them because with their opium and spirits they ruin the blacks and are doing no good to the country …"[124] Spencer viewed the Chinese as morally degenerate. He believed they introduced opium to Aboriginal people and the male Chinese took Indigenous women into what he believed was a form of sexual slavery. He wanted to completely prohibit contact between the two groups, and on 12 February 1912 he had Darwin's Chinatown proclaimed a Prohibited Area for Aboriginals.[125] Academic and activist Gary Foley described this period in Australian history as a harbinger for the White Australia policy:

> "[P]articularly during the gold rush in Victoria, race became a major issue on another front. Paranoia about the numbers of Chinese miners on the goldfields created numerous clashes and ultimately led to the development of the 'White Australia' immigration policy and also played a key role in the Federation of Australia in 1901. During the early part of this century, a viciously racist press campaign against

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[121] Andrew Chua, "The Racial Politics of Public Health in 1910s Darwin Chinatown", *Journal of Northern Territory History* 21 (2010). p. 68.
[122] John Mettam, "Central Administration and the Northern Territory". (Sydney University, 1995).
[123] Chua, A. "The Racial Politics of Public Health in 1910s Darwin Chinatown".
[124] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.
[125] Chua, A. "The Racial Politics of Public Health in 1910s Darwin Chinatown".

> 'the yellow peril' saw Australian cartoonists distinguish themselves by producing ugly caricatures of evil-looking, opium-smoking, white-woman-corrupting, yellow hordes to the north, poised to pounce on the white populace of Australia. These cartoons are almost identical in their intent and effect to the racist caricatures that were to be a regular feature of Der Sturmer and other Nazi propaganda of the 1930s."[126]

Chua, McGregor and Mettam's analyses of the reports of the day reveal that Aboriginals employed by whites – in Chinatown in Darwin – wore brass identity disks. Mettam examines Spencer's role in the movement of the local Larrakkia tribe to a compound at Kahlin Beach outside Darwin so they could be monitored.[127] This location was partly selected for its cultural meaning to the people, but also for its proximity to the white district of town where Aboriginal labourers were regularly required.[128] Most significantly, Mettam finds, Baldwin Spencer advocated for the removal of part-Aboriginal children (from interracial marriages between Asian, Aboriginal and European Aboriginal). These children were to be separated from their mothers and placed in dedicated institutions:

> "Two government institutions were established to house and educate the children; the first was Kahlin Compound on the outskirts of Darwin, which opened in 1913, located in an area now known as Myilly Point. The second was The Bungalow located in Alice Springs, which opened in June 1914 under the direction of Ida Standley. The school at the Bungalow taught white children in the morning and half-caste children in the afternoon."[129]

While Spencer was only in the role of Chief Protector of Aboriginals in the NT for a year, he had a marked effect on policy. His views of protection and segregation would come to dominate the policy and legislative environment there for the next decade. In 1918 the Aboriginals Ordinance was amended to extend the

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[126] Foley, "The Enlightenment, Imperialism, and the Evolution of Museum".
[127] Mettam, "Central Administration and the Northern Territory".
[128] Chua, "The Racial Politics of Public Health in 1910s Darwin Chinatown".
[129] Mettam, "Central Administration and the Northern Territory".

authority of the Chief Protector even further. From birth to death Aboriginal women were to come under his direct control, unless they were married to, or living with, a husband of European origin. All police officers were appointed as 'Protectors' to assist the Chief Protector. As is widely known, "[t]he practice of taking children from their families and from perceived neglect had begun early in the Commonwealth era. This was the genesis of the policy that would affect many Aboriginal families both then and in later years, and create a group of people known today as the 'Stolen Generations'."[130]

2.7 Anthropology, the NT and the beginnings of ethnography

The first major anthropological expeditions in this period included the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits led by Alfred Haddon in 1898.[131] This, and another expedition led by Radcliffe-Brown (with British funding), were anthropological expeditions regarded as landmarks in anthropological history. The Cambridge Anthropological Expedition set a pattern in its use of movie film and sound recording, which Spencer and Gillen later emulated. The Haddon expedition recorded a huge amount of audio material in its seven months: up to 100 wax cylinders of Torres Strait Islander people's language and song. Haddon also managed to shoot small bits of movie footage using a 35 mm movie camera. Haddon saw the movie camera as "an indispensable piece of anthropological apparatus", and he encouraged Walter Baldwin Spencer to take one on his expedition into Central Australia in 1901.[132]

The 1910–11 Oxford and Cambridge Expedition to WA was led by eminent anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown with a WA government contribution in the person of Daisy Bates. Less well known and little studied was a series of solitary

[130] Tim and Trevor Graham Rowse, "Walter Baldwin Spencer Regrets," The National Film and Sound Archive, http://www.nfsa.gov.au/digitallearning/mabo/info/walterSpencerRegrets.htm

[131] Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits (1898), Hodes, Jeremy. Index to the Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits, Haddon, Alfred C. 1855–1940, Ray, Sidney Herbert, 1858–1939. Linguistics and Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*. Cambridge University Press, 1901.

[132] ibid.

journeys by the German ethnographer Erherd Eylmann, between 1896 and 1898.[133]

Spencer and Gillen's second long expedition in 1901 was financed by a Melbourne newspaper and assisted by state governments of Victoria and SA. It also came about after extensive lobbying from the British academic establishment.[134] According to Peterson these expeditions were of interest to European and British anthropologists alike. The first of these, Peterson asserts, revealed an active "export industry in Australian ethnography in return for intellectual guidance".[135] These particular expeditions also marked the beginning of the use of audiovisual material in ethnography in Australia. Major filmmakers within this genre included Walter Baldwin Spencer, Charles Mountford, Adolphus Elkin, Norman B. Tindale, E. O. Stocker, T. G. H. Strehlow, Ian Dunlop, Cecil Holmes, Roger Sandall, Curtis Levy David, Judith MacDougall and Kim McKenzie. Many of the films made by some of the earlier ethnographic filmmakers include culturally restricted materials".[136]

Twelve major books on Australian ethnography appeared in the first decade and a half of the 20th century. According to Peterson, Spencer's contribution was profound: "the three major volumes of ethnography he produced, two in collaboration with F. J. Gillen, Alice Springs postmaster and Protector of Aborigines, excelled in the detailed Aboriginal social and religious life".[137]

There were other writers/ethnographers of the time and these were mostly amateur; all had various roles and engagements with Aboriginal people, for example W. E. Roth, Aboriginal Protector in Queensland; Erherd Eylmann,

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[133] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding". *Dominions Apart: Reflections on the Culture of Science and Technology in Canada and Australia 1850–1945.* Vol. 17, no. 1–2, 199.

[134] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding"; Nicolas Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology," *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 2, no. 3 (1990); G. Weiss, & Wodak, R, "Introduction: Theory, Interdisciplinarity and Critical Discourse Analysis" in *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity*, ed. G. Weiss & R. Wodak (eds.)(New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

[135] Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology".

[136] Liz McNiven, "Torres Strait Islanders (1898)" http://aso.gov.au/titles/historical/torres-strait-islanders/notes/

[137] Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology".

German ethnographer in SA; Mrs Langloh Parker, a station owner's wife in Western NSW; Rev. Mathews on the Kabi people in South Queensland; Daisy Bates on the people of WA; Carl Strehlow on the Aranda; and R. H. Mathews on tribes of eastern Australia. In this period, significant anthropological expeditions were being organised, while amateur anthropologists worked closely with known anthropologists. Peterson comments how "such busy enthusiasts were remarkably dedicated, usually working in geographic isolation, far removed from their intellectual peers, in our ambient cultural environment of indifference or racial contempt. Often, their sole reward was praise from some distant great man whom they never met."[138]

Well documented intellectual relationships, such as those between Lorimer Fison and Lewis Henry Morgan, Howitt and E. B. Tylor, R. H. Mathews and Mrs Langloh Parker with Andrew Lang, and Spencer and Gillen with Sir James Frazer, also proved to be rewarding for the colonial beneficiaries of local and international patronage. Praise and publicity inevitably accompanied these connections and developments.[139]

2.8 Anthropology moves to the university

The first formal attempts to establish anthropology as a university discipline began at the first British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1914. All the influential names of early anthropology in Australia were present, including Grafton Elliot Smith, Walter Baldwin Spencer, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski. While the proposal was delayed because of World War I, it was reactivated in 1919.[140]

At this time we also see arguments beginning in earnest as to where and which university and state the discipline should be located. Baldwin Spencer argued the home of ethnography should reside in Melbourne. Alfred Haddon favoured

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[138] ibid. p. 10.

[139] D. J. Mulvaney, "Gum Leaves on the Golden Bough: Australia's Palaeolithic Survivals Discovered," in *Antiquity and Man*, ed. J. D. Evans et al. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981); Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology".

[140] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding".

Sydney University, while still others argued for Adelaide. The creation and development of the first Chair of Anthropology in Australia from its inception to its realisation took over 10 years and involved discussions and disputes between universities in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide; likewise, the ideological positioning was influenced by the leading lights in anthropology both in Australia and overseas, as well as by organisations such as the Rockefeller Foundation.[141]

Both Peterson and Mulvaney point out that while Darwinian evolutionary theory was flourishing for the first 30 years of the century, the eugenics movement would also play a crucial role in the institutionalisation of anthropology in this country.[142] The Chair was finally located at Sydney University in 1925.[143] Alfred Radcliffe-Brown was the first to hold it. Radcliffe-Brown, along with the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, who first advocated for the creation of anthropology as an academic discipline in Australia, were both 'functional anthropologists'. Functional anthropology moved away from evolutionary science to functional and social anthropology – concerned primarily with understanding how society and culture operated.[144]

Within anthropological circles, Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski introduced the concepts of fieldwork into the social anthropology context. This group, while differing from the evolutionary anthropologists in their focus on the functioning and complex structures within cultures, made no real critique of evolutionary theory and seemed to "slip into the same conceptual world as their predecessors".[145] The "primitivity of such societies as Australian Aboriginal remained a taken-for-granted-fact", writes McGregor. This had the consequence that the concept of race and racial differentiation also carried on into this new

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[141] Gray, *A Cautious Silence: The Politics of Australian Anthropology*; McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*; Mulvaney, "Gum Leaves on the Golden Bough: Australia's Palaeolithic Survivals Discovered"; Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology".

[142] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding"; Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology".

[143] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

[144] Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown, "On the Concept of Function in Social Science," *American Anthropologist* (1935).

[145] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

period of social anthropology. Anthropologists still described Indigenous people as 'stone age' for example in this era.[146]

Peterson's work is important here, inflecting the institutional history of Aboriginal anthropology with these other strands of influence, and reflects on the impact that anthropology had on the colonial administration and the ways in which the discipline was influenced and shaped by both funding bodies and government chief protectors. His academic study finds the research on Aboriginal cultures and societies to be initially fuelled by 'doomed race' theory and the supposition that "authentic pre-colonial practices were about to disappear". Peterson uses Baldwin Spencer's introduction in the preface to *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* to elaborate on this point. Here Peterson charts how the 'doomed race' theory echoed loudly through the first three decades of this century and that while "a fascination" with Aboriginal societies and cultures existed, the only way of gaining government support for the discipline in the end was by stressing anthropological uses to colonial administrations in New Guinea and the Pacific.[147]

Peterson describes this situation as creating a complex marginalisation that then dominated anthropology particularly after World War II: "it was this climate of an academic neglect of Aboriginal anthropological research that led to the move to establish the institute." Peterson further outlines four phases of anthropology as it related to Aboriginal culture:

- a period of systemic research between 1606 and 1870
- systemic research from 1870 to 1925
- from 1925 to 1946, the establishment of professional anthropology
- from 1946 to 1977, the rise of academic anthropology.

The "first 50 years of the 19th century were dominated," says Peterson, "by Christian de-generativist views, that for the most part eclipsed the social

[146] H. K. Fry and R. H. Pulleine, *The mentality of the Australian Aborigine*, 1931 cited in ibid. p. 10.
[147] Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology".

evolutionary framework". Darwin's ideas, however, "fuelled the revival of social evolutionary interests", and these views then posed problems because "they did not entail the idea of progress".[148]

In 1920 Australia received a mandate from the League of Nations for the Australian Commonwealth to take over the government administration of New Guinea. The New Guinea Act of 1921 saw the establishment of civil administration. It also shifted the anthropological focus from Indigenous Australian anthropology to New Guinea and reinforced the need for a practical anthropology to assist in the arena of government administration.[149] Ethnographic salvage for social science theory formulation – or to record 'dead' cultures – no longer provided the sole justification for anthropology. An 'emerging functionalist anthropology', which stressed indirect rule, became more appropriate to the New Guinea context. Mulvaney adds that, "[particularly] in the years after WWI, a central plank in the lobbying for the institutionalization of anthropology, was its relevance to the administration of native races".[150]

We discover here that at the time of the Chair of Australian Anthropology being created, Bronislaw Malinowski urged the government to create a central institute in Sydney and focus on cultural and functional anthropology. But Alfred Haddon followed Spencer's thinking and advocated instead for the chair of anthropology to be located in Melbourne. Those who argued for the Chair to be located at Sydney did so with New Guinea firmly on their minds.[151]

> "Thus it is clear that as early as 1919 the academic power brokers, in this case particularly Haddon, who also played a key role in establishing a chair of anthropology in Capetown in 1920 (Firth 1956) had already settled on Sydney as the centre for the

[148] ibid.
[149] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.
[150] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology: Foundations and Funding". p. 119.
[151] Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology". p. 106.

establishment of anthropology specifically because of its significance for work in New Guinea and the Pacific." [152]

2.9 The role of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Galton Society

As we have discussed briefly, in 1925 the University of Sydney established the first Chair of Anthropology. What has not been discussed is that the Rockefeller Foundation had a direct role in funding that Chair from its inception.[153] Peterson's work is key here, and draws authority from the fact that he spent time in the Rockefeller archives and describes the large sum of money that went on to fund anthropology projects, including 30 researchers. This funding, as he discovered, came from a request to the Foundation from the Galton Society to undertake a major study of primitive societies.[154] Mulvaney wrote how:

> "[t]his would have concentrated on the human biology of small-scale societies living under situations where genetic natural selection was operating unhindered by medical intervention. Although this Galton Society proposal was not implemented, the Rockefeller Foundation provided an untied sum, with human biology expected to figure prominently in research projects. Between 1926 and 1938, £52,500 was granted, an enormous sum in the Depression era".[155]

According to Mulvaney, the selection of Radcliffe-Brown to the position of inaugural Chair was partly due to his sympathies with the study of racial eugenics. The money supplied by the Rockefeller Foundation ($100,000 over a five-year period) paid for all the anthropological research, with the exception of the Donald Thomson fieldwork in 1935–36, paid for by the Commonwealth.[156]

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[152] ibid.
[153] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology: Foundations and Funding". p. 119.
[154] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding"; Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology".
[155] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology: Foundations and Funding". p. 120.
[156] ibid. p. 120.

> "Thus what had started as a proposal for an extended bio-anthropological expedition from the Galton Society ended up as an untied grant to anthropological studies but one in which Aboriginal human biology was clearly assumed to be central."[157]

Mulvaney makes the point that a high proportion of the funding was expended in New Guinea. [158] Despite this, it is clear according to Mulvaney that the establishment and dominance of functionalist/structure-function anthropology during the interwar periods was only assured because of the Rockefeller Foundation's intellectual and financial concerns. This is supported by Donald Fisher's research, which argues the gatekeeper functions assumed by the Rockefeller Foundation blurred the distinction between "academic and intellectual independence on the one hand and the control of avenues of revenue on the other".[159]

2.10 Censorship and the case of Ralph Piddington

The case of Ralph Piddington documented in Mulvaney and Geoffrey Gray is of particular interest as it illuminates the machinations of the institution (university) and administration (Commonwealth government) in determining which direction research funding in Indigenous anthropological studies could take.[160] Piddington is important to my 're-tracing' also because he was researching in remote areas in WA around the time the first Tanami Track was being created across the border. Piddington was a celebrated anthropologist and psychology academic who completed his MA in psychology and his MA in anthropology at Sydney University, and later a PhD at the London School of Economics. Piddington was also an anthropology student under the first Chair of

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[157] Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology". p. 9.

[158] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology: Foundations and Funding".

[159] Donald Fisher, "Rockefeller Philanthropy and the Rise of Social Anthropology," *Anthropology Today* 2, no. 1 (1986).

[160] Geoffrey Gray, "Piddington's Indiscretion: Ralph Piddington, the Australian National Research Council and Academic Freedom," *Oceania* 64, no. 3 (1994); Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding".

Anthropology, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown. In fact, it was Radcliffe-Brown who suggested the young Piddington take up a government Australian National Research Council (ANRC) research position with Aboriginal communities in the north-western part of WA. In May 1930 he began his research in the field.[161]

Upon returning to Sydney in January 1932, Piddington gave an interview with the Sydney newspaper, *The World*.[162] The interview was published with the headline, "Aborigines on cattle stations are in slavery" and reported in other papers in Australia including *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Piddington is quoted extensively from the article.[163]

> **Anthropologist Piddington Backs World's probe**
>
> "An exhaustive inquiry into the conditions of aborigines who have been forced into contact with white men in the northern parts of Australia is urgently needed, Ralph Piddington BA, distinguished Sydney University anthropologist and son of Mr Justice Piddington told *The World* today.
>
> The system of employing aborigines on cattle stations in the North and North-west Australia virtually amounts to slavery, he says. Mr Piddington has recently returned from Lagrange (sic) Bay, in the Broome region of Western Australia where he has been assisted by his wife in two year's research work for the Australian National Research Council.
>
> His observations reveal slavery of natives, trafficking in lubras, and the murdering and flogging of aborigines by white men – similarly

[161] Gray, "Piddington's Indiscretion: Ralph Piddington, the Australian National Research Council and Academic Freedom".

[162] Gray, ibid. writes: "From interview given by Ralph Piddington to *The World*, 14 January 1932". National Library of Australia (NLA), MS 482, 859B. This relates to events at La Grange which are outlined by Neville. State Archives of WA (hereafter SAWA), ACC993, 27/36. This is a restricted file. Copies of this file were provided on the condition that I 'respect the confidentiality of any personal information about Aboriginal people'. Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Affairs Department, to author, 21 December 1995. I would like to thank Cedric Wyatt, CEO, for permission to quote from this file.

[163] Interview with Ralph Piddington, *The World*, 14 January 1932 ibid. p. 222.

> disclosed by Francis Birtles in his statements to *The World* regarding conditions in the Northern Territory."

The article expanded on these themes by quoting Piddington on the lack of Commonwealth and departmental knowledge about ongoing abuses toward Aboriginal people by "white men". It also included extensive anecdotal evidence of police ignorance and bias against Aboriginal people. "Mr Birtles is quite correct in his statement that danger and ostracism await any man who ventures to protest against the brutal treatment of aborigines", said Mr Piddington. Continuing in this vein the reporter from *The World*, wrote:

> "The anthropologist is glad to join *The World* in its effort to have the native question in Northern Australia thoroughly probed. In his opinion, the administration of native affairs should be in the hands of the Commonwealth and some system of effective inspection instituted …"[164]

In the same newspaper, on 7 July 1932,[165] Piddington published a signed column-length article, detailing actions by police and pastoralists and labelling the WA government as 'callously indifferent', that the state was a 'plague spot of European oppression', and the affair 'a national disgrace'. With the knowledge of hindsight of Kimberley racial history and of the details which Piddington later supplied to the ANRC in his defence, there is little doubt that he spoke the truth.[166] The "wrath" of the chief protector, A. O. Neville, however, was soon directed at Piddington via the ANRC. Unfortunately for Piddington, Neville was a member of the ANRC Anthropology Committee on the Rockefeller funding awards.[167]

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[164] Gray, "Piddington's Indiscretion: Ralph Piddington, the Australian National Research Council and Academic Freedom".
[165] *The World*, July 7 1932; see Illustration 2.
[166] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding". p. 122.
[167] Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology: Foundations and Funding".

THE WORLD, THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 1932

Aborigines On Cattle Stations Are In Slavery

Anthropologist Piddington Backs World's Probe Demand

ONE of the native employed by Mr. Piddington during his researches.

Mr. Ralph Piddington

"An exhaustive inquiry into the conditions of aborigines who have been forced into contact with white men in the northern parts of Australia is urgently needed," Ralph Piddington, B.A., distinguished Sydney University anthropologist, and son of Mr. Justice Piddington, told THE WORLD to-day.

The system of employing aborigines on cattle stations in the North and North-west Australia virtually amounts to slavery, he says.

Mr. Piddington has recently returned from Lagrange Bay, in the Broome region of West Australia, where he has been assisted by his wife in two years' research work for the Australian National Research Council.

His observations reveal slavery of natives, trafficking in lubras, and the murdering and flogging of aborigines by white men—similarly disclosed by Francis Birtles in his statements to THE WORLD regarding conditions in the Northern Territory.

Dept. Knows Nothing

"The comment of the Home Affairs Department that Birtles's allegations of ill-treatment are not sufficiently definite to warrant official inquiries show that the Department knows nothing of affairs in the northern parts of the Commonwealth," said Mr. Piddington. "In fact, any inquiry would be fruitless unless it was conducted by persons who understand the native mentality and are known and trusted by the natives. It is difficult to obtain definite evidence because so many white men are implicated and the natives are suspicious of anyone whom they do not know; nor have white men in general given them any reason for confidence.

Ideal Investigator

"An ideal man for this job would be Ernest Mitchell, Chief Inspector of Aborigines for West Australia, who was retrenched in 1930. He was paid a compliment by an old aboriginie which I, knowing something of the native mind, would be proud to receive. An old man said: 'He only half white man, half blackfellow.'

"The Mitchell Government is indifferent to the abuses of the natives because natives have no votes. When Ernest Mitchell was retrenched I took it upon myself to interview Sir James Mitchell. I put forward the desirability of the retention of Chief Inspector services on the grounds of his ability to handle native affairs both from the moral and the practical points of view, but my submissions were treated with polite indifference on the part of the Premier. Now that Mr. Mitchell is no longer in that position, the Aborigines Department of West Australia has no means of inspecting the natives except through the agency of isolated protectors, and the department is virtually helpless against unscrupulous white settlers.

Police Bias

"The police officers are biased in favor of station owners and other members of the white community, and they have not the necessary technical training for obtaining accurate information from the blacks.

"I have in mind one case which illustrates the general attitude of the police.

"A constable who had arrested a native on a charge of murder, obtained a confession from his prisoner and subsequently produced it in court.

"Ernest Mitchell, who, fortunately for the blackfellow, was in court, asked the policeman if he had warned his prisoner in the prescribed form.

"'Did you warn the prisoner?' he was asked.

"'Yes,' said the constable.

"'What did you tell him?' asked Mitchell.

"Said the constable: 'I said to him, 'Spose you tell me you killum . . . all right. Spose you no tellum . . . all right. You bin killum.'"

What is the value of a statement obtained under those circumstances? asks the anthropologist, especially as the natives will, for the most part, tell a white man what they think he wishes to know?

As He Would Shoot Dog

Another case related by Mr. Piddington is of a native who was struck by a white sandalwood trader who had stolen his gin. The assault happened in the grounds of a Government feeding station, and the head Protector of Aborigines took no action beyond telling the trader that if he wanted to fight the native he must hit him when outside the Government fence.

"'—— the Government and its fence,' said the white man, and he hit the native another savage blow.

"This man," said Mr. Piddington, "told me quite calmly that he had been after the blackfellow for two weeks with a gun, but had not been able to get a shot at him.

"Is it any wonder that the natives of this protector's area have little respect for the West Australian Government?"

Mr. Piddington saw no evidence of opium trafficking among the blacks, but he supports Mr. Birtles in his assertions that lubras are sold for liquor. This occurs in the more largely settled areas, and the Aborigines in Broome are responsible for a great deal of the bartering.

"Outside the settled areas men largely dispense with the formality of giving a blackfellow gong for the favors of his gin," continued the anthropologist. "The aboriginal idea of sex are so different from those of European civilisation that the lending of wives among themselves is quite a usual social amenity. If a native likes a white man he often will be quite agreeable to lend his gin. In many white settlements, however, employers bring economic pressure to bear in compelling unwilling husbands to surrender their wives."

"Mr. Birtles is quite correct in his statement that danger and ostracism await any white man who ventures to protest against brutal treatment of aborigines," said Mr. Piddington. "I know of one occasion when a sympathetic official would have been murdered had it not been for a warning given him by a blackfellow he had befriended."

The anthropologist is glad to join THE WORLD in its effort to have the native question in North Australia thoroughly probed. In his opinion, the administration of native affairs should be in the hands of the Commonwealth, and some system of effective inspection instituted.

"My wife and I have a deep admiration and affection for the aborigines, among whom we have spent so many happy and interesting months," he said. "They have assisted us greatly in our research work and have done everything in their power for our comfort.

Need Special Study

"Their intelligence when dealing with matters in their own environment is quite equal to that of the white man. They have a complicated social system, and though their weapons and implements are of the simplest they are quite adequate to the needs of a race of hunters.

"The human qualities of generosity and hospitality are nowhere more highly developed than among the aborigines living in their native state, and these very qualities have delivered them into the hands of the unscrupulous white men who, though in the minority, have wrought such evil in Northern Australia. The worst plague-spot of the North is the Kimberley country. I have not been there, but I have definite evidence of murders and other atrocities perpetrated upon aborigines.

"The system of employing aborigines on stations virtually amounts to slavery, continued Mr. Piddington.

"A native is morally bound to his own country. If he is able he always returns there to die, and he is generally uncomfortable if forced to live away—though he may depart for short 'walkabouts' now and again. When a station is established he is entirely at the mercy of the white man, for under the influence of white civilisation he never acquires the knowledge of bushcraft without which he cannot wrest a living from the bush.

"In one sense he is free," continued the anthropologist. "He is at liberty to starve if he prefers to do so. The only alternative is to work for the white man at the white man's rate of pay, which consists usually of his tucker, a minimum of clothing, and an occasional quid of tobacco.

"I know of cases when station-holders have refused natives even two days' holiday to attend ceremonies of a deeply religious character. As one who appreciates the aborigine's veneration of tribal customs and beliefs, I know this is a very serious matter in their eyes, though it is regarded by the average white man as a joke."

Illustration 1 **ABORIGINES ON CATTLE STATIONS ARE IN SLAVERY**

***The World*, 14 January 1932**

Geoffrey Gray provides a detailed report of the treatment of Ralph Piddington after he challenged the conditions, treatment and welfare of Aboriginal people in Northern Australia. It was, according to Gray, not the first time Piddington had raised the condition of Aborigines: he had also reported poor conditions and abuses of Aboriginal people at La Grange Bay, WA. Chief protector A. O. Neville, unsurprisingly perhaps, rejected these allegations brought by Piddington to Neville, and these included the sexual abuse of Aboriginal women, beatings of Aboriginal men and women, and a list of other violations against Aboriginal people.[168] Neville tried to dismiss Piddington by claiming he was a drunk and a communist.[169]

Following this story and according to both Mulvaney and Gray, Neville put pressure on the ANRC board as well the then acting Head of the Anthropology, Raymond Firth (and then later Elkin), to successfully cease future funding altogether to Piddington. Except for service during World War II, Piddington only returned to Australia in 1967, when he revisited his former research area on a grant from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. In retrospect, his treatment appears as possibly the first of several blatant denials of academic (and civil) freedom to anthropologists.[170] Other anthropology fieldworkers in WA were warned about A. O. Neville, and also warned not to publicise any "cruelty to natives" that would reflect badly on the department. Firth would comment in a memo on this matter:

> "[I]ncidentally any cruelty to natives observed during research should not be reported until after the research is concluded as this is apt to lead to complications with white residents and directly interfere with research. In any case such reports are quite likely to be ignored by Mr. Neville who dislikes any reflections on the competence of his department." [171]

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[168] Gray, "Piddington's Indiscretion: Ralph Piddington, the Australian National Research Council and Academic Freedom". p. 219.

[169] ibid.

[170] ibid.; "'The Natives Are Happy': A. P. Elkin, A. O. Neville and Anthropological Research on Northwest Western Australia"; Mulvaney, "Australian Anthropology since Darwin: Models, Foundations and Funding".

[171] Geoffrey Gray, *Scholars at War: Australasian Social Scientists, 1939–1945* (ANU Press, 2012) p. 218.

Following Radcliffe-Brown as inaugural Chair of Anthropology at the University of Sydney, Raymond Firth was appointed acting Head of the Department of Anthropology. Firth was a proponent of Malinowski's and an adherent to functional anthropological theory and its relevance to the Aboriginal people. Although most of the anthropology department's focus was on New Guinea and not Australia, Firth was determined to forge an anthropological theory with practical implications.[172]

[172] ibid.

TREATMENT Of ABORIGINES

World's Plea for Better Conditions Receives Attention Abroad.

By RALPH PIDDINGTON, M.A.

ATTENTION has been drawn in the London Press to the treatment of aborigines in Australia. This is the direct result of the demands for a more humane treatment which have been made by THE WORLD.

The fact that the London Press has taken notice of our odious treatment of the Australian aborigine does not come as a surprise to those familiar with the conditions under which the natives live in the northern parts of the continent. It seems that though we ourselves refuse to face our problems frankly others are observing us with critical eyes, and we cannot be surprised if our attitude is recognised for what it is, namely, a policy of drift combined with absolute indifference to the sufferings of the native.

We have taken from the native all which made life worth living for him, and have given him nothing to put in the place. Even the work of rehabilitation has been vitiated by their refusal to understand the native point of view, and to adjust their demands to it. They have attempted to force the native to accept their religion, which is far too complicated for the native to grasp, since it is so far removed from those things which as a nomad and a hunter he knows and understands. The result of this is that missions, to a large extent, mean to the native nothing more than flour and tobacco.

Degradation of Aborigines

In spite of their inability to understand the mind of the native, the missionaries are, with a few exceptions, the only people who have done anything to further the interests of the aborigines. While squatters and traders have taken the native's land, giving him nothing in return, and by bringing him into contact with the vices of civilisation have brought him to a level of degradation which must excite the indignation and pity of any observer.

One of the greatest cruelties which one can inflict upon a native is to refuse him the right to attend the most sacred ceremonies of his tribe, yet this is often done by unsympathetic settlers. I once heard a squatter refuse a native stockman two days holiday to attend the initiation into manhood of one of his kinsmen, a duty which the native feels as keenly as we would feel our obligation to attend the funeral of a near relative. The fact that this is often done out of sheer lack of consideration does not affect the fact that the native is deprived of the right to carry out his most sacred obligations as a member of the tribe.

Western Australia has always been a plague spot of European oppression of the native. When the Government appointed a Royal Commissioner on the subject in 1904, he reported that "the first thing that met the gaze, on landing at Wyndham, was the black gaol-birds, chained together, pulling loads of metal in drays to make roads through the sand to Hall's Creek." Not even the convict system can present any more hideous pictures than the results of giving money grants to police for the arrest of natives on charges of cattle-killing. Early in this century this was, in North-Western Australia, a regular industry, and one man received as much as £462 in 18 months. In the days when blackfellows were "arrested without instructions, authority or information."

Illustration 2 **TREATMENT OF ABORIGINES**

– World's Plea for Better Conditions Receives Attention Abroad

Ralph Piddington, *The World,* 7 July 1932

2.11 Radcliffe-Brown's legacy, Donald Thomson and anthropology in the 1930s

Despite this criticism of Radcliffe-Brown regarding his connections to the Galton Institute via the Rockefeller Foundation, Radcliffe-Brown would come to be highly regarded in the academy for gathering important ethnographic data and, as a follower of W. H. Rivers, also employing genealogical methods in determining kin relationships.[173] According to another scholar in this field, Jonathon Lane, Radcliffe-Brown recognised the unity of Aborigines' social and environmental relations and described them as "very important". [174] Lane writes that Radcliffe-Brown stumbled with the concepts of Aboriginal spirituality, calling it "[d]ifficult to name".[175] The intrinsic Indigenous cultural–spiritual connection to the land Radcliffe-Brown simply called a "wider structure", and noted that it included myth, ritual and totemism. He did, however, base this ultimate structural framework in Aborigines' territory: "the most important determining factor in relation to this wider structure [was] the strong social bond between the horde or local clan and its territory".[176]

But, according to Lane, Radcliffe-Brown changed this terminology in a later article. Instead of 'territory', he talked of the patrilineal, horde-based organisation around food and the importance of the local clan as the basic unit of social integration.[177]

Later, in a newspaper article in 1930, Radcliffe-Brown stated that the problem of depopulation was primarily territorial: "A big mistake was made," he wrote in the *Melbourne Herald*, "which can be rectified only by recognising that the Aborigines' culture is based on land ownership." [178]

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[173] Jonathon Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation," (University of Sydney, 2008).
[174] ibid. p. 286.
[175] ibid.
[176] ibid. p. 287.
[177] ibid.
[178] Interview with A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Herald*, Melbourne, 11 January 1930; cited in Mary Bennett, *The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being* (London: Alston Rivers, 1930). p. 128.

While we have seen that he published this opinion in January 1930, according to Lane he did not go so far as to argue that recognition of the land-based system could reverse what he regarded as the inevitable doom of First Nation culture.[179] But the anthropologist Donald Thomson did make this point. In 1927, Thomson lived with Aborigines in Cape York. In 1936 he reported to the Commonwealth government, proposing "absolute segregation" on inviolable reserves for the Aborigines in Arnhem Land.[180] According to Lane, over the next two decades Thomson fought the assimilation policy, and argued for it to be replaced with one based on Aboriginal rights to land. In a series of newspaper articles in 1946, Thomson reiterated that Aboriginal land ownership was indeed well defined, and thus recommended that governments recognise "the territorial rights of the aborigines and hereditary ownership of land by clans in Australia".[181]

Despite these important and significant events in the late 1920s and early 1930s functional anthropology and the Australian government were too closely intertwined. In 1927, Radcliffe-Brown recommended the appointment of an anthropologist to the NT Administration: he even suggested short courses in anthropology. One administrator, the well-known assimilationist, and Chief Protector of the NT in the 1930s, Cecil Cook, did take one of these short courses. Cook was the Chief Protector of the NT during the years the Tanami Track was built and, as we shall see, his policies had wide-ranging impacts on the Warlpiri people of the Tanami Desert. We can also see a general plan evolving which developed into an Australian version of "assimilation".

2.12 The road to assimilation and the role of the media

> "The policy of the Commonwealth is to do everything possible to convert the half-caste into a white citizen. The question arises whether the same policy should not be adopted in regard to the

[179] Lane, 2008.

[180] Donald Thomson, Interim General Report of Preliminary Expedition to Arnhem Land 1935–36, Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation".

[181] Justice for Aborigines' reprinted from *The Herald*, Melbourne, December 28, 30, 31 in ibid.

> aborigines. In my opinion, there are three alternatives. First, we may adopt a policy of laissez faire, which, to every Protector of Aborigines, is repugnant; secondly, we may develop an enlightened elaborate system of protection which will produce an Aboriginal population that is likely to swamp the white; or, thirdly, we may follow a policy under which the Aboriginal will be absorbed into the white population. My view is that unless the black population is speedily absorbed into the white, the process will soon be reversed, and in 50 years, or a little later, the white population of the Northern Territory will be absorbed into the black. I suggest that we first decide what our ultimate objective should be, and then discuss means to that end."[182]

Despite some shift in anthropological perspectives during the 1920s, Aboriginal administration remained in the rut of protection and in the grip of the doomed race theory that still prevailed until the 1930s.[183] Chief protectors, especially Bleakley in Queensland (in the late 1920s), still believed and enforced strict control and protection to 'alleviate' the 'dying pillow' scenario.[184] John Chesterman and Heather Douglas chart two distinct forms of integration; firstly, biological absorption of the kind championed by Cecil Cook and A. O. Neville. The first is to breed out 'Aboriginality', and this we have looked at. The second form of absorption–assimilation–social integration was championed by A. P. Elkin. While many amateur anthropologists such as Daisy Bates and Olive Pink still believed in the 'doomed race' idea and advocated for the segregation of full-bloods to prevent this, the chief protectors of the Commonwealth and states such as Cook and Neville and the Chair of Anthropology in the late 30s and 40s, Professor A. P. Elkin, believed assimilation was exactly the process needed to civilise the 'primitive' (more on Elkin later in the chapter).[185]

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[182] Dr Cecil Cook, "Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities", ed. Commonwealth of Australia (Canberra, 1937).

[183] Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia"; McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 112, Chesterman and Douglas, p. 51.

[184] *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 112.

[185] Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia".

Assimilation was the policy that dominated Indigenous affairs from the 1930s to the 1960s. The standard definition *now* of assimilation dates back to the 1963 statement by Aboriginal affairs minister, Paul Hasluck:

> "The policy of assimilation means that all Aborigines and part-Aborigines will attain the same manner of living as other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians."[186]

In contrast to this definition we find that "for some people in the 1930s and later, the term assimilation was used less to justify coercive practices and more to indicate social expectation. For many the expectation was that the Indigenous population would eventually lose its cultural and even biological uniqueness."[187] As we have seen, from the late 19th century up until the 1930s, state and territory governments isolated Indigenous people on reserves. That included 'half-castes'.[188] The question in the 1930s became the legal issue of 'Aboriginality': and this began to be determined by a convoluted system of 'blood quantum'. Chesterman and Douglas remarked that "[people] of mixed race created administrative difficulties, and administrative regimes resorted to fanciful determinations based on skin colour".[189]

Victoria was the first state to bring in 'mixed-race' legislation in the 1880s. Many states viewed mixed race or 'half-caste' as non-Aboriginal for economic reasons. The Commonwealth had a specific policy. The Aboriginals Ordinance Act of 1918, according to Chesterman and Douglas, was more concerned with social associations. From the 1920s until the 1930s there was more emphasis on the half-caste situation in policy and government.[190] The media were instrumental in publicising views on 'mixed-race' populations, as scare-mongered by Cook and

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[186] ibid. p. 48.
[187] Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia". p. 49.
[188] ibid.
[189] ibid. p. 49.
[190] ibid. p. 50.

Neville.[191] The *Northern Standard* newspaper in 1935 quoted the NT minister for the interior, Thomas Paterson, who made the absurd claim that "85% of the births in the NT were half-caste children born to two half-caste parents".[192]

In 1938, the *Northern Standard* again noted that since 1921 the number of half-caste Indigenous in Australia had "more than trebled, and that half-castes had been increasing at a consistently higher average rate than white people".[193] Chesterman and Douglas add that here "[the] growing mixed-race population raised several ideological problems for white Australian society. Many viewed people of mixed race as the embodiment of the worst of both races; to white society they were at the very least illegitimate through birth out of wedlock, yet they did not possess the redeeming feature of authentic Aboriginality."[194]

This perspective, exemplified by newspapers like the *Northern Standard*, reveals a more widespread popularist notion that was fuelled by the media. The views of Cook and Neville here were able to find a favourable environment in which to spread their racist commentary. Cook focused on the potentially explosive growth in the number of mixed-race people and unemployed half-castes who may then rise up, as he warned, in revolt. This would be a problem, he remarked, not unlike the African American situation in the US:

> "If aborigines are protected physically and morally, before long there will be in the Northern Territory, a black race, already numbering about 19,000, and multiplying at a rate far in excess of that of the whites. If we leave them alone, they will die, and we shall have no problem, apart from dealing with those pangs of conscience which must attend the passing of a neglected race. If, on the other hand, we protect them with the elaborate methods of protection which every conscientious protector would adopt, we shall raise another problem which may become a serious one from a national view-point, for we

[191] ibid. p. 51.
[192] "NT Mission Stations. Minister Denies Statement," *The Northern Standard*, 18 October 1935.
[193] *The Northern Standard* , 20 March 1938 quoted in "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia". Chesterman and Douglas say these statistics and the papers coverage created the "ideological problem of the half-caste". p. 52.
[194] ibid.

shall have in the Northern Territory, and possibly in north-western Australia also, a large black population which may drive out the white."[195]

According to Tony Austin, these alarmist views (of Cooks) can be attributed directly to the emergence of the eugenics movement and a good deal of scientific and pseudoscientific thought about the effects of miscegenation and the place of people of mixed 'blood'. Here we can see how a "marriage of the emerging, interlocking sciences of anthropology, psychology and eugenics with the evangelical progressivism of urban social reformers, resulted in extreme controls over the lives of many young people, and not least Northern Territory half-castes."[196]

Kramer finds the role of Cecil Cook here in policing the classification of blood and skin colour of Aboriginal people a form of 'biopolitical surveillance':[197] "[w]hite protectors were granted the legal ability to restrict the movement, sequester the earnings and prescribe punishment for the Indigenous people incarcerated in their jurisdiction."[198]

2.13 Legal and policy restrictions on Aboriginal interrelationships

McGregor argues that by the 1930s the issue of part-Aboriginal or 'mixed-race' (or 'half-caste' children) moved to centre stage in government policy around Aboriginal people. Overriding the segregation issue these children were viewed as the result of interrelationships: a 'miscegenation', as it was called, between Indigenous women and non-Indigenous men.[199] I discuss this in more depth in my chapter on Strehlow and the Granites. Strehlow devoted some commentary

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[195] Cook quoted in Tony Austin, *Cecil Cook, Scientific Thought and 'Half-Castes' in the Northern Territory 1927–1939* in *Aboriginal History* (1990). pp. 104–122.
[196] ibid. pp. 104–122.
[197] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 34.
[198] ibid. p. 34. More on Cecil Cook later in the chapter.
[199] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

to the plight of Indigenous women at the Granites, who were physically taken by prospectors. In his words, these 'wandering' prospectors 'stole' the women, with many contracting venereal disease.[200] Legal restrictions on interrelationships as a form of protecting Aboriginal people began in Victoria in the late 1880s and in the rest of the country over the next 20 odd years. This act marked what Chesterman and Douglas call the official panic about 'half-caste' or mixed-race children.[201] In 1922 the NT administrator, F. C. Urquhart, reported on what he saw as a growing problem. The most significant report on the NT Indigenous, however, was carried out by Queensland's Chief Protector, John William Bleakley, and submitted to the NT government in 1929. In this report, Bleakley proposed strict regulations for "control and protection of female Aboriginals".[202]

The first 'half-caste' or mixed-race institution in the NT was euphemistically referred to as 'the bungalow'. The Bungalow, opened in 1915, was in effect nothing more than a series of galvanised iron sheds, originally built to house 12 children.[203] By the time it was inspected by Baldwin Spencer in 1923, the Bungalow housed 60 children and five years later, 70. Its specific gender-based training was aimed at 'civilising', but Spencer reported that it was overcrowded and lacked facilities. Spencer's photographs of the Bungalow at the time show children lying side-to-side in the building, or as Spencer observed: "huddled together on the ground".[204] The staff consisted of a matron, three Indigenous women paid only in rations and clothes, two goat shepherds, and a non-Indigenous gardener and his Aboriginal wife.

Spencer recommended that the Bungalow be shut down and Indigenous reserves created "for the housing of the half-cases and their training in industrial and

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[200] T. G. H. Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre," (Alice Springs: The Strehlow Centre, 1935–1960).

[201] Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia". p. 50.

[202] John W. Bleakley, "The Aboriginals and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia, Report by JW Bleakley, Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Queensland 1928". (Melbourne, 1929).

[203] More information on the Bungalow in Alice Springs and the Kahlin compound in Darwin can be found in the government publication, Wilkie, "Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families".

[204] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs".

domestic work".[205] Eventually there was no other option but to move the Bungalow to Jay Creek, 29 miles outside of Alice Springs.[206] The cost for running these institutions also led the government to seek missionary control of institutions and organisations.[207] Bleakley's 1929 report, according to McGregor, was more sympathetic to mixed-race children being raised with other Aboriginal young people, and this also reflected Baldwin Spencer's views.[208] Cook, cited in McGregor, was against Bleakley's recommendations:

> "The policy has been to endeavour to save the white element in the half-caste from further dilution and to encourage the half-caste to qualify for and accept the duties of citizenship. So far from regarding the quadroon, as Mr Bleakley does, as a menace even more deplorable, considerable care has been exercised in raising these delicate children with a view to their future availability in the total breeding out of colour."[209]

At this time, administrators had begun to take measures to address the ideological and administrative problems that these beliefs represented. The states and territories were rarely uniform in their approach.[210] The late 1930s saw a new direction in policy nationwide. Administrators and protectors sought to regulate more extensively the lives of people classed as Aboriginal, and sought to integrate mixed-race people they perceived as 'capable' into white society.

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[205] Baldwin Spencer, "Report on the Half Castes and Aboriginals of the Southern Division of the Northern Territory, with Special Reference to the Bungalow at Stuart and the Hermannsburg Mission Station", (ACT: Australian Archives, 1923).

[206] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

[207] ibid.

[208] Bleakley, "The Aboriginals and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia, Report by JW Bleakley, Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Queensland 1928".

[209] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

[210] Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia". "Between 1934 and 1936, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales legislated to either restate or increase the power of administrators to remove Indigenous people to reserves or other institutions. In both Western Australia and Queensland, legislation was passed at this time that enabled authorities for the first time to compel Indigenous people to be subjected to medical procedures".

This new approach was flagged in 1937 at a national conference for state and territory administrators who met to discuss Indigenous policies.[211]

In the NT of the late 1930s the authorities could exercise increasing powers over Indigenous lives. Drinking laws became tighter, and Indigenous people became explicitly barred from receiving some benefits that others took for granted. In addition to the laws becoming more restrictive, their reach was growing too, with ever-greater numbers of Indigenous people coming under the control of state and territory authorities – a process known as "coming under the Act".[212]

2.14 Cecil Cook: Chief Protector of Aborigines, NT

> "Cecil Cook was largely behind this fear amongst the white people of a growing number of mixed race who would overwhelm their numbers."[213]

Dr Cecil Cook was Chief Protector of Aborigines in the NT from 1927 to 1939. As a young man, Cook worked in epidemiology of leprosy as well as researching the prevalence of hookworm in the NT and WA. John McLaren, then Secretary for Home and Territories, the Commonwealth Department responsible for the Territory, singled out Cook's work in the NT.[214]

The nationalist concern for racial wellbeing, translated into Australia's White Australia Policy, was perhaps the most vital driving force in Cook's policymaking.[215] Cook was very vocal, as demonstrated in his belief in the 'breeding out' of race. He believed, for instance, that fairer skin Aboriginal girls

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[211] "Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities", (paper presented at the Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities, Canberra, 1937).

[212] *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts Amendment Act 1934* (Qld), sections 7, 21; *Aborigines Act 1934* (SA), section 17; *Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1936* (WA), section 9; *Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act 1936* (NSW), section 2. See further Chesterman and Galligan, op. cit., pp. 126, 131, 137, *Aborigines Act Amendment Act 1936* (WA), section 12; *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts Amendment Act 1934* (Qld), sections 12 and 13. See also Chesterman p. 126, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia".

[213] ibid.

[214] Austin, *Cecil Cook, Scientific Thought and 'Half-Castes' in the Northern Territory 1927–1939.*

[215] ibid.

should breed with white men to "breed out the colour".[216] He believed the mixed-race population to be a menace. However, he heavily advocated for biological absorption – especially that part-Aboriginal women be trained in half-caste institutions and to breed (because of the lack of 'white' women) with white men after becoming domesticated and civilised.[217] Cook was also very much against Asian–Aboriginal interrelationships. He set about prohibiting relationships between Asian men and Aboriginal mixed-race women, arguing that "[i]f this excess is permitted to mate with alien blood, the future of this country may very well be doomed to disaster".[218]

Cook also had concerns about revolutionary left-wing politics arising from mixed-race populations and that a predominantly "coloured" northern population would lead to this.[219] Cook's proposals attracted condemnation though, particularly from some white women's groups, who argued that absorption into the white community would bring about a downgrading of the white race.[220] W. E. Stanner in 1933 was a young anthropologist who was also against 'absorption', this time on the grounds that it would create an underclass of poor whites. Despite opposition to Cook's ideas on absorption then, by the mid to late 1930s senior administrators across the country were of the view that absorption was the ultimate fate not just for mixed-race people but also for the entire Aboriginal population.[221] Stanner would go on to become one Australia's most influential anthropologists, with progressive and sympathetic views toward Aboriginal Australians.

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[216] This period is one of biological assimilation or what is called, absorption. Tindale in 1941 (Survey of the Half-caste problem of South Australia) researched the theories of Aboriginal and Caucasian kinship. Tindale's theory based on anthropometric data from his colleague, Dr Birdsell, found evidence, he believed to indicate that the Aboriginal race was a forerunner of the Caucasian race. He also argued in his work for the 'uplifting' of 'half-castes' their "disabilities seem to be lack of education and home training and discouragement implicit in belonging to an outcast stock". Tindale is regarded as the first scientific investigation into biological absorption or 'breeding out' of colour. Government officials, meanwhile had been espousing this from some time notably, Cecil Cook. McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 170.

[217] "The Doomed Race: A Scientific Axiom of the Late Nineteenth Century".

[218] *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 170.

[219] Austin, *Cecil Cook, Scientific Thought and 'Half-Castes' in the Northern Territory 1927–1939.* p. 113.

[220] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 174.

[221] Cook's 1931 view of the fact of a growing number of people of mixed descent never really changed and his policy of 'breeding out the colour' by inducing half-caste women to many European men is the best-known element of his welfare policies: it represents an ultimate eugenist solution. Austin, *Cecil Cook, Scientific Thought and 'Half-Castes' in the Northern Territory 1927–1939*. p. 113.

2.15 The 1937 Native Welfare Conference

When the first Commonwealth Native Welfare Conference was held in 1937,[222] it was the first time all protectors of Aboriginal people from all states and territories gathered to discuss the "Aboriginal problem".[223] Chief protectors from WA, Queensland and the NT dominated the discussion and all protectors agreed to Neville's proposal of assimilation:

> "[this] conference believes that the destiny of the natives of Aboriginal origin, but not of the full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end."[224]

Up to and including 1937, the states and territories had devised policies aimed at integrating mixed-race people into white society. This development was highlighted at the 1937 conference.[225] Among the active biological absorptionists at the conference was A. O. Neville, the Commissioner of Native Affairs in WA, and Dr Cecil Cook. As an advocate for the 'breeding out' of Aboriginality, Cook saw no reason to stop with people of mixed race:

> "In my opinion, there are three alternatives. First, we may adopt a policy of laissez faire, which, to every Protector of Aborigines, is repugnant; secondly, we may develop an enlightened elaborate system of protection which will produce an Aboriginal population that is likely to swamp the white; or, thirdly, we may follow a policy under which the Aboriginal will be absorbed into the white population."[226]

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[222] Dr Cecil Cook, "Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities," ed. Commonwealth of Australia (Canberra: Commonwealth Government, 1937).

[223] Wilkie, "Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families".

[224] A. O. Neville, Speech, Commonwealth of Australia "Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities". ibid.

[225] Cook, "Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities".

[226] "Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities". Also quoted in Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia". p. 57.

Cecil Cook was against segregation and against Aboriginal people retaining their culture and customs. His goal was for the Aboriginal population to transform (and disappear) into the white population. He was also against missionaries controlling reserves. He favoured total absorption. The other main advocate of absorption was WA Commissioner of Native Affairs, A. O. Neville. Neville argued on similar grounds, with statements like: "I see no objection to the ultimate absorption into our own race of the whole of the existing Australian native race."[227]

The 1937 conference would deal separately with 'full blood' and 'half-caste' Indigenous. As far as the mixed-race population was concerned, the conference resolved to affirm "the principle that the general policy in respect of full-blood natives should be; (a) To educate to white standard, children of the detribalized living near centres of white population, and subsequently to place them in employment … which will not bring them into economic or social conflict with the white community; and (b) To keep the semi-civilized under a benevolent supervision …" The conference also committed to "preserve as far as possible the uncivilized native in his normal tribal state by the establishment of inviolable reserves".[228] So the conference continued to uphold the maintenance of segregation for the "full-blood" Aboriginal population. This in turn indicates that the racial argument over the 'caste' of any Aboriginal person was still the absolute basis of determining that person's future and that all Aboriginals would be controlled and their procreation monitored.

Cook appeared more than paranoid when he argued: "[unless] the black population is speedily absorbed into the white, the process will soon be reversed, and in 50 years, or a little later, the white population of the Northern Territory will be absorbed into the black".[229] He backed this up with figures: "[there] is now a population of half-castes numbering one-fifth of the total whites, and having a natural increase of 18 per 1,000 compared with the white rate of minus .3 per 1,000, and it is only a matter of a few years before the half-

[227] "Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities". pp. 11–14.
[228] ibid.
[229] ibid.

caste population will approximate that of the white population. In my opinion, the Northern Territory cannot absorb all those people in employment, and, consequently, the question of disposing of the half-caste population arises."[230]

This forecast appears exaggerated to us today, but provided the raison d'être for his proposals. As Tony Austin writes:

> "(Cook's) policy for Half-castes, it is true, was premised on an extreme biological solution. While that was taking place however, the domestic, social and economic environments of Half-castes were to be manipulated in the interests of greater social acceptability and mental and moral improvement. In these respects Cook was remarkably progressive. This was not understood in the southern states and was resented in the North. On the other hand, the control he continued to exercise over the lives of adults – while in keeping with the views of most Australians – and his attempt to engineer a biological solution to the 'Half-caste' problem, makes him an extremist among progressivists. His biological engineering was persisted with at a time when race scientists were beginning to turn against eugenist solutions finding favour in Fascist Europe."[231]

2.16 The role of Christian reformers and amateur anthropologists

In the late 1920s and 30s Aboriginal advancement lobby groups and welfare organisations started to appear on the political landscape. All except one or two were white, and philosophically they were predominantly Christian. The main bodies behind these organisations, aside from Christian philanthropists such as Daisy Bates, were the Christian churches, the Communist party and workers' organisations. All had essentially white memberships other than the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association formed in NSW in the mid 1920s. Of these

[230] Cook, "Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities".
[231] Austin, *Cecil Cook, Scientific Thought and 'Half-Castes' in the Northern Territory 1927–1939* p. 119.

organisations, the majority called for Aboriginal reserves to protect the Indigenous from 'dying out'. This was despite the Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics figures in 1927 showing that rather than 'dying out' from contact, the numbers of Indigenous people in the country were growing.[232]

Of the self-proclaimed anthropologists and Christian philanthropists in the 1920s and 30s who still believed in the 'dying pillow' and 'doomed race theories', Daisy Bates stands out. In this section I will briefly examine the role of Christian reformers and/or amateur anthropologists such as Daisy Bates and Olive Pink. Their role in fuelling public perception and endorsing and reinforcing the dominant stereotypes of Indigenous people in the media cannot be overlooked or downplayed, even as Daisy Bates is regarded as an autodidact and "defender of the Indigenous".[233]

In her book, *The Passing of the Aborigines*,[234] Bates offered little in the way of hope. According to McGregor, "her proposals entailed no lack of autocracy and regulation".[235] Aboriginals were to be gathered into reserves, where their lives would be controlled to a far greater extent than even Baldwin Spencer had suggested. But unlike Spencer, she didn't think this would allow for their ongoing survival. In fact, Bates was obsessed with the "licentiousness" of the moral standing of the Aboriginal women, and the men she believed controlled them and prostituted them out.[236] She also accused Aboriginal people of cannibalism, claims that were dismissed by anthropologists and scientists alike.[237] Despite many of her sensational claims, Bates' views on Aboriginal women and their morality were held in regard by many progressive organisations, and in particular by women's welfare organisations. They viewed the 'half-caste issue' as being of extreme importance. It was also regarded as an issue amongst

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[232] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 124.
[233] Lisa Waller, "Singular Influence: Mapping the Ascent of Daisy M. Bates in Popular Understanding and Indigenous Policy," *Australian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 2 (2010).
[234] Daisy Bates, *The Passing of the Aborigines: A Lifetime Spent among the Natives of Australia* (lulu.com, 2010).
[235] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.
[236] ibid. p. 127.
[237] ibid.; Waller, "Singular Influence: Mapping the Ascent of Daisy M. Bates in Popular Understanding and Indigenous Policy".

government administrators and scientists.[238] These 'progressive' women's organisations called for regulations prohibiting interracial sex primarily on the grounds that they wanted to help Indigenous women. To this extent the regulations they proposed can be argued as aimed at supervising black women's sexual behaviour. Thus miscegenation and interracial sex were also understood as racial death for Aboriginal people.[239]

Lisa Waller's analysis of the role of Daisy Bates as a journalist within popular culture of the time is relevant here. She sees Daisy Bates as being a journalist with symbolic capital who had a wide-ranging influence via her work.[240] Waller questions the legitimisation of Bates' work as purely 'ethnographic' and instead raises the argument that her work should be defined more correctly within the realms of journalism. "Unlike most mainstream journalists working on Indigenous rounds today, Daisy Bates lived among Indigenous people, spoke their languages, and was formally recognised as a community member. Her fascinating and often controversial life has been a rich source of inspiration for creative artists and scholars from a range of disciplines", Waller wrote, "but Journalism Studies is not one of them".[241]

In her analysis, Waller finds that Bates exerted a "singular influence", and was regarded as a "voice of reason" through her popular journalism. This in turn, saw her playing a 'strategic role' in supporting and upholding the predominant views of segregation and of a "dying race". Waller argues that:

> "Bates' status as a media authority on Indigenous people and issues was built upon her reputation and prestige in the fields of government and anthropology and her unique place in Australian journalism as a reporter embedded in an Indigenous community. Bates had considerable agency in building that capital, but, ultimately, it was the state and the media's power to decide what was of most

[238] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. pp. 131–132.
[239] ibid.
[240] Waller, "Singular Influence: Mapping the Ascent of Daisy M. Bates in Popular Understanding and Indigenous Policy". pp. 1–14.
[241] ibid.

value in any field that ensured that Bates' voice dominated other anthropologists and people with expertise in Indigenous welfare."[242]

2.17 Olive Pink, Donald Thomson: white mavericks who spoke up

Olive Pink came to anthropology after a trip to central Australia in 1930. She then began studying anthropology full time at Sydney University.[243] Pink, from this time on, was an advocate for Aboriginal people and she fought for the improvement of their conditions and treatment throughout her life. She was critical of anthropologists, missionaries and government officials who in turn, she believed, created difficulties for her.[244]

Cowlinshaw takes the view that Pink was, like Ralph Piddington before her, marginalised because of her sympathetic views toward the Aboriginal people she worked with.[245] According to Cowlinshaw, Olive Pink and Donald Thomson were marginalised by the Sydney School of Anthropology, because they wouldn't accept its authority. Both were intensely involved with advocacy on behalf of Aborigines in the Territory, but from very different perspectives from those of Raymond Firth, acting Chair of Anthropology at Sydney University, and his predecessor, A. P. Elkin.[246] Olive Pink's position was different from that of Thomson too, although like him she wanted reserves to be created for Aboriginal people that weren't controlled by missionaries. After considerable time living in Central Australia, Pink, like Daisy Bates, acquired the image of a crazy old woman.[247] According to Marcus, Pink's "supposed eccentricity took the form of a consistent political and moral critique of anthropological knowledge and its

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[242] ibid.
[243] Geoffrey Gray, "(This Often) Sympathetic Collaboration: Anthropologists, Academic Freedom and Government," *Humanities Research* 2 (1998). p. 41.
[244] ibid. p. 41.
[245] Gillian Cowlishaw, "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists," *Canberra Anthropology* 13, no. 2 (1990), pp. 1–28.
[246] ibid. p. 12.
[247] ibid. 1990 op. cit.

creators".[248] She was critical of "the tendency of academics to convert political and moral issues to abstract arguments in such a way as to depoliticize important issues".[249]

Important also is the fact that Pink saw Aboriginal depopulation and venereal disease as a direct result of their loss of land.[250] She was against Firth's position that "the idea of assigning land to Aboriginals was a political impossibility, one not worth discussing".[251] She also considered that the employment of Aborigines as black-trackers by the police was "morally wrong and corrupting".[252] Pink even went so far as to make accusations of a conspiracy of silence on matters of culture contact.[253] Marcus, who is attributed as rescuing Olive Pink from obscurity, found Pink to be a "passionate critic" of anthropologists' dishonesty about Aborigines.[254] Marcus and Cowlinshaw both regard her conflict with Firth and Elkin to be centred on the conditions of Aborigines. They offer: "[while] Pink may have found some of today's challengers of the dominant paradigms uncongenial, it seems that she foreshadowed the view that academics are all operating in a world of power where limited and particular forms of knowledge compete for legitimacy."[255]

Pink's interests in the real state of Aboriginal Australians, in their economic and sexual exploitation, in their poverty, health and deaths, also ran counter to the notions of 'pure science' being purveyed in her university seminars.[256] However, McGregor, in an exploration of Pink's writings, goes on to say that despite Marcus's view, Pink articulated "an original and incisive critique of Aboriginal-European relations", [257] her writings still reveal her to be "an old fashioned humanitarian" who insisted on the "maintenance of hard racial boundaries".

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[248] Julie Marcus, "Olive Pink and the Encounter with the Academy," *Mankind* 17, no. 3 (1987).
[249] ibid.
[250] Cowlishaw, "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists".
[251] Marcus, "Olive Pink and the Encounter with the Academy".
[252] ibid.
[253] Pink during her lecture on these matters at Sydney University in 1936 quoted in Cowlishaw, "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists".
[254] Marcus, "Olive Pink and the Encounter with the Academy".
[255] Cowlishaw, "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists"; Marcus, "Olive Pink and the Encounter with the Academy".
[256] "Olive Pink and the Encounter with the Academy". p. 38.
[257] Russell McGregor, "The Clear Categories of Olive Pink," *Oceania* (1994). p. 4.

Pink, McGregor argued, was concerned with the two main sentiments of the day regarding Aboriginal welfare: firstly, that Indigenous people were doomed unless preserved; and secondly, she had fears around an ever-growing "half-caste problem". [258] Because of this, McGregor, finds these positions put her into direct conflict with Elkin, and McGregor documents this philosophical disagreement with Elkin as being uneasy and often very tense.[259]

But despite her dislike of Elkin, due in part to his religious background (his former role as an Anglican clergyman) and also his conservative position in support of assimilation, she maintained a correspondence with him. "While Elkin was working toward his assimilationist policy, Pink became convinced that segregation was the only solution."[260] She had high moral standards that vacillated around sex: McGregor defines this morality as black and white. For Pink, sex between the two races was wrong: "Olive Pink was one of a long line of humanitarian lobbyists who regarded sex as the most potent force leading to the degeneration and decline of the Aboriginal race."[261] She declared that venereal diseases and miscegenation would be their downfall, and Aboriginal people could and must be saved but only through segregation.[262] One way in which she saw this happening was the creation of a secular sanctuary for each NT tribe. Missions, she declared, were not run appropriately. They should instead be secular and run by a woman. As far as the Warlpiri, she believed *she* should administer a secular sanctuary for them, and it would be for "full bloods only".[263] T. G. H. Strehlow vehemently objected to this idea.[264] According to McGregor's research into Pink's letters to A. P. Elkin, Pink had believed the 'half-caste' problem could only be solved by sending 'half-caste' children to an institution.

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[258] ibid. p. 5.
[259] ibid.
[260] ibid.
[261] ibid.
[262] ibid. McGregor cites Olive Pink, letter to Elkin, 25 July 1938 in A. P. Elkin Personal Archive, box 38 item 1/10/6, University of Sydney Archives.
[263] ibid.
[264] Strehlow, T. G. H. "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre". Alice Springs: The Strehlow Centre, 1935–1960.

There was no place for them in her secular sanctuary: interbreeding should be stopped.[265]

McGregor notes an 18-page letter Pink wrote in 1935 expressing her disappointment and displeasure with Elkin, as well as with other anthropologists and government appointed officers: Stanner, Kaberry, Strehlow, the entire anthropological establishment, missions and Christian welfare bodies.[266] Geoffrey Gray (1998) takes a different position and sides with Marcus (1987) and Cheater (1989) that Pink was sidelined by academia because she was sympathetic to the plight of the Indigenous.[267]

> "She argued that the 'men who knew most' about conditions in central Australia, the anthropologists, missionaries, and administrators, worked together to 'camouflage the true, deplorable, state of affairs there' and 'kept … silent about the true situation of the Aborigines'. As a result she made herself unpopular with Elkin and the ANRC. She returned to the field but her work was marginalized and her funding ceased after 1936."[268]

Gray believes that Pink was the ultimate advocate for Aboriginal people but was vilified for this.[269] Gray, along with Marcus and finds that Pink was marginalised not because she didn't believe in absorption polices or assimilation, or was against the 'half-caste', or generally annoying as McGregor cites in letters from Elkin and others, but her marginalisation "was due primarily to the contrary position she took with regard to knowledges produced by male anthropologists".[270] According to Gray (1998), Cheater (1989) and Marcus (1987) Pink stopped working in anthropology in the late 1930s. Around this

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[265] McGregor, "The Clear Categories of Olive Pink".
[266] Pink wrote numerous letters of this kind to Elkin especially in 1935, 1936 and 1937. ibid.
[267] Christine Cheater, "The Native Problem," *Olive Pink Society Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (1989); Gray, "(This Often) Sympathetic Collaboration: Anthropologists, Academic Freedom and Government". pp. 41–42.
[268] Cheater, "The Native Problem". p. 41.
[269] Gray, "(This Often) Sympathetic Collaboration: Anthropologists, Academic Freedom and Government".
[270] Cheater, "The Native Problem"; Gray, *A Cautious Silence: The Politics of Australian Anthropology*; Marcus, "Olive Pink and the Encounter with the Academy"; McGregor, "The Clear Categories of Olive Pink".

time and not long after, her work was deposited for safe keeping at Sydney University. Pink, in an unpublished letter to her family, says:

> "Anthropology in the hands of administrators, patrol officers, cadets and missionaries, is being used to dominate and enslave [Aborigines] further … to turn them from proudly independent landowners into regimented serfs … or encouraged derelicts and diseased 'hanger's on' … on Mission reserves, or on camps (useful as brothels) near white mining camps and settlements and at station homesteads."[271]

According to ANU anthropologist and academic Melinda Hinkson, Pink saw and related to the Warlpiri in a way other non-Indigenous settlers wouldn't or couldn't.[272] Pink stood up for the Warlpiri and the Indigenous people of the Tanami and was appalled at their suffering and exploitation at the hands of men like Walter Braitling (see Chapter 4). Pink campaigned vigorously for an Aboriginal reserve to be at the sacred water and dreaming site Pikilji, and for the Warlpiri to have rights over this area for mining and other activities. Braitling campaigned for a 'moveable reserve' and in 1946 wrote to the NT Administration objecting to the settlement near his stock route as it would impact on *his* water supplies for *his* cattle: never mind the water was from a sacred source. Pink argued loudly and consistently for a secular reserve at Pikilji away from missionaries and pastoralists.

Pinks' establishment of native plant gardens in the area, Hinkson finds, led her to her idea of different forms of beauty co-existing:

> "Notwithstanding her obstinacy and accounts of rudeness to persons black and white, from Pink's time among the Warlpiri emerges the idea that different forms of beauty might co-exist rather than settle in an antagonistic or hierarchical relationship."[273]

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[271] Undated letter to her nieces, entitled, 'My reasons for not publishing my research', quoted in Cheater, "The Native Problem". p. 8.
[272] M. Hinkson, *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2014). p. 63.
[273] ibid.

Hinkson writes that to this day Pink is remembered by Warlpiri "[as] the first campaigner for land rights and as a person who 'truly loved' Warlpiri people".[274]

2.18 Aboriginal resistance in the 1930s

Despite the heavy-handed government policy, frequently extreme views of church and state, misguided do-gooders, Christian philanthropists and amateur anthropologists, there was strong and Aboriginal resistance to many of these policies and proposals. In 1937 William Cooper, the Aboriginal secretary of the Victorian-based Australian Aborigines League, was one of many Aboriginal people that repudiated the terms "full blood" and "half-caste".[275] Cooper in a letter to the Commonwealth Minister for the Interior wrote that Aboriginal people could only be divided linguistically or culturally, and he condemned segregation. Other organisations in NSW demanded citizen rights. Aboriginal activists believed discrimination existed in these biological binaries, 'full-blood' and 'half-caste'. In his letter, Cooper wrote, "[we do not] feel any different toward any member of our race who is full blood as against one with white blood".[276] According to McGregor, "Cooper had no sympathy with proposals for preserving pristine primitives on closed reserves".[277] Cooper is quoted in McGregor as saying "we don't want to be zoological specimens in Arnhem Land".[278]

Aboriginal activists in the 1930s such as John Patten and William Ferguson (for the Aborigines Progressive Society) advocated the Aboriginal nation should assist their brothers and sisters in the desert "uplift". They also called for land settlement and self-reliance.[279] There is a vast amount of information here on Aboriginal activism that challenged the predominant colonial discourse (see Chapter 6) throughout Australia in the 20th century: this field is broad and

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[274] ibid.
[275] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. pp. 249–259.
[276] Cooper to Minister of the Interior, 26 July 1938, AA, CRS A659, 40/1/858 quoted in ibid. p. 250.
[277] ibid.
[278] ibid.
[279] ibid. p. 251.

dynamic, even as my focus is on the colonial constructs that created what Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Irene Watson call "race-war", which, as we have seen, justified Aboriginal people being often violently moved from their homelands to 'protectorates' or missions.[280]

2.19 A. P. Elkin: assimilationist

> "He was the dominant figure in prewar and postwar Australian anthropology, exercising his authority over funding, choice of field site, patronage, academic positions, even controlling the material published in the journal *Oceania*, which he edited from 1933 to his death in 1979."[281]

A. P. Elkin had a profound impact not just on anthropology at the University of Sydney but also on policy for Aboriginal people throughout the 1940s and 50s. He has been described as an 'assimilationist', eclectic and 'progressivist'.[282] Over time, Elkin moved away from his biological and racial determinism (the 'doomed race') theory to embrace an assimilationist perspective.[283] Through his position at the University of Sydney, as Chair of Anthropology in the late 1930s and 40s, he wielded a great deal of influence on policy decisions, and as he became known as an outspoken assimilationist. Rising from the position of clergyman in the Maitland area of NSW, Elkin went on to complete a Masters degree and later a

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[280] A. Moreton-Robinson, "Writing Off Indigeous Sovereignty: The Discourse of Security and Patriarchal White Sovereignty," in *Sovereign Subjects: Indigenous Sovereignty Matters*, ed. A. Moreton-Robinson (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2007); A. Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' up to the White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2000); "Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of Patriarchal White Sovereignty," *Cultural Studies Review: Critical Indigenous Theory* 15, no. 2, September (2009); A. Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," *Griffith Law Review* 20, no. 3 (2011); A. Moreton-Robinson & F. Nicoll, "We Shall Fight Them on the Beaches: Protesting Cultures of White Possession," *Journal of Australian Studies* 98 (2006).

[281] Gray, *Scholars at War: Australasian Social Scientists, 1939–1945*. p. 15.

[282] Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation"; McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*; Ian J. and Lynette Russell McNiven, *Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology* (Rowman Altamira, 2005).

[283] Adolphus Peter Elkin, "Reaction and Interaction: A Food Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia," *American Anthropologist* 53, no. 2 (1951); Aldolphus Peter Elkin, *A National Aboriginal Policy* (Sydney: Australasian Publishing Co., 1944); Elkin A. P., "Cultural and Racial Clash in Australia," *Morpeth Review* 2 (1932).

[283] McNiven, *Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology.*

PhD in Anthropology. In London, Elkin's views on the question of Indigenous Australians were widely circulated; although today, his views and statements on assimilation and other policies involving Indigenous Australians are heavily criticised.[284]

Early in his career then, Elkin, the former clergyman, was philosophically aligned to "diffusionist" thinking and is documented as having "hyper-diffusionist" sympathies.[285] McNiven and Russe trace Elkin's hyper-diffusionist thinking to his student days at University College London where he undertook his PhD and worked under the diffusionist, Elliot Smith:

> "Using written sources Elkin had produced a 'vast historical survey of burial rites, initiation rites, the making of medicine men and mythology … studded with maps on the distribution of circumcision rites, the use of shell, and ending with … Elliott Smith's hobbyhorse: the diffusion of mummification rites of the Egyptian XXI Dynasty."[286]

While Elkin claims he was "not subjected to any indoctrination of theories of diffusion or of Egypt as the source of civilization,"[287] he supported the theoretical and philosophical tenets of Eliot's diffusion paradigm throughout his life.[288] In a thesis on Elkin, Lane is more sympathetic to Elkin's role as a diffusionist, and as "champion of acculturation" and "the harbinger of less brutal methods and theories regarding the role of missionaries in communities".[289] Lane attributes this to Elkin's time at missions, including in WA, when he was undertaking fieldwork.

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[284] ibid.

[285] Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation"; McNiven, *Appropriated Pasts: Indigenous Peoples and the Colonial Culture of Archaeology.*

[286] Gray, *G*. "'The Natives are Happy': A. P. Elkin, A .O. Neville and Anthropological Research in Northwest Western Australia". p. 107.

[287] Lane, op. cit.

[288] Elkin, "Reaction and Interaction: A Food Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia"; Gray, *A Cautious Silence: The Politics of Australian Anthropology*; Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation".

[289] Lane, J. "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation". Unpublished thesis. Sydney University Department of History, 2007.

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, the then Foundation Professor of Anthropology in Sydney, helped Elkin to secure a Rockefeller grant to undertake this fieldwork in the Kimberley, WA.[290] Elkin believed that Aboriginals should be allowed to retain language and cultural practices (particularly religious ones) within the mission. Despite this, he still argued that missions were better suited than secular alternatives.

> "Missions with their many sided-activities – spiritual, moral, educational and technical – should be able to pre-eminently help a race to rise in the cultural scale, and also should be the best vanguard of the white races in their contact with coloured peoples … [They should be the least inclined] to undervalue the religious sanction and sacramental outlook of the primitive races, [which remain] essential for the preservation of all that is of value in native life and custom."[291]

Elkin also came to reject the concept that Aboriginal people would die out because they were genetically incapable of progress.[292] He believed this would happen only if they were not given the opportunity to progress into society. The 'full-bloods' would and could thrive as "intelligent parasites", and would survive in other cultural circumstances. In 1951, he warned that the "full-bloods" would "completely disappear" unless his anthropological advice was heeded by government policymakers.[293]

Elkin saw the role of missionaries as the overseers of a transformation in Aboriginal society and culture. Even while agreeing with early protectionist policies himself, Elkin came to believe that an alternative to protectionist policies should be developed. In his paper published in *American Anthropologist* in 1951, Elkin spelt out clearly his position in opposition to the 'dying pillow' theme.[294] Elkin charted what he saw as the path to assimilation paper from the very first contact. He believed that a result of inevitable clash in early colonial

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[290] ibid.

[291] Elkin, "Reaction and Interaction: A Food Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia".

[292] Russell McGregor, "Intelligent Parasitism: A. P. Elkin and the Rhetoric of Assimilation," *Journal of Australian Studies* 20, no. 50–51 (1996).

[293] Markovich, "Prohibited Acts, and Intentions Not Motives. 'Genocide, a Crime of Which No Anglo-Saxon Nation Could Be Guilty'".

[294] Elkin, "Reaction and Interaction: A Food Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia". p. 172.

confrontation would lead to pauperism amongst the Indigenous and then these stages would follow: 'intelligent parasitism', where the Indigenous would make some external adaptation to white settlers amid protectionist policies, to 'intelligent appreciation', where both the 'native' and 'the settler', public and government have a "growing understanding and appreciation of Aborigines by public and government". Elkin saw this last stage as the role of anthropology. During this period, he argued, positive polices should bring about the next stage where more positive policies could be introduced (all leading to eventual assimilation): "positive polices slowly, hesitantly, but surely imposed".[295]

While he was highly regarded as a scholar, Elkin's language was "frequently archaic", finds McGregor, bordering on the opaque and insensitive. 'Intelligent parasitism' was one of a very few instances of imaginative word usage, and its latter half evinces an apparent insensitivity to both Aboriginal sensibilities and colloquial English usage in Australia.[296]

To Elkin, in his celebrated paper in *American Anthropologist*, 'the doomed race' theory was challenged, and would not lead to what he proposed was an appropriate endpoint.

> "The (disappearance of the Aborigines) … became the accepted and publicized dogma. Intelligent adaptation was not suspected, for the failure of the attempts made to civilise, educate and Christianize the Aborigines (which was the early official policy, particularly from 1820 to 1840) was accepted as a sign that they were poorly endowed with intelligence. The dogma appeared, and was rationalized and justified, that a primitive, food-gathering people was doomed to extinction when overtaken by civilization. Nothing could be done except to avoid unnecessary harshness and to 'smooth the dying pillow', a concept over one hundred years old. This was the inspiration and theme of the protection policies adopted by the government within Australia at

[295] Elkin believed that citizenship, social services, franchise, education and employment conditions were the precursor to eventual and total assimilation in Elkin, "Reaction and Interaction: A Food Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia". pp. 172–183.

[296] McGregor, "Intelligent Parasitism: A. P. Elkin and the Rhetoric of Assimilation". p. 118.

> various dates during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The Aborigines would not, or more likely, could not, be civilized. Diseases and clashes in the marginal region meant their reduction to pathetic remnants."[297]

According to Lane, the 'doomed race' theory was still "driving through the scientific community like a wedge" in the 1930s.[298] This was prevalent amongst physical anthropologists and positivist psychologists. Elkin argued for acculturative assimilation on the basis that even though Aboriginal people had lost their land, they could change from within "rapidly and radically".[299] For Elkin the psychological factor and not physical contest over land showed the way forward. Paradoxically, he stated, "the most salient point of Aboriginal psychology was its religious nature".[300] As the Chair of Anthropology at Sydney University in the 1930s, Elkin extrapolated his views within the scientific and academic communities (Lane, 2008). He wrote widely in scientific journals and proposed a new positive era in applied Australian social anthropology.[301] Yet, despite his more progressive ideas advancing from the 'doomed race' or 'dying pillow' theories, Elkin still very much believed in the role of Christianity and in liberal democracy in advancing Aboriginal people to gain a better way of life.[302] He then championed what others would view as alarming and destructive legislation to control and 'assimilate' the Indigenous population.

2.20 Elkin's battles on the academic frontline

"[While] battling against racial science in the person of Stanley Porteus, Elkin was also conducting a war between rival schools of social anthropology, "[p]itting his diffusionist approach against Radcliffe-Brown's structuralism".[303]

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[297] Elkin, "Reaction and Interaction: A Food Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia". pp. 164–186.
[298] Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation". p. 278.
[299] ibid. p. 278.
[300] ibid. p. 278.
[301] Elkin, *A National Aboriginal Policy*. pp. 39–40.
[302] Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation". p. 284.
[303] McGregor, "Intelligent Parasitism: A. P. Elkin and the Rhetoric of Assimilation".

Radcliffe-Brown insisted on the territorial nature of Aboriginal society: "[a] big mistake was made", Radcliffe-Brown wrote in the Melbourne *Herald*, "which can be rectified only by recognising that the Aborigines' culture is based on land ownership".[304] A student of Radcliffe-Brown's, anthropologist Donald Thomson, spent two decades studying Indigenous culture and connections to the land. He undertook fieldwork in Cape York and Arnhem land.[305] Cowlinshaw finds Thomson's academic and ethnographic work contrasting sharply with the ethnographic work of his contemporaries. Thomson explored Indigenous meaning and feeling within everyday social organisation.[306] According to Cowlinshaw, "[his] analysis of the Hero Cult, which considers sociological, psychological, symbolic and historical forces, surely placed him in the forefront of the concerns of anthropology in the 1930s".[307]

Cowlinshaw and Peterson have documented open hostility between Elkin and Thomson. They claim Elkin was overtly hostile to Thomson, slandering his personal and professional life. Elkin's biographer, Tigger Wise, records a series of comments Elkin made about Thomson. Wise claims Elkin attempted to stop Thomson getting jobs and being consulted on matters close to Elkin's heart.[308] Elkin recommended the work of Catherine and Ronald Berndt over Thomson.[309] Cowlinshaw finds that Thomson was detailed and precise in his work and this did not limit his theoretical insights. His fieldwork in Cape York and Arnhem Land showed his ability to listen, communicate and respect those he worked with. Further, Cowlishaw and Peterson find that he attempted to understand the society of the Indigenous he worked with, "not as an exercise in academic explanation but in terms of their own understanding of the human condition and their own reaction to their historical predicament".[310] Cowlinshaw also adds that

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[304] Interview with A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Herald*, Melbourne, 11 January 1930; cited in Bennett, *The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being*.

[305] Cowlishaw, "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists"; Peterson, "Studying Man and Man's Nature: The History of the Institutionalisation of Aboriginal Anthropology".

[306] Cowlishaw, "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists".

[307] ibid. p. 13.

[308] Tigger Wise, *The Self-Made Anthroplogist: A Life of A. P. Elkin* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985). p. 132.

[309] ibid. p. 203.

[310] Peterson quoted in Cowlishaw, "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists". p. 13.

Thomson's representation of the Indigenous people revealed them as having an active voice "in terms of their relationship with Europeans which is in striking contrast with Elkin and with most other anthropologists".[311]

2.21 Elkin and assimilation policy

In the 1930s and 1940s Elkin advocated for the conversion of 'half-castes', Indigenous people of mixed-race birth, away from their Aboriginality. He believed that the character of half-castes was determined by their social environment, not biological inheritance:[312] "One of the major shifts in Elkin's thinking over the course of the 1930s was away from the racial conception of Aboriginal primitivism toward an economic interpretation."[313] This is interesting. Elkin also advocated for economic changes to the conditions of Aboriginal peoples' lives, through the introduction of food production, horticulture and agricultural production. However, as a former religious leader, we have seen that he believed intrinsically that missionaries had the central moral, social and 'civilising' role to play.[314] On a more positive note, Elkin lobbied for the establishment of a Commonwealth Department of Native Affairs. This was established by McEwan in 1939 with an emphasis on Indigenous education. While espousing Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski's methodologies for the study of human society, he still drew heavily on the notion of social progress and elevation of the primitive to civilisation. As McGregor writes, "the most salient features of Elkin's proposals were not innovativeness or novelty but the commonplace idea of progress that echo back through 19th century evolutionism to 18th century enlightenment".[315] As early as 1932, Elkin had said that "the position demands that if [the Aborigine] is to survive, he must pass with great rapidity from the food-gathering stage of complete dependence on nature, and from the socio-mystical organisation of tribal life, to a stage in which nature

[311] ibid.
[312] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 206.
[313] "Intelligent Parasitism: A. P. Elkin and the Rhetoric of Assimilation".
[314] "A. P. Elkin and the Rhetoric of Assimilation," *Journal of Australian Studies* 20, no. 50–51 (1996).
[315] *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 223.

is exploited, and in which mechanisation and economics control the outlook on nature and society".[316]

Markovich as well as McGregor and Lane trace Elkin's introduction of assimilation policies.[317] Elkin's argued that 'full-blood' Aboriginal people of the NT should have "absolute segregation" on "inviolable reserves".[318] This was also when the wrongly maligned anthropologist Donald Thomson argued that assimilation policies should be replaced with land-based rights solutions for all Indigenous.[319] Elkin is regarded as Radcliffe-Brown's successor, but this seems strange in the sense that he was against Radcliffe-Brown's structuralist approach. Neither was Elkin interested in the land-based question. Rather, "[he] wanted anthropology to focus upon and so (eventually) strengthen those aspects of Aboriginal social organization compatible with settler-Australian occupation of their lands".[320]

In 1940 Elkin took over the administration of the Aborigines Welfare Board in NSW. According to Lane, "Elkin's achievement was to establish a central vision of Aboriginal affairs, grounded in Christian idealism, broadcast and institutionalized in secular and scientific iterations".[321] By focusing on his acculturation and assimilationist ideals, he (Elkin) would put the land-rights movement in reverse.[322] Lane writes: "[i]f in the 1940s the champions of Aboriginal rights had received the backing of a long-serving activist Professor of Anthropology, instead of his enmity, then the myriad of settlement of those rights might today be further advanced."[323]

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[316] Elkin, "Cultural and Racial Clash in Australia".

[317] Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation"; Markovich, "Prohibited Acts, and Intentions Not Motives. 'Genocide, a Crime of Which No Anglo-Saxon Nation Could Be Guilty'"; McGregor, "A. P. Elkin and the Rhetoric of Assimilation"; "Intelligent Parasitism: A. P. Elkin and the Rhetoric of Assimilation"; *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race" Theory 1880–1939*; Wise, *The Self-Made Anthroplogist: A Life of A. P. Elkin*.

[318] Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation". p. 288.

[319] Cowlishaw, "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists".

[320] Lane, "Anchorage in Aboriginal Affairs: A. P. Elkin on Religious Continuity and Civic Obligation". p. 290.

[321] ibid.

[322] ibid. p. 304.

[323] ibid. p. 304.

Elkin, according to Gray and others, used anthropological knowledge during, after and in-between the major wars as "[an] extension as well as a continuation of the use of anthropologists by colonial governments in the Pacific in the interwar years. Colonial governments readily accepted – although did not necessarily embrace fully – the usefulness of anthropology or advice from anthropologists in the control, management and advancement (uplift) of colonised peoples."[324]

Gray points to Gillian Cowlinshaw's "discourse of usefulness" argument, which he also believes was a constructed discourse anthropologists had adopted in the 1930s as a means of being useful to government: "it was a discourse which seemed to lack any critical distance from the policies of government".[325] Gray also explores the relationship between A. O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines in WA, and Elkin. This relationship, Gray contends, revealed Elkin's "eagerness to cultivate the acceptance and approval of Neville and a desire not to upset government".[326] Gray thus uses the example of Elkin's relationship with A. O. Neville as an example of the close and frequently inappropriate relationship between anthropology and government. Elkin's "fieldwork" in WA in 1928 brought him into close connection with A. O. Neville, and this according to Gray would be the beginning of an ongoing collaboration between government and anthropology.[327]

"Elkin's acceptance of Neville's policies and his lack of criticism of those policies and practices demonstrate the beginnings of a sympathetic collaboration between government (Neville) and anthropology (Elkin). Neville and Elkin both valued a researcher who did not disturb the established order …"[328] Elkin's method relied on genealogical method – concentrating on kinship and social organisation, displacing "the field worker from the violent realities of the frontier which enabled a re-construction of a past". Gray says the genealogical method suited Elkin's proposed ethnological survey. This did not include any of

[324] Gray, "'The Natives Are Happy': A. P. Elkin, A. O. Neville and Anthropological Research on Northwest Western Australia". p. 105.
[325] ibid. p. 106.
[326] ibid.
[327] ibid.
[328] ibid. p. 107.

the contemporary work of Malinowski's (of the time), which Elkin saw as useful but not appropriate. "Elkin's view of the inapplicability of Malinowski's method and theory was re-enforced when he was confronted by an Aboriginality that was fragmenting and disintegrating as a result of white settlement and consequent Aboriginal dispossession and resettlement."[329] To Gray, this is Elkin chasing genealogical data: "chasing after remainders". Gray documents Elkin's relationship with Aborigines in Cape Leveque via a letter to his wife, Sally. In it he tells her the Aborigines believe he is there to study their laws and customs so as to help them. But, this is not why he is there. Elkin clearly has other plans and this remains the unstated assumption we find revealed in Gray's essay.[330]

For example, Elkin travelled with Neville through three government depot stations in the Kimberley and praised the conditions he saw there. At this time, just before the Coniston Massacre had such huge consequences for the Warlpiri in the area, and not far from where Elkin was doing his fieldwork, Elkin commented that at these ration depots at cattle stations, or 'feeding stations' as he called them, "[the] natives can come and receive food, and so have no reason for killing cattle on private stations. The protector also calls at other stations on the way to see how the natives are treated there."[331] Further in his journey, beyond the Vestey's station, at Avon Valley he found:

> "[t]he natives can come and receive fair treatment; if they work, they get plenty of food; if they live in the bush camp, or just visit occasionally, they receive a bullock once a week and a stick of tobacco each Sunday, with medicine whenever necessary. They are taught not to spear cattle, and incidentally to realise that not all whites are bad … The natives are happy."[332]

According to Gray, he assessed the stations to be of little use to future researchers as contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous had been going

[329] ibid. p. 107.
[330] Elkin to Sally Elkin, 13 October 1928. 1/1/1/1, Elkin Papers, University of Sydney archives, quoted in ibid. p. 111.
[331] ibid.
[332] ibid.

on for some time. "Neville and the WA government were pleased with Elkin. They set out what they saw as the value of anthropological research, especially the value of Elkin's research and generally agreed with his views about the benefits and usefulness of anthropology."[333]

This however, didn't stop the researcher Ralph Piddington, as we have seen, from later exposing the WA treatment of Indigenous in these same stations and area – leading to maltreatment and poor conditions for Aborigines. We have seen that Piddington was then sidelined and later blacklisted from academic appointments in Australia because of his commentary.[334] Gray describes the press release drafted by Neville which praises the work of Elkin and regards the results of Elkin's research as being pivotal for administration purposes: they "[are] moreover bound to be of considerable assistance to officers entrusted with the administration of native affairs in the future".[335] This period then, Gray regards as a pivotal moment in Elkin's ongoing 'silence' and indeed whitewashing of government policy. And we will find this was to continue with Elkin's later appointment as Chair of Anthropology at the University of Sydney. Gray writes and I quote in full here:

> "Elkin's acceptance of Neville's policies and his lack of criticism of those policies and practices demonstrate the beginnings of a sympathetic collaboration between government (Neville) and anthropology (Elkin). Neville and Elkin both valued a researcher who did not disturb the established order. This became obvious when Ralph Piddington, an Australian National Research Council (ANRC) sponsored researcher, made public his criticism of the treatment and conditions of Aborigines in WA, particularly the La Grange area. Elkin offered Piddington no support and placed the continuation of the research program over Piddington's public criticism of the failures of the WA government to improve the treatment and conditions of

[333] ibid. p. 113.
[334] ibid.
[335] Press release, W. H. Kitson, Minister in Charge of the Aborigines Department, 31 October 1928. WASA, ACC 993, 365/27 cited in Gray ibid. p. 113.

Aborigines. Piddington's criticisms were an embarrassment to both Neville and Elkin. Elkin assured Neville that future ANRC sponsored researchers would not be like Piddington but rather as he himself had been in 1928."[336]

2.22 *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*: intersection on the road

Elkin almost met up with the Tanami road builder and prospector, Michael Terry, in 1928. Elkin's near meeting with Terry and his trucks occurred at the Vestey station in a place called Lajamanu (also known by its colonial name as Hooker Creek). Elkin missed the group by a day. He wrote of this (almost) meeting in a letter to his wife, Sally. I quote from this here:

> "… a chief pastoral inspector of Vestey's and their chief auditor also started out from Wyndam about the same time … Coming for the south along the southern parts of the Kimberlys is Terry's party trying two six-wheeled motor trucks, and MacRobertson, the Lolly man of Melbourne, or rather his party with lollies, wireless and what not – ten or twelve men – I only wish this lot would turn up here before we leave tomorrow; it would be so exciting." [337]

During and after World War II, Elkin himself was increasingly marginalised in the field of Aboriginal policy.[338] In the period focused on in this chapter, the 1920s to the 1940s, we see the growing confluence of government and the

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[336] "Piddington's Indiscretion: Ralph Piddington, the Australian National Research Council and Academic Freedom".

[337] Journal Elkin kept in 'form of letters', 15 July 1928. 1/1/1/1, EP quoted in "'The Natives Are Happy': A. P. Elkin, A. O. Neville and Anthropological Research on Northwest Western Australia". p. 112.

[338] "Elkin had increasingly been marginalised as a shaper of Aboriginal policy, at least at the Commonwealth level. The high point in Elkin's career as an influential figure in Canberra had come at the end of the 1930s when he, together with Minister for the Interior Jack McEwen, and his departmental secretary, J. A. Carrodus, had drafted the 'New Deal for Aborigines', of the assimilation policy which was published in February 1939. The 'New Deal' was never effectively implemented, largely due to the pressures and demands of war. In the era of post-war reconstruction, it was clear to Elkin that Aboriginal affairs were back on the political agenda, that assimilation was to be attempted with renewed vigour – and that he was on the sidelines. His enormous output of the late 1940s and early 1950s, of lectures, addresses, articles and papers on 'culture contact', appears to have been connected with his determination to regain control of the assimilationist agenda". Cited in Russell McGregor, "Intelligent Parasitism: A. P. Elkin and the Rhetoric of Assimilation," ibid. 20, no. 50–51.

academic discipline of anthropology in defining, shaping and determining outcomes for Aboriginal people. Policies based on the dubious science of eugenics played a significant part in influencing and shaping government policy toward Aboriginal people in all parts of the country. Weaving this all together in a web of morality, religiosity and confused notions of civility and 'enlightenment' were the newspapers of the day.

Over the following chapters I will be looking at the book, *Tragedy Track,* and the newspaper stories that were published in 1932–33 as the building of the road began in earnest and the search for gold forged new and permanent tracks into Warlpiri and Arrernte country.

Chapter 3

White man's dreaming track

> "This demographic shift (drought, gold rush, Coniston massacre) signalled the beginning of a twenty year process that was to concentrate the majority of the Warlpiri at Tanami and the Granites … The prospectors' pursuit of economic wealth in the form of gold resulted in the sudden infusion of new meaning of a distinctly economic character into certain Warlpiri places. These subtle shifts were bought about by the attention given by both Warlpiri people and the wider Australia society to the Granites (Yartulu Yartulu) and the Tanami (Jarnami). For Australians, these regions that possessed gold deposits became significant in what was, for them, the vast background emptiness of the Tanami Desert. Yet these were just two places among thousands, of religious and social significance for the Warlpiri. In the aftermath of white occupation in the region, the Granites and Tanami became important centres for the Warlpiri because of the access they afforded to highly desirable new goods, such as tobacco, flour, blankets, tools, tinned meat, tea, sugar, and most significantly of all a permanent water supply." [339]

The Tanami road was built as a means for prospectors to locate and exploit gold resources in this area of the Tanami Desert. The road and its creation thus became a metaphor for movement, displacement and loss for the Warlpiri. However, invisible to the prospectors and explorers were the intricate dreaming tracks of an ancient civilisation that could not be known.[340]

As one aspect of this thesis is concerned with the history of the Tanami road, in this chapter I will be focusing on two non-Indigenous explorers/prospectors who intricately mapped and described the geographical features of the Central Desert and were instrumental in creating the road that eventually became known as "the Tragedy Track".[341]

Before the Tanami road and the very first contact between the ancient Warlpiri civilisation and the western explorers, prospectors followed the camel tracks

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[339] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".
[340] ibid.
[341] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

and later wheel ruts of explorers such as Allan Davidson and Michael Terry, who pushed through the arid interior in search of gold and other minerals as well as pastoral land. These are the two non-Indigenous explorer/prospectors I am going to look at here as it's their story and travel that opened up this part of the desert for goldmining, and led to the story the radio documentary pursues in *Tragedy Track*.[342]

To non-Indigenous prospectors the Tanami Desert, or Central Desert as it is also referred to, was inhospitable country: it had poor rainfall, and was dry and difficult country, with very little in the way of water sources. To many it was 'empty'. The Tanami was one of the last regions in Australia to be opened up by explorers and prospectors. The extremely difficult terrain meant that until the establishment of stock routes and the Overland Telegraph Line (see 3.2) it wasn't an option for many station owners and cattle farmers, and other than the persistent and determined prospectors looking for gold and other minerals, the area was left largely uncolonised until well into the 20th century.[343]

Contact between Warlpiri and European settlers and prospectors in the central Tanami Desert was also significantly different from contact in other parts of the country. Elias believes the difference can be attributed to the geographical remoteness of the Warlpiri. "The Tanami desert was the scene of some of the last incursions by colonisers into the heart of the continent, these explorers and prospectors marked the culmination of a long process of 'opening-up' Australia at the turn of last century."[344] Elias documents the cultural significance to the Warlpiri of both the Granites (Yartulu Yartulu) and Tanami (Jarnami) and the relative vastness and perceived emptiness of this desert place to the colonial prospectors.[345] The search for gold, in an area known for its lack of permanent water and little rainfall as well as its limited potential for stock grazing, gave the

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[342] ibid.

[343] Allan Davidson, "Explorations in Central Australia. ," ed. Parliament, Parliamentary Papers of South Australia (South Australia: South Australian Government, 1905); Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; "The Measure of Dreams. Customary Land Tenure and Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea"; "Jukurrpa – Golden Dreams," in *Gold: Forgotten Histories and Lost Objects of Australia*, ed. Cook, McCalman, Reeves (Cambridge University Press, 2011); M. Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia* (University of Chicago Press, 1965); Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*.

[344] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

[345] ibid.

place, in the mind of the settlers and prospectors, a meaning. However, for the Warlpiri, this place held significant cultural dreaming sites, permanent water supplies, and was the place of important Jukurrpa (dreaming stories).

Despite inaccessibility to parts of the NT, a large scale and rapid expansion of the pastoral industry was underway to the north of the Tanami in the later part of the 19th century. However, the SA government in its report on the NT, of 1887 and 1890, found that there was strained and violent contact between Aboriginal people and the pastoralists and occupation of the land by both groups was "hopelessly irreconcilable".[346]

3.1 Early colonial prospecting expeditions

John McDonald Stuart is believed to be the first European to sight Warlpiri during two expeditions in 1861 and 1862.[347] According to the historian and anthropologist Mervyn Meggitt, Stuart was the first white man the Warlpiri ever saw and they were fortunate it was Stuart and not any other explorer: "It seems clear that Stuart was the first white man seen by the Warlpiri. They were fortunate that it was Stuart, rather than some other of the early explorers, for throughout his journeys he took great care to avoid conflict with Aborigines."[348]

3.2 The Overland Telegraph Line

Stuart is believed to the first explorer to successfully cross from the south to the north of Australia and return, which he did in 1862.[349] The next Europeans the Warlpiri saw were those working on the Overland Telegraph Line between 1870

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[346] ibid.

[347] "Commonwealth Government Records About the Northern Territory"; Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs"; Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*. "Commonwealth Government Records About the Northern Territory," ed. National Archives of Australia (Australian Government).

[348] *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.

[349] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs".

and 1872, although there is no record of contact between these Europeans and the Indigenous.[350] Once Stuart's journey from south to north was realised this led to the development and construction of this overland telegraph to link the continent from north to south "and thus link Australia by telegraph to the outside world via a submarine cable to Java". Construction began on 22 August 1872, and was described by Coughlan as precipitating "the white occupation of Aboriginal country in Central Australia".[351]

Between 1870 and 1872 the Overland Telegraph Line (approximately 3200 km long) was successfully established to link Adelaide and Darwin.

Coughlan and Hartwig also argue that the Overland Telegraph led to significant Aboriginal depopulation.

> "Dispossession, violence, disease and malnutrition were to take their toll. Dispossession began when pastoralists arrived with the telegraph line and construction teams had established their pastoral stations on Aboriginal land around permanent water supplies. The first two were established in 1872, Undoolya station around the Telegraph Station and the spring known as the Alice Spring, and Owen Springs station nearby, together covering an area of 3,200 sq. miles. By 1881 Hartwig estimates that maybe the whole of Central Australia was either held under pastoral lease or under lease application.[352]

Kimber is more conciliatory toward settler-colonists when it comes to the Overland Telegraph. In his view, while heralding a significant period of contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, he believes it was initially cordial:

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[350] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; R. Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894" in *The Fifth Eric Johnston Lecture* (NT, Darwin: Northern Territory Library, 1991); Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.

[351] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs".

[352] M. C. Hartwig, "The Progress of White Settlements in the Alice Springs District and Its Effect on the Aboriginal Inhabitants". Quoted in Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs". p. xxiv.

> "Initial contact between Aborigines and telegraph station staff was cautiously friendly. The Arrernte, intrigued by these first-ever stone buildings with iron roofs, called the Alice Springs station 'Kapmanta', literally the 'solid head' place. To allay the fears of any who might think this is unfair, they were not referring to the operators but to the roofing – 'the place of watertight roofs'."[353]

Kimber believes the Overland Telegraph Station was vital to provide water supplies to explorers and settlers in the Central Desert.[354] According to Peter Taylor the men who built the Overland Telegraph Station suffered enormously and particularly due to a lack of water supplies.[355] "The men who built the Overland Telegraph Line suffered hardship and shared heroism on an epic scale", wrote Kimber. [356]"One of those who suffered most was a man called Kraagen, whose mates included a note on his grave that told all future travellers he had 'perished here for want of water'."[357]

However, aside from this 'Aussie battler discourse', discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, in the course of the Overland Telegraph construction many Indigenous were killed in clashes that Kimber documents extensively and without sentimentality.[358] Notwithstanding the non-Indigenous heroism involved in the building of the Overland Telegraph, it is a period of time, as

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[353] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894".

[354] ibid.

[355] P. Taylor, *An End to Silence: The Building of the Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide to Darwin. Sydney* (Methuen, 1980).

[356] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894". p. 5.

[357] See Chapter 6 on the mythology and discourse of the 'the battler' and its inception and use.

[358] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894". "Long dry stages, heavy rains, quicksand, a rat plague, threatening Aborigines, tracking up of strayed stock – these were their experiences as they travelled up to Alice Springs. After that they got worse. Upwards of 3,000 sheep and 100 goats died from eating poison bush near the Devil's Marbles. John Milner was clubbed to death and his assailant was shot at and severely wounded, and from then on relationships with the Aborigines were epitomized by the order, 'make sure of a nigger every shot'. At one stage the staghounds were let loose on an estimated 200 Aborigines who were believed to be preparing an ambush; the dogs tore out the throat of one man and savaged others as they fled. Further troubles befell the party, with stock losses and a delay of 3 months because of the wet season. By the time they reached Darwin in March 1872, the entire journey had taken nearly ten years, everyone had suffered great privations, and by now the tally of sheep lost in natural disasters was nearly 4,000."

Coughlan and Hartwig reveal, significant for the slow and inexorable depopulation of Aboriginal people from the Tanami.[359]

3.3 Early Aboriginal resistance in the Centre

Despite the vast space and a relatively slow pace of colonisation and settlement, there were significant incursions on traditional land in this region and from the 1880s. Rowse and Kimber both site settler aggression in the 1880s as provoking a "phase of Aboriginal 'resistance' including cattle killing".[360] Tim Rowse, in his scholarly work on colonisation in the Central Desert, examines the initial barter and exchange between desert tribes and the prospectors/colonisers and poses the question: "[w]hat was the understanding of these transactions? … I, as historian must share their perplexity. Would the Arrernte and Luritja people have recognized my proposed distinction between bartering and rationing? What did they understand to be their obligations, if any, as rationed people?" He then answers himself: "… even when frontiers are negotiated, rather than violently contested, borders between cultures, there is every possibility of mutual incomprehension …"[361]

Guerrilla warfare is documented to have been in evidence even on the most remote stations into the 1890s and "indeed into the 1920s; the Coniston Massacre of 1928 was to be the last major recorded massacre in this bloody frontier history".[362] Historian Dick Kimber in his 1990 address to the State Library of the NT found that settler aggression and frontier violence wasn't as prevalent as first thought in the early days, but this changed radically with the Overland Telegraph, the opening up of pastoral properties and with the mining fields:

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[359] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs"; Hartwig, "The Progress of White Settlements in the Alice Springs District and Its Effect on the Aboriginal Inhabitants".

[360] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894"; Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*.

[361] *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*. p. 20.

[362] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894".

> "In general, because the explorers passed through the country at a relatively rapid rate, avoiding prolonged associations with Aborigines, direct clashes were few in number. Aborigines tended to use firing of vegetation to force the 'oruncha' or 'mamu' ('devil-monsters', as white men on horseback and their stock were initially perceived) to move on. Fighting involving spears against firearms tended to be 'on the run' rather than from barricades or by ambush, and extraordinarily few deaths occurred on either side. However, once the telegraph stations and pastoral properties were established, and the mining fields opened, very different situations prevailed."[363]

The Indigenous of the Central Desert had their own problems aside from the encroaching cattle stations and mines. Kimber notes that on the Finke River, south of Alice Springs, a major intertribal war was occurring around 1875. It was independent of the Overland Telegraph Station and the new pastoral stations:

> "It involved people from a very wide range of country, with upwards of 160 people killed over three years. By the time the last avenging warriors returned to their home country in 1878, the first cattle stations and Hermannsburg Mission had been established. According to T. G. H. Strehlow, the Aboriginal people were so 'sickened by the several years of murder and killing' that, although they resented aspects of the intrusions, they also 'longed to return to an era of peace and quiet amity'."[364]

However, it isn't known how European colonisation impacted on the inception of this tribal war. Was a major contributing factor the fact that different language groups and tribes had been forced into uneasy and unexpected contact because of the arrival of pastoralists and miners? We do know that from the late 1880s cattle killing in the NT became an issue. Kimber notes that police in the NT were active in pursuing Aboriginal suspects and frequently killed and captured any they believed were active in slaughtering cattle on pastoral land (formerly tribal

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[363] ibid. p. 5.
[364] Kimber, 1991 p. 5.

lands). Some of the instances of the retribution against Aboriginal people are chilling. According to Kimber:

> "Constable Wurmbrand, after arresting and chaining three Aborigines, shot them all: his claim that they were attempting to escape was disputed by evidence – they were still all chained together in death. He shot four more a little later. At this stage Aboriginal guerrilla warfare, with stock killing and attempts on the lives of station hands would appear to have been successful – but at undesirable cost."[365]

Kimber estimates the number of Indigenous killed for 'cattle killing' or 'thieving' in the NT in the early parts of last century "could be as close to 1000". He quotes the Reverend W. J. Schwarz, who lived at the Finke River Mission from 1874 to 1891:

> "[Many] of the actions which were taken against the blacks were … taken with the object of exterminating them, and especially the men. If a squatter kept cattle, and there were blacks on his run, either the blacks or the cattle had to go. The evidence presented does, I suggest, support this perception."[366]

3.4 Explorers and prospectors: contact and clashes with the Indigenous

Colonel Peter Egerton Warburton encountered Indigenous in Wallamalla, Warlpiri country, in 1875, and camped at wells for weeks on end without any conflict.[367] The explorers tried to find a route through harsh terrain near the Granites but a lack of water forced them west. Warburton's journey in 1873 was

[365] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894". p. 16.
[366] ibid. p. 16.
[367] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*. p. 19.

significant for his attempts at finding and using Warlpiri water supplies: he did so, according to Elias, by abducting a Warlpiri boy.[368]

From 1880 to 1900 there was pastoral activity on the northern border of Warlpiri territory. Pastoralists took over huge tracts of land, laying the foundations of the big cattle stations on the northern borders of Warlpiri country. Nat Buchanan, who attempted to blaze a fire track as a stock route through to the Granites, which Davidson later encountered in 1901 on his prospecting expedition, established the beginnings of the massive Wave Hill Station in 1880.[369] When Nat Buchanan established his cattle station at Wave Hill, the Gurindji and Mudhara tribes living in the vicinity, according to Meggitt, were more or less friendly, although the settlers shot a number of them for spearing cattle.[370] Other pastoralists moving cattle and seeking new lands include the Gordons, the Farquharsons and the Duracks.[371]

Coughlan finds that Aboriginal resistance became fiercer in Central Australia as the occupation of white settlers and miners continued, and water and food resources began to dwindle. She documents cattle killing as a *form of resistance* by the Indigenous landowners and the consequences at the hands of punitive police raids.[372] "Strehlow (1971; 1978) and Hartwig (1965) give details of many raids and atrocities carried out against Aboriginal groups in the name of the law by two officers Constable Wilshire and Constable Wurmbrand (and their charges), throughout the 1880s, some with the open, some with the tacit, support of the Resident; and some of which he would not know."[373]

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[368] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".
[369] ibid.
[370] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*. p. 19.
[371] ibid. p. 19
[372] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs".
[373] Rowley, *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society; Outcasts in White Australia; the Remote Aborigines* quoted in Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs".

While there were many clashes and 'incidents', Coughlan describes the massacre in the 1880s documented by Hartwig and others.[374] The names of two police officers in particular are associated with the brutality of this period of Central Australian history: Constable Wiltshire, who arrived in Central Australia in December 1881; and Constable Wurmbrand, who arrived in 1884.[375]

> "There were many incidents. At a place now known as Wurmbrand's Rockhole, west of Alice Springs, Wurmbrand came across a camp of men, women and children and without warning, identification of offenders, or charges being laid, simply shot all of those not fast enough to escape (Strehlow 1978: 7). At another incident at Glen Helen, also west of Alice Springs, Wurmbrand captured and chained three prisoners, and then he shot them as they were allegedly attempting to escape. On the same excursion four others were shot as they 'resisted' arrest (Hartwig 1965: 398). In a later raid Wurmbrand reported shooting two offenders. However, a station hand who had accompanied the raid reported seventeen Aboriginal people shot dead (Hartwig 1965: 399). At Blackfellow's Bones, near Mt Riddock, about seventy miles north east of Alice Springs as the crow flies, a party of police, trackers and settlers shot a large number of Anmatjera people who had gathered together for ceremonies. The details of this murder are not clear but it is understood that between fifty to one hundred people were massacred (Hartwig 1965: 397–8). The casualness of this programme of pacification is illustrated by an entry in 1884 in the Hermannsburg Station journal:
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> During sheep shearing in October Constable Wurmbrandt (sic) arrived here with his party, arrested three natives on the station, took

[374] "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs"; Hartwig, "The Progress of White Settlements in the Alice Springs District and Its Effect on the Aboriginal Inhabitants".

[375] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs"; Hartwig, "The Progress of White Settlements in the Alice Springs District and Its Effect on the Aboriginal Inhabitants"; Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre". Strehlow and Hartwig give details of many raids and atrocities carried out against Aboriginal groups under the name of the law by these two officers and their charges, throughout the 1880s. Quoted in Coughlan.

them to the MacDonnell Ranges, and shot them there (quoted in Strehlow 1971: 588).

By about 1886 Hartwig (1965: 400) estimates that the resistance movement for most Aboriginal groups within about an eighty-mile radius of the Alice Springs Telegraph Station was over, only to begin on an even larger scale further out."[376]

3.5 Explorers' tracks

The JB track

Between 1913 and 1914 the Australian Investment Agency (Vestey's) bought Wave Hill and Gordon Downs, making it the largest holder of land in the NT: 25,000 square miles along the northern and western edge of Warlpiri country. An "intrepid nomad" named Brown, who grazed cattle between Stuart Creek and the Lander in Warlpiri territory, opened up the JB track from Tanami to Coniston Station. But a drought in 1902 seems to have forced small holders like Brown out of the region.[377]

David Carneggie

Another expedition, led by David Carneggie in 1899, to the west Australian goldfields – and which departed, as Davidson had, from the accessible town of Halls Creek – is documented by Kimber.[378] Pastoralists were also making

[376] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs". Constable Willshire was finally arrested in 1890 by Frank J. Gillen, a Justice of the Peace at the telegraph station, and committed for trial in Port Augusta (Willshire 1895; Strehlow 1978: 47–8). His arrest resulted from an incident near Tempe Downs Station, on the Finke River west of Alice Springs in February 1890. Willshire and his native police ambushed an Aboriginal camp at dawn, shot two men, had breakfast at the station, and then returned and burned the bodies (Strehlow 1978: 46–8). Although Willshire was not convicted at his trial in July, he did not return to the Alice Springs district (Strehlow 1971: xxxiv). The same year, following Hermannsburg mission complaints of police shooting Aboriginal prisoners and entering Aboriginal camps and shooting all in sight, and of sexual abuse of Aboriginal women by police and pastoralists, the SA Parliament commissioned a report on police activities in Central Australia. As with Willshire's trial this report found no evidence to support the mission accusations. See Coughlan for more, Chapter 2, p. xxvi.

[377] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*. p. 20.

[378] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894".

expeditions into the area. R. T. Morice, a wealthy pastoralist from Seduna country in the NT, received money from the SA government for a surveyor. The surveyor, according to Kimber, travelled up through the Tanami: these were "remarkable expeditions only just touching on Tanami and getting through".[379]

According to Elias, the early days of colonisation left much evidence to indicate permanent occupation of the Tanami desert by Warlpiri "in the form of camps either actual, recent or abandoned, hut-like shelters and windbreaks thatched with spinifex and covered with sand, bark windbreaks, yam holes, stored objects, chopped trees, burnt country and innumerable fires".[380] According to Kimber, water was a premium and it could only be found in several significant waterholes, rock holes and soakages.[381]

Barrow Creek Telegraph Station

Barrow Creek north of Alice Springs was another site of conflict with the Indigenous and Indigenous resistance to encroaching colonisation. Barrow Creek was named by the explorer John McDouall Stuart on his expedition in 1860. According to Kimber, it was a site where two men were killed in 1874 and reprisals occurred for some years later. In 1918 it was a site of a massacre that was documented by T. G. H. Strehlow.[382]

Kimber also describes how following the death of two white men, reprisals led to the shooting of between 10 (official) and 40 (through other accounts) Indigenous people. He believes the number could have been greater than this:

> "Aborigines were shot, and we have many comments and justifications on both sides. The patrols were out for six week and in 1918 'Skipper' Partridge was told that 'they shot every black person they could see' – the official figures were 'several' and 'three'.

[379] ibid.; interview by Susan Angel, 2011.
[380] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 65.
[381] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894". The scarcity of water is also very well documented by Elias, Meggitt, Davidson, Terry and Strehlow (see bibliography).
[382] ibid.

Strehlow was also told of indiscriminate shootings, with many innocent people shot and, in addition, sacred objects smashed. The end result was that 'for years … no black ever came within miles of Barrow Creek'."[383]

3.6 Alan Davidson and the path to gold

As this work is concerned with the colonial conquest of the lands – the search for gold, the building of the road and how these events impacted on the Warlpiri in the region – I will look specifically at Alan Davidson's expedition in 1905, and Michael Terry's in 1934. Both of these non-Indigenous explorers opened up the desert country for gold prospecting, for mining, for pastoral companies and for travel.[384] All of the first early expeditions through the Tanami were on camel and all managed to travel through to the Tanami for brief periods of time. Davidson, however, was in the Tanami region prospecting for up to 18 months, and in the space of two expeditions worked his way through a large tract of the Tanami Desert.[385]

Dick Kimber worked closely with Warlpiri people, particularly senior elder Harry Nelson of Yuendumu for almost 50 years. His knowledge of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous history of the Tanami is particularly relevant for this history of the Tanami Track/road as it includes stories and accounts from many different sources.[386]

Alan Davidson's first expedition was in 1897; then in 1900 he located the Granites goldfields in the Tanami Desert. This expedition triggered what Kimber

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[383] ibid.

[384] Davidson, "Explorations in Central Australia"; M. Terry, *Hidden Wealth and Hiding People* (Putnam, 1931); *Sand and Sun: Two Gold-Hunting Expeditions with Camels in the Dry Lands of Central Australia* (M. Joseph Limited, 1937).Davidson's journals and book documenting his travels, and are a compilation of his major expeditions.

[385] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894".

[386] Dick Kimber has had a very longstanding and close relationship with the senior elders of Yuendumu, especially, senior elder Harry Nelson. He recorded many stories and wrote and spoke informally and formally to historians, academics and published some of his research. ibid.

calls "the idea and sense of gold" in this desert region.[387] To Derek Elias "the lasting consequence of this expedition, almost thirty years after Warburton's journey, was the discovery of gold at both Tanami and the Granites. Although, at the time, Davidson did not think it was in big enough quantities."[388] Kimber says Davidson is an important key to understanding the Tanami. The 1900 prospecting expedition was funded by the London Syndicate and led by an Aboriginal man working alongside Davidson. This expedition, which journeyed to the Granites, first found gold at this location.[389]

Born in England in 1873, Davidson studied metallurgy and mining engineering. His first work in Australia was at Kalgoorlie. Prior to his prospecting in Australia for the London Syndicate (a group formed by the British investors who looked at developing pastoral and mining interests in Australia and the Pacific) Davidson had prospected in New Guinea also for the London Syndicate. At the age of 24, he was appointed leader of the Central Australian Exploration Syndicate, to prospect over 11,000 square miles of the NT.[390]

On Davidson's first expedition into the interior in 1897 he rode on horseback from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs. Here he bought stores and camels and assembled a party. Among his team were two men who had lived and worked in the area for some time. One had worked on the Overland Telegraph. The party also included two prospectors, a cameleer and three Aboriginal men, together with nine camels, five horses, stores for six months and prospecting equipment – plus another 30 camels to take all the gear to the expedition's first depot between the Devil's Marbles and Tennant Creek.[391] For the next two years, the expedition explored the unknown country east of the Overland Telegraph Line, through the Murchison and Davenport Ranges. However, in terms of gold, little of value was found, but nevertheless, Davidson's detailed descriptions of the country, especially its geology and watercourses, would be useful to those who

[387] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894".
[388] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".
[389] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894".
[390] Valmai Hankel, "Allan Davidson: Prospector in the Central Desert," *Australian Heritage*.
[391] ibid.

followed him.[392] On his return to Adelaide, Davidson was summoned back to London by the Syndicate, where he received instructions for a second expedition, the Western Expedition, also to find gold.[393] This later expedition, which began in 1901, is regarded as the most significant for this study. Davidson's expedition made tracks and left instructions that were to be used by Terry and others later.[394]

3.7 The Western Expedition

This time Davidson took only four companions, among them his 53-year-old father James and an Indigenous guide he called 'the blackboy', Jack. Nine bull camels carried their gear: rations for six months, 85 gallons or 17 days' water supply, and a small dog, Dodger, who, to the men's dismay, disappeared after a few weeks.

Leaving in May 1900 from Kelly's Well, about 55 km south of Tennant Creek, and close to the present-day Stuart Highway, the party headed west through the sand, spinifex and low scrub. Davidson sent final telegrams from this point and it would be four-and-a-half months before any further communications were made.[395]

During this expedition, Davidson surveyed much of the Tanami/Granites area, mapping Wilsons Creek, Ware Range, Tanami and Granite Hill (later the Granites).

He was the first to discover gold, although he did not believe he had discovered enough for mining to proceed. However, his report still encouraged many prospectors to begin the trek from Halls Creek (WA) to the Granites. This access point from the WA town of Halls Creek was, according to Kimber, the only way through to the interior until Michael Terry came in the 1920s. However, before

[392] Davidson, "Explorations in Central Australia".
[393] ibid.
[394] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 66.
[395] Hankel, "Allan Davidson: Prospector in the Central Desert".

Terry drove through with trucks from the Centre, during 1902 and again 1908, prospectors made forays from Halls Creek in groups to the Granites, then a well was sunk at Tanami.[396]

The Western Expedition journeyed west, always looking for water in the scrubby and unfamiliar country. They came across a track near Winnecke Creek blazed by 70-year-old Nat Buchanan when he was attempting to establish a stock route between Barkly Tableland and Tennant Creek some years before. [397] Davidson's observations on this expedition were mostly concerned with geology, topography, rock formations, waterhole sites and the quality and quantity of the various rocks and soils they examined. Wherever he went, Davidson wrote detailed descriptions of the place and geology. He wrote very little about non-geological features or other aspects of the landscape. In a rare diary entry on July 27, Davidson wrote about some beautiful, pastoral country, the finest, he said, they had encountered: "[birds] were extremely numerous about this locality with splendid grass flats to walk on, fleets of grass parrots and birds of other descriptions chirping and singing made me for a while imagine I was in a more favoured locality than central Australia. This would be a likely location for new birds, if we only had time to devote to this interesting work."[398]

3.8 Naming the Tanami

'Tanamee' is the western Warlpiri pronunciation for the Tanami Desert, according to Dick Kimber. His work with the Warlpiri ascribes the meaning of Tanami to specific rock holes with significance to the Warlpiri in the region.[399] Davidson's expedition encountered the vast desert area known as Tanamee in August 1900. Here the expedition encountered a waterhole and a later a gorge with "two magnificent waterholes". The upper hole contained, Davidson noted in his journal, about 14,000 gallons of water and a second about 22,000 gallons of

[396] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894".
[397] Davidson, "Explorations in Central Australia". p. 121.
[398] ibid. p. 121.
[399] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894".

water. In the vicinity were ample plants and bushes for the camels. A few days later they met three Aboriginal men:

> "Jack (the boy) sighted three blackfellows at the rockholes and induced them to come and pay their respects to the camp. The party consisted of one old man and two young men. The former was very doubtful of the advisability of coming too close, and stood at the top of the range to wait the reception accorded the others. When he saw that they were given a feed, he concluded it as safe, and joined them. These blacks were about the average height but somewhat bony and reedy. On inquiry the boy learned the native name of the rockholes was 'Tanami' and that they never 'died' – the conclusion we had already formed. They were shown gold specimens, but had never seen anything like it before so it was evident that there was not much to be got 'specking' round this locality."[400]

Davidson believed that the nearby reefs were a possible future source, and gave a detailed description of the country around the rock holes. This was later published in the two volumes I have been referring to.[401]

A few days after encountering the rock holes, Davidson discovered another waterhole near a 'blackish hill' made of granite boulders – we know the area as the Granites. The Tanami Track passes nearby.[402] Throughout the entire expedition Davidson only encountered a handful of Indigenous people. However, he did encounter evidence of Indigenous camps. Davidson recorded these encounters with Indigenous people in an arrogant and slightly startled way:

> "Some old black fellows' camps were noticed along the base of this tableland. They were remarkable for the fact that the spinifex thatching and the wurlies had been covered with sand some inches in

[400] Davidson, A. "Explorations in Central Australia". p. 141.
[401] ibid. p. 141.
[402] ibid. p. 141.

> thickness. This was done evidently as additional protection from both rain and sun."[403]

The Indigenous group they encountered indicated to Davidson that there were similar stones to the ones he showed them, east toward a large creek. Davidson also noted that of the group, three men spoke the same or similar language to the tribes of west Barrow Creek that Davidson was familiar with. Davidson had met with a tribe he called Wurramulla, but were most likely Warlpiri.[404] In this region, Davidson gave up on finding rich gold specimens and spent his time describing the local geography. He decided to prospect further afield "with the object of discovering gold belts".[405] Soon after this they discovered Granites Hill and named the region, the Granites.[406]

Though they prospected throughout the Tanami and Granites region they did not find any large quantities of gold; water and food too were in scant supply. Some days the camels would go up to 12 days without water.[407] By the time they got to the Granites area they had run out of rations and were down to bread and meat, and sugarless tea. This meant the expedition was coming to an end. Davidson wrote in his journal on 31 August 1900:

> "I should like to be in a position to go over these belts again and give them a thorough trial but time and rations will not permit. I am afraid that I am beginning to doubt the existence of rich shows, as the work we have done and the number of samples tried for practically nothing is fair evidence that, although gold exists, and in all probabilities in paying quantities, it is not rich in deposits."[408]

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[403] ibid. p. 35.
[404] ibid. p. 146.
[405] ibid. pp. 146–152.
[406] ibid. p. 152.
[407] ibid. Davidson goes into some detail about the lack of water and the difficulties for both the explorers and their animals.
[408] ibid. p. 166.

On 5 September he named Mount Davidson "after my father, who had done much in a quiet way to open up new country in several of the colonies".[409] On arrival back in Barrow Creek he sent a telegram to his London bosses:

> "The disappointment is greater after three years work in the interior, but in this line success only comes to the few, and I can but hope that those who may follow in our footsteps will reap the reward we naturally think we deserve but failed to secure."[410]

In his journal and to the local newspapers Davidson urged others to make the journey:

> "Although we failed to discover payable reefs under present conditions, this does not signify they do not exist. The real work of prospecting the large areas of auriferous country located by this expedition is still to be done. I have no doubt payable gold reefs will be opened up."[411]

It's worth noting that significant geographical features of the Tanami Desert were named by Davidson (in English) after officers of the Central Australian Exploration Syndicate in Adelaide and London, and some of these places retain those names for government purposes: Gardner Range, Ware Range, Mount Wilson, Mount Stubbins, Bramall Creek. Davidson named places after his family too, including Mount Davidson and Atchinson Creek, as well as naming places by physical features such as Red Hill, Big Hill and Granite Hill. There are a few Indigenous names recorded including Tanami, Kurundi Creek and Munadgee Creek, but these are not many.[412]

Davidson also tested and described three gold bearing belts. Explorers and prospectors after Davidson used the maps and were able to reproduce the route Davidson took, creating the road into the desert in search of the elusive gold.

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[409] ibid. p. 167.
[410] ibid. p. 167.
[411] ibid. p. 196.
[412] ibid. p. 197.

3.9 Searching for gold and conflict (1905–1910)

After Davidson, around 1904, another prospecting venture took R. T. Maurice and W. R. Murray into the region. During this period a number of prospecting parties made their way to the Granites region, all following in the footsteps of Allan Davidson. A small rush occurred in 1909. In 1910, one hundred men were on the field and quite a few died on the tracks out to the mines. There was another small rush in 1925.[413]

The next significant colonial explorer who drove the Davidson track to the Granites and opened up the desert country for exploration was Michael Terry. Terry drove the first trucks through the Tanami in the 1920s. Michael Terry payed homage to Davidson, on Allan Davidson's death, in 1930. In an obituary in *The Adelaide Advertiser*, Terry called Davidson's unexpected death at 56 a "serious loss to the Empire".[414]

> "That his departure should be nigh upon the eve of major developments is all the more tragic for a London syndicate, of which he was a director, and was preparing to give Tanami a thorough trial. In the boldest words we may say it is indeed bad luck that he should not remain with us at so important a period in respect to his discovery."[415]

Terry went on to say that "for anyone who travels the lands between the overland telegraph line and Tanami use his admirable journal, issued by the SA government and thus gain some understanding of the man, his astounding energy, his great appreciation of detail and methodical work".[416]

During 1905 and 1906 a severe drought hit the region, forcing prospectors – with limited water supplies – back to the Centre. Kimber says Aboriginal people at the time – even though extremely well versed in the countryside – were also

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[413] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".
[414] "Obituary Allan Davidson," *The Advertiser*, Saturday 11 January 1930. p. 21.
[415] ibid. p. 21.
[416] ibid. p. 21.

retreating to areas where water was more plentiful.[417] Mervyn Meggitt accounts for 500 people at Granites during this time. However, this 'rush' was short-lived.[418]

In the following two years the government – under the control of SA – sunk wells along the tracks to the Tanami from Halls Creek (WA) to Wave Hill (in the NT). This area is also known as Lajamanu. In 1908 three men found a thousand ounces of gold (28 kg) at Tanami, and there were other large and small finds around this time.[419]

A geologist for the SA government, H. Brown, was sent to the Tanami and Granites region in 1908. His favourable report of gold led to an increase in gold prospecting and a small rush began as reports trickled back to Alice Springs, Halls Creek and SA. Brown, following the reports of many men arriving at the field from the government, arranged for a series of wells to be sunk from Wave Hill to Tanami via Hooker Creek.[420]

Halls Creek, at this time, was the only access point for prospectors. Prospectors still followed Davidson's predictions of gold in the Tanami and prospecting continued with reports from the Granites goldfields of other finds. There were approximately 60 men prospecting throughout the Tanami/Granites region prior to the report. These prospectors between 1902 and 1908 found small amounts of gold. After the report and the new wells, up to 500 men may have been at the site for a brief period.[421] A mining warden was appointed to the Granites in 1909, however there is little documented interaction between Warlpiri and prospectors until the death of a prospector in 1910.[422]

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[417] Kimber, "Dick Kimber Interviewed at the Strehlow Centre".
[418] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*. p. 21.
[419] Elias, "Jukurrpa – Golden Dreams".
[420] "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 68.
[421] ibid. p. 68.
[422] ibid.

3.10 The impact of the 1909 gold rush: conflicts over water and massacre

"The local Aborigines, mainly Warlpiri, at first avoided this large group of strangers at Tanami".[423] Meggitt wrote how there was little conflict until 1910, when Warlpiri men stole the stores of two prospectors and speared one of the men to death. Police at the Tanami camp and miners captured a number of Aboriginals following this incident, and they were escorted to Darwin and tried. It is not believed that any of the men captured were involved in the incident.[424]

Following this event, Elias discovered that Warlpiri avoided the Granites even though it was a significant sacred ritual site.[425]"This incident did little to encourage more than the already limited interaction between the Warlpiri and the prospectors, but oral histories collected by Dick Kimber indicate that violent reprisals in the wake of the death of Stuart were far more extensive than officially reported."[426]

One can discover numerous reports of reprisals following this killing. Meggitt writes that several colonials were captured for the crime and later discharged.[427] Then, a prospector named Lewis was speared to death at the Granites in 1911. According to Kimber and his Warlpiri sources the attack was actually over access to a key waterhole for the Warlpiri in the area, and this was the beginning of tensions around rock holes and waterholes.[428] Kimber maintains there were constant misconceptions between the colonial prospectors and Indigenous inhabitants. Kimber alleges Lewis gave the Warlpiri food and told them to "clear off". However, as the waterhole in question was an important source of water for them, they did not.[429]

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[423] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.
[424] ibid. p. 21.
[425] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".
[426] ibid. p. 69.
[427] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.
[428] Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–1894".
[429] ibid.

According to several now deceased senior Warlpiri law men, a trooper or troopers were sent out from Barrow Creek in the NT and Warlpiri men were rounded up and arrested – although they weren't the men who speared Lewis, and were not connected to the spearing in any way. According to Kimber, the men were chained to trees and summarily shot. This massacre was witnessed by other Warlpiri men and today it is an oral story still told by the Warlpiri.[430] In discussions about the incident at the Granites, Meggitt was informed in Lajamanu that "most of the tribe avoided the place for years to come".[431]

3.11 The SA government and political context of NT

We have already encountered how the NT was under the jurisdiction of the SA government in Chapter 2. This was part of a complex history of how the state was managed and it was to change again in the early 20th century. I'd like to quickly examine the timeline of changes to the state.

From 1827 to 1863 the Territory was part of NSW. However, NSW took little interest and eventually ceded the region to SA. The SA Administration, located in Darwin, eventually wanted the NT to pay for itself. They attempted to create an economic self-sufficiency through selling off land: first to pastoralists, and then to mining interests. Local pastoralists were encouraged to take up leases and conflicts ensued between Europeans and Indigenous. These were almost inevitably settled in favour of the Europeans. Meggitt attributes this to a desire to encourage more settlement in the region:

> "In any case the great distances, poor communications and shortage of administrative personnel made it almost inevitable that the settlers would take the law into their own hands. [Ironically], humanitarian concerns about the fate of Aborigines gave rise to the formation of police officers as 'protectors of Aborigines', and in 1892 a number of

[430] ibid.

[431] "Commonwealth Government Records About the Northern Territory"; Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.

areas were proclaimed Aboriginal reserves. In 1894 the Government medical officer became the chief Protector of Aborigines."[432]

As conflicts between pastoralists and other Indigenous groups increased many settlers abandoned their stations and properties. As SA was unable to finance the Territory and make it "pay its own way", it handed the state over to the Commonwealth in 1911. With this new state under its protectorate, the federal parliament, as we have seen, appointed biologist and anthropologist Baldwin Spencer as Chief Protector of Aboriginals in the NT. Baldwin Spencer then established the Aborigines Department and made many recommendations to Parliament. Legislation was passed in 1918 covering Aboriginal employment, residence, health and morality. These laws remained in force until 1933, when amendments were introduced.[433]

3.12 Impact of camels and drought

A severe drought between the years of 1924 and 1929 had a devastating impact. This, coupled with the ongoing violent incursions from pastoralists and the toll of lives from introduced diseases, reduced the numbers of Indigenous within the Central Desert area: "[i]n this region, the killing of Aboriginal people, and the heavy death toll inflicted by introduced diseases, produced acute shortages of labour on pastoral stations. The combination of dwindling interest in the gold workings at Tanami and the Granites, and the severe drought of 1924–29, exacerbated this situation".[434]

Prior to Michael Terry creating what is regarded as the first Tanami road in 1927 when he drove through the area in trucks, prospectors came from the north and west on camels. Camels would have one of the greatest impacts on the region.[435] Camels could empty rock holes and soakages very quickly. According to Elias, the

[432] *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*. p. 22.
[433] Markovich, "Prohibited Acts, and Intentions Not Motives. 'Genocide, a Crime of Which No Anglo-Saxon Nation Could Be Guilty'".
[434] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 209.
[435] ibid. p. 69.

water losses from camels dramatically affected Warlpiri's economic use of their places and the severe drought of 1924–29 exacerbated this situation.[436] According to Kimber, many Warlpiri left the area and headed to cattle stations in the north and east. Warlpiri men were also employed by prospectors.[437]

Up until the 1924–29 drought, the Warlpiri had had sporadic contact with Europeans. The Warlpiri came in to stock camps only out of curiosity. According to Meggitt, they would have been content to maintain sporadic contact indefinitely.[438]

Elias also acknowledges the drought as being the main reason Warlpiri then did venture into the cattle stations and mines: this was principally to acquire food and clothes, and tools, and in turn according to Elias, this created a desire for these goods particularly during the drought years: "the desire for goods turned Warlpiri attention away from their hunting and gathering economy".[439] This new found desire for goods as introduced by prospectors and station owners, coupled with the severe drought, meant many more Warlpiri were in close contact with Europeans. During this period Warlpiri were also forced to leave the centre of the desert to search for food and water. Parties travelled to the cattle stations to both north and east, increasing their contact with the pastoralists with whom they had previously little interaction, only to provide labour for very brief periods in order to acquire goods.[440]

The drought from 1924 to 1929 was regarded as Central Australia's severest drought in the recorded history of the area. Meggitt found that "after the first two years food and water were so scarce that only a few Warlpiri dared to remain in the desert. A number of these perished. The rest of the tribe was forced to disperse and seek food from the white men they hitherto had avoided."[441] Many moved to the Tanami and Granites mines, finding they had to

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[436] ibid.
[437] Kimber, "Dick Kimber Interviewed at the Strehlow Centre".
[438] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.
[439] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 69.
[440] "Jukurrpa – Golden Dreams". p. 209.
[441] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.

beg from prospectors; others travelled to the cattle stations in the Hanson and Lander Creek areas, and according to Meggitt the tensions between white cattlemen and Aborigines became ever more tense.[442]

The Coniston massacre, well documented, scattered the tribes even further.[443] "At least one hundred people were killed in the Cockatoo Creek Lander area. This catastrophe, and subsequent demographic impact triggered a whole-scale uprooting process that began in 1928."[444]

3.13 Michael Terry

Gold mining hit a lull in the 1920s until a lone prospector, Jimmy Wickham, returned with a small gold find from prospecting in the west and south of the Tanami. He had stories of a gold reef in the region, according to Elias and Terry, and although this reef was never verified or rediscovered it lead to the next wave of prospecting and goldmining in the region.[445] "The myth of Wickham's find was to inject substantial energy into the flagging activities of prospectors."[446]

Aside from Wickham's alleged discovery, the geologist H. Ellis came out to the Tanami in 1925 around the same time as Wickham, with stories of more gold deposits. Ellis published his findings in 1927, and this coupled with the story of Wickham's find, led to another rush: this one opening up the area for a new wave of mapping, exploration and desperate bids at discovering gold. Even though water was still a major issue prospectors began to investigate the area with more vigour. The major explorer at this time was the Tanami Gold Company. The company brought out the first mechanical stamp battery and gas engine by donkey teams to the Tanami in 1926 from Perth. However, a lack of water again played its hand, forcing the closure of the stamps operations in 1928. Other

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[442] ibid.
[443] See Chapter 4.
[444] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".
[445] "Commonwealth Government Records About the Northern Territory"; "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*; Terry, *Hidden Wealth and Hiding People*.
[446] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 211.

expeditions were carried out, including Thomson in 1926, in search of that elusive gold reef: as before, this was not found. Thomson did meet up with the explorer Michael Terry at the Granites and, regardless of these disappointments, they both believed the area had much more gold to yield.[447] Elias records a meeting between Thomson in 1926, on his expedition searching for the infamous Wickham's gold reef, and Michael Terry:

> "Thomson reported that all of the 'natives' encountered were friendly and that his party made frequent use of Warlpiri assistance: one man was given a tomahawk for helping to find water, and on another occasion men were given tobacco for demonstrating the use of a bullroarer."[448]
>
> "[a]pparently the Warlpiri people they met were quite familiar by this time with the intruders' obsession with gold and the party was encouraged to head south."[449]

At the Granites, Thomson met Terry "[a]nd both men concluded that the Tanami-Granites area needed extensive prospecting and bulk sampling. A short time later, in 1930, Terry was to make the original Tanami road between Halls Creek and Alice Springs through the Granites and Tanami."[450]

As noted earlier in this thesis, Michael Terry is known for the first motorised crossing of the Tanami.[451] In his seven months of fieldwork Terry plotted and named 40 topographical features between the border of WA and the start of the settlement along the Lander River 290 km north-west of Alice Springs.[452] Like Davidson, all of Terry's work was accepted by Commonwealth mapping, and like Davidson, Terry was primarily interested in gold in the Tanami/Granites region. Starting from Port Headland in WA, Terry and his six-wheeled Morris trucks

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[447] ibid. p. 211.
[448] ibid. p. 211.
[449] ibid. p. 211.
[450] ibid. p. 211.
[451] Charlotte Barnard, *Last Explorer – the Autobiography of Michael Terry* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1987).
[452] Terry, *Hidden Wealth and Hiding People*.

made their way from Broome to Halls Creek and then onto the Tanami, the Granites and Alice Springs.

Terry described the reason for the choice of vehicle like this: "[motor] transport was selected in the belief that better work afield can be done by this agency than on the backs of camels and horses".[453] Terry had come part of the way in 1925 and followed the tracks and routes of previous prospectors. By this time there was a track – following Allan Davidson's route – to the Granites: "tracks left by caterpillar track motors we took there in 1925 were still strong".[454]

Also like Davidson, Terry kept detailed journals which were later turned into a book published in 1931, *Hidden Wealth and Hiding People*, one of a number of books he published on his expeditions to various geological sites in Australia. In *Hidden Wealth*, Terry writes of encountering the unmapped interior, the spinifex plains and the rugged scrubland he saw all around him:

> "Five days after departing from Hall's creek we continued inland. Having said good-bye to those at the homestead, radiators were turned south-east for the last stage of the Tanami. We were indeed about to walk off the map – the next homestead being in Central Australia, a good four hundred miles away. Once the confines of Gordon Downs had been left behind there would be no settlement, except the police camp at Tanami until we reached Lander Creek and so made contact with the limit of the white man west of the overland Telegraph line from Adelaide to Darwin. Beyond Tanami, except for the traverse run by Davidson in 1900 there is no official mapping, just open country of Spinifex plain with isolated hills."[455]

As well as various tracks left by prospectors and Davidson in his time, on the track to the Granites, Terry followed a "track of sorts, principally deep-cut wheel ruts of the donkey teams which had moved the battery to the field".[456] The tracks

[453] ibid. pp. 130–140.
[454] ibid. pp. 130–140.
[455] ibid. p. 130.
[456] ibid. p. 117.

left by the Syndicate truck had long since been sanded over. He also followed the wheel ruts of the wagons on much the same path. This is the first written acknowledgement of a road of sorts. It was the track that Terry would lobby the government to improve.[457] After finding the Granites the expedition encountered incredible anthills that they forcibly knocked down to create a better track, Terry concedes the going improved:

> "So it was with great satisfaction that we knocked down or broke off the tops of the minor ant hills with our strong bumper bars … The way opened out, the hills petered out, til at length a great plain, bounded by the Pargee range ahead lay before us … Travelling improved again; the trucks got along at a great old bat, eating up the miles pleasantly which was surprising, for not a few had said we might not see Tanami with a whole skin." [458]

They cleared the remainder of the track of anthills in anticipation of their return along the track. Later in their travels they encounter the first sandy gorges that disabled the trucks and then later they hit massive spinifex:

> "South-east from the Gardner range, following the strike of some reefs we set out in the hope of more mineralized outcrops. Soon after quitting excellent travel on hard rubble flats, we came to a great thicket on high scrub; being dreadful on tyres, it was named puncture bush. Standing over fifteen feet high, well above truck canopies unable to dodge in an out of clumps, you had to go straight at it and take the consequences."[459]

On this overland route Terry had to stop every mile to search for spikes in the wheels. At this point they changed direction and followed camel pads to Tanami.

Taking the trucks through slowly Terry encountered many Indigenous camps and people – far more than Davidson – and was also more opinionated about the

[457] ibid. p. 117.
[458] ibid. p. 121.
[459] ibid. p. 138.

groups they encountered, attempting to gain information about their culture and customs. He was critical of Indigenous camps and what he took as their lifestyle, and made a number of patronising, ill-informed assumptions about their habits:

> "The camps of these nomadic folk are indeed simple affairs. Making no regular habitation, having no stock, neither cultivating nor putting by store for lean days, they wander about their tribal grounds here today, there tomorrow, never long at one spot."[460]

He regards an Indigenous man at a waterhole and makes a comment in his journal, again exposing his very limited understanding of their bushcraft: "[w]hen they sit down, by the water, partly through laziness, partly through certainty of a brief stay, in winter time they pull off a few leafy branches, maybe gather a little spinifex, and form a pile".[461] These journals also reveal little understanding of traditional customs or culture, with Terry frequently adopting a colonial gung-ho approach to serious issues of non-Indigenous trespass on sacred, tribal land:

> "Take the case of Walter Oakes when he was somewhere south-west of Bugagee he came upon a mob of three-hundred blacks who bailed him up. By violent gesture and their term ('phutta-phutta' repeated quickly) they conveyed to him in no uncertain manner that he had best clear out. Wisely he did so. What more could one man do against a mob like that? He has to sleep."[462]

3.14 Terry lobbies for his 'white man's dreaming track'

In his book, *Hidden wealth and Hiding People*, Terry makes the straightforward case for the creation of road from Alice Springs to the Tanami to find gold:

[460] ibid. p. 132.
[461] ibid. p. 133.
[462] ibid. p. 133.

> "For a number of years a few have agitated to get a stock route across from Tanami to the overland telegraph line, something done to open up this hinterland, to make it suitable for everyday travel, in contradiction to the existent uncertainties which grow to actual closing of the way in severe times to all but the camel-man and the motor."[463]

In a chapter, 'Steering for Naval Action', Terry lobbies descriptively for the road. He makes it clear the road is to access the gold reefs at the Tanami. He says the six-wheel Morris could make it, but a fire trail over the spinifex was urgently required. He suggests the route from the Stafford's at Coniston Station to the Granites, which is where eventually the road was created.

> "The whole ploughing operation could be done in a couple of months by two white men, maybe a black or two, animals and the plough-why, the whole contract should not cost 500 (pounds). Terry ascertains the length and duration trip will take from Adelaide to Alice and to the Granites with the new road."[464]

Derek Elias's anecdotal research at Lajamanu uncovered the Warlpiri elders' name for the track:

> "Older Warlpiri men at Lajamanu who remember this time refer to the Tanami road as the 'white man's dreaming track', a double meaning because the track linked up their major places, the towns and the minefields. The track assisted the opening of cattle stations to the south of the region; notably Braitling took up land and occupied Mt Doreen pastoral lease in 1932."[465]

Dick Kimber's oral history stories of the area include conversations with Warlpiri elders now deceased. Kimber had conversations with senior elder, Jack Ross (Jakamarrra), who is believed to have lived for more than 100 years in the

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[463] ibid. p. 134.
[464] ibid. p. 135.
[465] Elias, "Jukurrpa – Golden Dreams".

Tanami. The recollections he passed onto Kimber include his first sightings of a vehicle believed to have been one of Michael Terry's trucks:

> "Old Jack Ross (Jakamarra) was a very old man accepted to be over 100 … (he) was very alert, sang the songs. Sat down with Harry Nelson who he was related to through the Jakamarra skin. He practiced the songs that Jack (taught). Old Jack said he saw these vehicles (Michael Terry's trucks). There's a little bit in the start of the bush mechanics which shows this old man discussing the first track that he saw and I'm sure from my discussion with Jack it was one of the Michael Terry vehicles. He first saw the tracks and he thought the big tracks must be two mythological snakes – jukurrpa dreamtime snakes – which they had in the country and they were wary of them. He saw the car and someone threw a spear at the tyre and it went ssshhhhhhh and they all ran away. There's a lovely bit (in bush mechanics) of old Jack sitting making brake drums out of a bit of wood so they could patch up an old car and it's the beginning of the bush mechanics story. That would've been the earliest contact period (Jack Ross seeing Michael Terry's vehicles in the late 1920s) that you have in this part of the world –the Tanami desert – with motor vehicles … That is effectively where the road would have travelled (past Ryan's Well and Coniston Station) because he (Michael Terry) met Randall Stafford at Coniston and comments on the Coniston issue afterwards."[466]

[466] Kimber, "Dick Kimber Interviewed at the Strehlow Centre".

Chapter 4

Digging into the Tragedy Track: conflict and massacre

> "In the early phase of colonisation (from the 1870s to the late 1920s, the moment of the last known massacre of Indigenous people), the colonial power over life or death is transparent. In that phase, a despotism over the colonised secured the invaders' property (land and herds) and combined the efforts of citizens and police in murderous campaigns on which were placed no effective legal limits. In that phase, the only 'welfare' interventions seeking to enhance Indigenous life, rather than simply to proscribe their intrusions on settler interests, were: the proclamation of the inviolable south-west reserve in 1920, in remote deserts unwanted by the colonizers; the institutionalized training of 'half-castes', from 1914 in Alice-Springs; and the (Lutheran) Finke River mission's attempted construction, from 1877, of an evangelical community centred on Hermannsburg."[467]

Tim Rowse, in his 2002 work *White Power, White Flour,* uses Foucault's analysis of power and control to examine rationing for Indigenous inhabitants of Central Australia from the late 19th century to the rationing at missions and reserves through the 20th century.[468] [469] Rowse asserts that, from the 1890s, rationing replaced violence as a means of governance. In this book he documents how rationing "was a pervasive institution of central Australian colonialism".[470] His critical history of the culture of colonisers through the exploration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous sources is a guide for this chapter.

Using Foucault's concept of behavioural management being transferred from institution to institution as a means of control, Rowse finds rationing to be the colonial technique "[which] could be transferred across a diversity of institutions: the scientific party, the pastoral lease, the mission enclave, the

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[467] Rowse, Tim. *White flour, white power: From rations to citizenship in Central Australia*. p. 7.

[468] ibid.

[469] M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish.* (A. Sheridan, Trans.)(New York: Vintage Books, 1977); T. Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 3, no. 2 (1990); "Indigenous Citizenship and Self-Determination: The Problem of Shared Responsibilities. "; *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*.

[470] Rowse, 2002, p. 7.

police station, the welfare settlement. At each of these sites, in central Australia from the 1880s to the 1960s, people were issued food and goods as rations."[471]

The second Foucauldian concept he explores concerns the construction, "among colonists", of a discourse about the colonised.[472] "Foucault, and others working in his wake, have shown that the practices of governing generate knowledges of those governed: such knowledges inform further practices of governing.[473] In terms of rationing, Rowse finds it "[w]as one fruitful site for the production and testing of rationers' understandings of Indigenous people. In particular, the knowledges associated with rationing have included speculative constructions of the nature of Indigenous agency."[474]

This chapter will examine the conditions for the Warlpiri in the 1920s prior to the gold rush of 1932–33 and the devastating impact of the Coniston massacre. It will look at what Tim Rowse has described as the objectification of the Warlpiri for research purposes, and the system of rationing introduced to quell violence. It will describe the gold rush and the condition at the mines in the early and late 1930s. I will use oral history accounts of change and movement along the road, beginning with the impact of the Coniston massacre and then later, the arrival of the patrol officers, pastoral leases and properties and the movement of the people to missions.[475]

4.1 The track and the gold rush in the 1920s

By the mid to late 1920s, after the gold rush of the early 1920s, and the forging of a road by Michael Terry's trucks, the Tanami Track was used frequently to

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[471] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish.* (A. Sheridan, Trans.); Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*.

[472] *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*. p. 5.

[473] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*. (A. Sheridan, Trans.); Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*. (More on colonial discourse studies in Chapter 6.)

[474] *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*. p. 5. I return to this in chapters 6 and 7 when I look at colonial discourse theory and radio documentary.

[475] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*. Podcast audio, *Hindsight*, 50 minutes, 2011, http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/hindsight/re-tracing-the-tragedy-track/3673122; Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*.

transport goods, prospectors and those interested in attaining pastoral leases to the Tanami goldfields. Elias notes a mechanical battery was brought from Perth in donkey teams to aid the mining, and by 1926 the first large-scale mining at Tanami began in earnest.[476] The track allowed for the movement of goldminers along the Tanami and in turn the track facilitated the opening up of the country to cattle stations that weren't located along the Overland Telegraph Line: "The track assisted the spread of cattle stations from Alice Springs to the south of the survey area. Most notably, Braitling took up and occupied the Mount Doreen pastoral lease in 1932."[477]

In *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* (the radio documentary), we travel along the main track and several back tracks on the way past Coniston Station and to the Granites goldfields. This is the route that the original newspaper expedition took to the Granites in 1932. One pastoral station, extremely important to the history of movement and change for the Warlpiri during this period of economic colonisation and featured in the documentary, is Mount Doreen. [478] I will look more closely at Mount Doreen in the following chapter.

4.2 The Warlpiri people of the Central Desert, 1920–1950

> "The profound changes caused by the drought drew the majority of the Warlpiri out of the Tanami desert and into prolonged, frequently disastrous contact with pastoral and settler society on its fringes …"[479]

From the 1920s, drought led a great demographic shift of the Warlpiri. Derek Elias writes about this demographic shift which saw, over 20 years, the relocation of the Warlpiri to the Granites and Tanami region. His research

[476] Elias, "Jukurrpa – Golden Dreams".
[477] "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 210.
[478] I will return to the history of Mount Doreen station in Chapter 5.
[479] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 209.

reveals how the movement changed their relationship to their sites of significance and drew the people more frequently to the pastoral stations and the mine.[480]

When historian and anthropologist Mervyn Meggitt spent time with the Warlpiri in the late 1950s he came to the conclusion that the Warlpiri were able to maintain cultural practices despite colonisation, but during the first phases some cultural practices were to change due to white contact. Ultimately, he saw strong evidence that family structures were being adversely affected,[481] "[although] the initial pattern of European settlement enabled the Warlpiri to maintain for a time the traditional division of the tribe into four major, localised communities, this slowly broke down as the cattle-stations and mines attracted the younger men."[482]

The early impact of conflict and massacre and the replacement of violence with rationing as Rowse has described, led not only to an erosion of cultural practices but also to a loss of place which, as Meggitt pointed out in his earlier anthropological research, led to the loss of significant cultural and sacred sites.[483]

4.3 The winding road to Coniston: the Coniston massacre of 1928

As the Tanami Track winds its way from Alice Springs to the Granites mines it detours past cattle stations, notably the cattle station and wolfram mine at Coniston Station near Mount Doreen. Not only did the Tanami Track bring the Warlpiri into more frequent contact with the cattle stations and miners, many

[480] ibid. p. 210.

[481] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*. p. 331. Mervyn Meggitt worked amongst the Warlpiri in the early 1950s. He found that one of the few tribal groups that were still intact following European contact was the Warlbiri also known as Warlpiri. In his study Meggitt worked amongst the tribe at Hooker Creek (Lajamanu), Yuendumu, Phillips Creek: all missions established during the 1930s.

[482] ibid. p. 331.

[483] ibid.

altercations between Warlpiri and the colonial pastoralists were recorded. The police and authorities were rarely on the side of the Indigenous.[484]

The road Michael Terry forged with his trucks looped around Coniston Station. This was the road that Baume travelled on his way to the Granites with the Sun-Telegraph Expedition. This is the road that I take with two others in the making of the documentary.[485]

The Coniston massacre is believed to be one of the last major conflicts between desert tribesmen and their European colonisers. Elias found that "[this] catastrophe and its subsequent demographic impact, triggered a wholesale uprooting process that began in 1928 for the Warlpiri of this area and which ended only with the establishment of communities, missions or ration depots as they were also frequently called."[486]

Wilson and O'Brien describe Coniston Station as the western outpost of the Central Desert. The Coniston lease, 250 km north-west of Alice Springs, was granted to Randall Stafford of Adelaide in 1917. In their detailed descriptions of the massacre, the place and the time, Wilson and O'Brien say contact in this area of the country, before the Coniston massacre, had been minimal: "The Tanami desert lay to the west of Coniston, the Lander River country to the north. European contact with the region's traditional owners, the Warlpiri, had been minimal, with pastoral stations and the Tanami goldfield the only permanent European presence."[487]

Kimber, Elias, Meggitt and Baume, amongst many other historians and anthropologists, documented the massacre which occurred in the area that was known as the Cockatoo Creek and Landers River region.[488]

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[484] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*; Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*; Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*

[485] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*. For more on Terry and his expedition see Chapter 3.

[486] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". pp. 208–209.

[487] Bill Wilson, and O'Brien, Justine, "To Infuse an Universal Terror': A Reappraisal of the Coniston Killings," *Aboriginal History* 27 (2003).

[488] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*; Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; Kimber, "The End of the Bad Old Days: European Settlement in Central Australia, 1871–

Valerie Napaljarri Martin from Yuendumu, co-narrator of *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* (Angel, 2011), knows the Warlpiri version of the story that is part of contemporary Warlpiri folklore and she followed the track to revisit the site in the making of the documentary. In the documentary, Valerie gives an emotional account of the story. For her and her family, the consequences of Brookes' killing were to have profound impact on her family for generations.[489]

> "The old track went through here, where we are now headed – Coniston Station. There was a massacre here in 1928. People used to come here from all over the countryside. They used to come here. Live here. Some Warlpiri people used to live here too. Used to be a big camp here, in those days, in 1928. In those days, they used to have cleaning ladies, Aboriginal women, "lubras" they used to call them. They used to bring back tobacco, rations and get themselves a feed. Then one day this old man was waiting, waiting for his wife. That old Brookes, he had her up in the house. So, he went up there checking on it and seen them two together and in a jealous rage he murdered him with an axe. That's how it started. In those days … So many (killed).[490]

For Baume, this was not the way he told it, and one can discover multiple versions explaining what triggered the reprisal. The Baume version involves the Warlpiri and Wallamulla tribes setting up camp near an elderly prospector named Brookes. Brookes, as this story goes, shared his stores with these tribes until he decided they could do so no more. According to Baume, and also Meggitt, at this moment, the Warlpiri clubbed him to death and rifled through his stores before fleeing. This account is strongly disputed however by Kimber and all Warlpiri accounts.[491] After the initial murder of Brookes, the Warlpiri who fled from Coniston Station made for Landers River. It was here that police began their reprisals.[492] According to Kimber, the murder that triggered the Coniston

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1894"; Meggitt, "Gadjari among the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia," *Oceania* (1966); Elias, "The Measure of Dreams. Customary Land Tenure and Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea".

[489] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

[490] Valerie Napaljarri Martin quoted in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

[491] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*; Meggitt, "Gadjari among the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia".

[492] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

massacre at Coniston Station in 1928 was an attempt by the Warlpiri to drive out the pastoralists. Kimber explains the Warlpiri were keen to drive Stafford out from Coniston.

Kimber likewise alleges that Brookes, a prospector working for Stafford, was involved with a Warlpiri woman and this led to the first incident. From his reading of the events: "[the] incident began when Brookes, a friend of Randall Stafford's' at Coniston station, was speared by Aboriginal men for taking a woman. He had two Aboriginal women already and there was a perception he had a third."[493] Troopers led by an officer, Constable Murray, were soon brought in. Accounts of how many Aboriginal people were killed on that day vary. The official figure is 31, however, Dick Kimber's oral history accounts indicate more than 300, possibly many more, were shot over several years and across a wide tract of the NT, and this has not been fully considered.[494] According to Kimber, "Paddy Tucker, an old prospector said, 'You gotta remember, Dick … people kept it quiet'. He thought carefully about it and said over two or three years more than 300 people were shot. Constable Murray and Nugget Moreton weren't writing reports. It's hearsay as to the numbers." But according to Kimber, Stafford only stopped the shooting after he accidently killed a young woman.[495]

In his 1933 book, *Tragedy Track*, Baume gives an account from Randall Stafford, the owner of Coniston Station. Baume blamed the incident on the Warlpiri who, he said, had tried to drive the Staffords out of nearby Cockatoo Creek.[496] "They have camped on his property in their hundreds and have refused to leave. They have demanded food at spear point. And a lone couple of whites with rifles are not a match for a hundred tribesmen; let the men who protect the Aborigines say what they will."[497]

Baume's version of events at Coniston following the murder of Brookes is vivid but without deep insight. Certainly, the language, directed toward the Indigenous, is brutal and unforgiving, and this shocks us today especially in the

[493] Kimber, "Dick Kimber Interviewed at the Strehlow Centre".
[494] ibid.
[495] ibid.
[496] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*. p. 58.
[497] ibid.

light of what we now know about conditions for the Aboriginal people who lived there at the time. This excerpt is particularly important for my story, as it gives the reader insight into the journalist's viewpoint and his prejudices: ultimately Baume proffers a nostalgic view of the station owner, as well as a reductive and discriminatory view of history which is typical of British colonial thinking.

> "There has been much controversy, and Randall Stafford's name has been linked often with the tragedy which occurred in 1928 only thirty odd miles from Coniston homestead at Brook's soak, fifteen miles from the fringe of the spinifex desert and last water for many weary miles. Old Brookes was a wandering prospector and a staunch friend of Stafford. When the blacks were hungry he gave them food. It was his invariable practice. He did not interfere with their women – though the practice of the desert tribes is to send in their gins as an offering for food. But his kindliness did not prevent the blacks he befriended from cutting him to pieces one day, near the soak which bears his name, and hiding (or attempting to hide) the poor butchered remains in the rabbit holes near the grave, which today, surmounted by a headstone placed there by old man Stafford, stands mutely to remind the overlander of the tragedy. Constable Murray, Randal Stafford and others, saw that vengeance was done. Many blacks were shot. The missionaries claim that the shooting was brutal and unnecessary, but after having heard from trustworthy men like Stafford, Rieff, trooper Lynch and others of the habits of some of the desert tribes, I will not listen again to the charge of brutality leveled by some well-meaning men against the police and the posse which saw that justice was done."[498]

Of the reprisals that followed, Hinkson writes that Constable George Murray led "a mounted assault" through Anmatyerre and Warlpiri country killing scores (an unknown number) of men women and children. Referring to Petronella Vaarzon-

[498] ibid.

Morel's oral history accounts, Hinkson finds references to entire family groups being killed in the reprisals that followed.[499]

Hinkson also makes reference to the board of enquiry that was established after the massacre of Warlpiri, which found that the killings were largely justified and it was not a punitive expedition. This is strongly disputed.

According to Meggitt, the shootings left the Warlpiri with a longstanding distrust of Europeans and they withdrew from a lot of contact other than work at the stations and at wolfram mining at Mount Doreen. [500] An official inquiry, a board comprising a Queensland police magistrate, an SA Police Inspector and the Central Australian Chief of Police, not surprisingly exonerated Constable Murray and other policemen who were involved in the massacre at Coniston. At this inquiry it was claimed only 17 were shot dead.[501] But Bill Wilson and Justin O'Brien also reveal information that indicates the total Aboriginal death toll was at least twice the official figure. Oral history anthropologist Liam Campbell spent 10 years with Darby Jampijinpa Ross in the 1990s onward. Here is an excerpt from an oral history account of the Coniston massacre, recorded by Campbell:

> "My sister, all about they get shot, too, there. And my brother-in-law. They finish all up there. And from there, they [Constable Murray's party] bin look: ''Oh, enough here. Oh, him bin puttem heap, little children and big boy, young man, and big boy … children. Oh, every-thing there! Women there; young girl. They killem' whole lot there.'"[502]

"Coniston was the subject of official reports, three court hearings, a Board of Enquiry, domestic and international press reports, a book, a thesis and journal

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[499] Hinkson, *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*. p. 56 referring to Petronella Vaarzon-Morel, *Warlpiri Women's Voices: Our Lives Our Histories*, ed. Petronella Vaarzon-Morel (Alice Springs: IAD Press, 1995). p. 45.

[500] More on this and the relationship between the Warlpiri and the Mount Doreen owners, the Braitling family, in a later part of the chapter.

[501] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.

[502] Darby Jampijinpa Ross talking about the events at Coniston in 1928. Quoted in L. Campbell, "Walking a Different Road: Recording Oral History with Darby Jampijinpa Ross," *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 26, no. 1 (2004).

articles. Despite this prominence and wealth of documentation, much remains imprecise and ambiguous in our historical understanding of the events leading to, during, and after the killings."[503] According to Meggitt, after the shootings the Warlpiri scattered, eventually drifting into Tenant Creek, Mount Singleton, the Mount Doreen area, and some moved to the Granites and Tanami mines.[504] The distrust of Europeans also "to an important degree reinforced the authority of the older men of the tribe who had previously tried to dissuade their juniors from becoming entangled with white men".[505]

Wilson and O'Brien's analysis also draws attention to three significant issues that led up to the Coniston killings and which are often disputed in the various interpretations of the event: conflict over land use, the effects of drought, and the events which led to the demise of Frederick Brookes.

> "In the non-Indigenous community, from police and pastoralists to politicians, there was a consensus that the competing interests of traditional Aboriginal owners of land and pastoralists could not mutually prosper. The South Australian Register summed it by stating 'the blacks have taken charge and it will be an impossibility to develop the country until there is more police protection'."[506]

According to Elias, the Coniston massacre became the point of significant change for the Warlpiri; coupled with the drought it brought about the demographic shift that led to more Warlpiri being in the Granites and Tanami region. This, in turn, changed their relationship to their sites of significance and importance.[507]

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[503] Wilson, "'To Infuse an Universal Terror': A Reappraisal of the Coniston Killings". p. 59.
[504] ibid.
[505] ibid. p. 25.
[506] ibid. p. 209.
[507] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 210.

4.4 The Granites gold rush 1932: the story of the Tragedy Track

Michael Terry's track and the break in the drought, along with the new stamp battery for the mine, brought a new rush of interest in the Granites. Despite this there weren't many prospectors at the Granites until a find in 1932. More than 200 people were believed to be at the field in this time.[508] The so-called 'gold rush' written up in the newspapers by Ernestine Hill in Alice Springs and F. E. Baume in Sydney impacted heavily on Warlpiri in the region.[509] According to Elias the Warlpiri were harassed by police stationed at the Granites mines; their water sources were being emptied by prospectors and they believed they had been invaded.[510]

Baume, Madigan and Terry all document the impact of the Granites rush on the Warlpiri and their places.[511] Elias comments on their findings:

> "The prospectors who were having little luck at the Granites wandered throughout the Tanami-Granites region and emptied many of Warlpiri's valuable water supplies in order to maintain their prospecting activities. Warlpiri were increasingly resentful of this tremendous disruption of the fragile economy of the Tanami Desert and it is clearly documented that they were under the impression that they had been invaded and that it was high time for the interlopers to depart."[512]

This invasion also brought with it venereal disease that spread quickly through stations and communities. Elias and Baume claim sex could be exchanged for

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[508] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.

[509] Newspaper stories from: Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

[510] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

[511] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*; Cecil Thomas Madigan, "The Simpson Desert Expedition, 1939: Scientific Reports. No. 1–8," *The Society* (1944); Terry, *Sand and Sun: Two Gold-Hunting Expeditions with Camels in the Dry Lands of Central Australia.*

[512] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

goods.[513] This was documented also by T. G. H. Strehlow in his journal during his many visits to the Granites and Tanami goldfields, as well as the pastoral stations as the patrol officer for the region.[514]

4.5 Oral history accounts

> "We had heard that in the Granites, to the west, a strange kind of people with white skins were staying. One day my father decided to have a look at those people, so we walked to Granites, where we saw them working in the coppermine (sic) there. To me those white people looked strange and I couldn't understand the way they were talking. We stayed there for a few days and then went back to the bush again. There was a road that went from the Granites to Thompsons Rockhole and on to Alice Springs, but we didn't go there, we stayed in our own country, east of Thompsons Rockhole and lived there off the land (Jangala 1977:1)."[515]

Elias says the Granites gold rush has two distinguishing features. Firstly, water was *not* recognised as a problem because a government well had already been sunk. Water clearly *was* a major problem for the Warlpiri and prospectors alike, even with this well. Secondly, the social context of the Granites rush brought the first official government policy that addressed the presence of the Warlpiri in the Tanami Desert.[516] Meggitt found, following the Coniston massacre, police kept all Indigenous people at a 10-mile radius from the prospectors' camps even when they were working for them.[517]

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[513] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

[514] Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".

[515] I. Bryson, "Gold Stories from Lajamanu" (videorecording). Centre for Cross-cultural Research, ANU, 2000. Interviews with Abie Jangala, Victor Simon Jupurrurla, Henry Anderson (Cook) Jakamarra, Ronnie Lawson Jakamarra and Doug Johnson Japanangka. Interviewd by Derek Elias. In English. Quoted in Elias, "Jukurrpa – Golden Dreams" and "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

[516] "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

[517] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.

At the time of the 'rush', Warlpiri were feared as violent and unpredictable because of their attempts to drive out cattle in the Tanami through spearing them.[518] This is despite the police and prospectors being the greatest threat and the most violent to the Warlpiri. The newly updated government policy (Aboriginals Ordinance Act of 1932, updated from 1918) meant Warlpiri not working in the mines had to stay 10 miles from the miner's camp. There had been little other involvement other than trade of goods in exchange for labour.[519] Elias and Meggitt illustrate the failure of relations and the contempt in which the Indigenous at the mine were kept. After the murder of a Warlpiri man and the wounding of other Warlpiri following the theft of provisions at the miners' camp, Elias finds no official record was made of the incident.[520]

4.6 In search of a gold rush

In 1932, on this newly ploughed road, the Tanami Track, we find the newspaper-led 'Madigan expedition' beginning their slow and inexorable drive to the gold.

> "The track from Alice Springs to the Granites is a tragedy of desolation – 380 miles of heat and flies, dust and spinifex. From Alice Springs the Madigan party followed the overland telegraph line for almost eighty miles to Ryan's Well."[521]

The radio documentary, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track,* made for ABC RN's *Hindsight*, follows F. E. Baume's telling of the 1932 Granite gold rush recounted

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[518] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

[519] This *Aboriginals Ordinance 1918* (Act no. 9/1918) combined and replaced the *Northern Territory Aboriginals Act of 1910* (SA) and the Commonwealth Aboriginals Ordinance of 1911. It carried over most of the provisions of the previous ordinances. The Chief Protector retained control over many aspects of Aboriginal lives and continued to be the legal guardian of every Aboriginal child. The *Aboriginals Ordinance 1918* was amended 18 times over the following decades, and was repealed by the *Welfare Ordinance 1953*. The Aboriginals Ordinance was amended by Act No. 6 1923, Act No. 10 1924, Act No. 11 1924, Act No. 14 1925, Act No. 5 1927, Act No. 17 1928, Act No. 23 1928, Act No. 5 1930, Act No. 4 1933, Act No. 4 1936, Act No. 5 1937, Act No. 7 1937, Act No. 4 1939, Act No. 11 1941, Act No. 5 1943, Act No. 8 1947, Act No. 7 1953, Act No. 9 1953. George, G., "*Aboriginal Ordinance 1918* (1918–1953)", Australian Government, https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/ref/nt/biogs/YE00037b.htm

[520] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.

[521] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

in his book, *Tragedy Track: the Story of the Granites*.[522] The book contains a series of essays and newspaper stories that followed the rush and documented the expedition. Newspaper stories were published in Associated Newspapers Limited, owned by R. C. Packer, and in the *Melbourne Herald,* then owned by the Murdoch family.[523] Baume was a journalist for the Packer family and working for Associated Press; along for the journey was Franz Marcard, the photographer, and C. T. Madigan, a geologist from Adelaide University.[524] The Sun-Telegraph Expedition to the Granites goldfields is the first newspaper-led expedition in Australian history, and despite its omission from anthropological or historical research, is significant for its representation of the Indigenous people of the area.

Baume, Madigan and Marcard were engaged on this expedition to validate the stories of the 'rush' through reportage. Baume's stories specifically outline the obstacles the colonisers faced in pioneering mining in this region. They describe, vividly and in archaic language, the rugged landscape, the obstacles faced by prospectors, and the fierce resistance by Indigenous owners and occupiers of the land.[525] The stories clearly expose the prevalent thinking of white male explorers, journalists and prospectors of the day; discourses that are both damning and revealing. *Tragedy Track* soon became an Australian popular history text and was printed by the mining company and reprinted right up until the mid 1990s.[526]

Baume begins his book:

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[522] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

[523] I look particularly at the telegraph and Sydney sun newspapers where Baume worked under the auspices of Associated Press under the control of R. C. Packer . ibid.

[524] Baume writes that he met Ernestine Hill in Alice Springs in 1932 (*Tragedy Track*, p. viii) and heard her stories there about the Granites and gold finds. Ernestine Hill, according to Baume, held court in Alice Springs with miners, stockmen and government workers. She spent considerable time at the Granites and was well known to the prospectors: "Mrs Hill heard the first tale of the Granites from the men who wandered in with gold they had won dry-blowing and dollying." He apologies on her behalf for exaggerating the extent of the finds: "It was not for her to realize that the few ounces of gold won by lone prospectors did not mean the discovery of another Coolgardie." p. viii ibid.

[525] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

[526] *Tragedy Track* was republished to "commemorate a milestone in one of Australia's greatest success stories – the pouring of the one-millionth ounce of gold from North Flinders Mines Limited's Tanami Desert deposits in the Northern Territory on 13 September 1994".

> "Why was the Madigan expedition, of which I was a member, sent to the Granites – a spot 63 miles south east of Tanami and 380 miles N.W. of Alice Springs? The Managing Editor of Associated Newspapers (Mr R. C. Packer), after due consideration with Mr Keith Murdoch, Managing Director of the Melbourne Herald group, felt that the investigating public was entitled to a better and more authoritative description of the field than could be – or would be – given by an individual mining company. The rise of the Granites shares was too swift, too mysterious, too quiet, to be all that it might have been. Hence the independent inquiry."[527]

As soon as they were on the road Baume stared filing stories to Associated Press. The newspaper stories ran on the front pages of the major dailies for months prior to the expedition departing from Alice Springs and almost every day for the six weeks of the expedition.[528] In all the stories we find 'the gold rush', the climbing gold stocks, a work for the dole scheme (to lure unemployed out to the goldmines), claims of substantial gold discoveries and the frightening spectres of the 'natives'. Over one thousand acres of desert was in the process of being pegged out by prospectors. Thousands of shares in the mines had been sold. The stories of Indigenous resistance to the prospectors on sacred and tribal lands dominated the headlines as the possibility of finding gold began to diminish.[529] Baume's account is a record of this ill-fated journey and it's also a snapshot of the predominant views and values of the colonial prospectors, adventurers and missionaries of the time. While other expeditions – such as the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits, led by Alfred Haddon in 1898, the Spencer and Gillen expedition of 1901–02, Radcliffe-Brown's 1910–11 Oxford and Cambridge Expedition to WA and the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land in 1948 – collected visual and oral artefacts (bones, tools and other collectibles), The Sun-Telegraph Expedition of 1932 collected

[527] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites* p. 4.
[528] See Chapter 6 for a discourse analysis and run-down of the newspaper stories; also the appendices.
[529] "Dangers of Waterhole".

popular representations: stereotypes, images and myths. Below is a typical extract of conquering the desert as a dispatch from the field.[530]

> "The Madigan Geological Expedition has arrived at the Granites after five days journey by motor-truck from Alice Springs. This is how you read of the arrival of a party at these lonely goldfields. But you can never realize the desolation of a long Northern Territory trek, or the wonder of it or the hardihood of the bushmen who make it possible unless you journey yourself into the heart of one of the worst deserts in the world.
>
> Travelling out from the overland telegraph line is no joke. True, it is not the ghastly business some vivid literature would have you believe. But it is a strain from beginning to end; strain when you think of your engine or of your water supply, your tyres, your camping position. From once you leave Coniston Station, owned by that fine old bushman Randal Stafford, you are in lonely country, with suspicious Myall blacks watching you from mulga and from stunted desert trees, fearing and hating you as another invader who will take their precious water from drying creek, stinking 'soak' or soupy rockhole …
>
> Today, of course, there is more traffic on the road than when the first camel prospectors swung out over the desert before Michael Terry had blazed the present track with his trucks not so many years ago. But all the traffic does not make the track one whit less lonely nor the vast distances one inch the less."[531]

As they travelled out to the Granites it became clear that the gold rush they were expecting to discover hadn't really happened. There was no evidence of a gold seam or gold finds that could substantiate a 'rush', and a severe shortage of water was leading to many deaths; dysentery had spread in the camps too.

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[530] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.
[531] ibid. p. 37.

> "Two scenes at the Granites I will never forget. The one, the collapse near the tin shed which was the store, of a man from Adelaide, worn out by flies and dysentery, half starved, unable to buy food because he was penniless, unable to borrow food because few men at the Granites were able to help him, being short of rations themselves. I gave him a cup of condensed milk and water and he screamed. 'For God's sake take me back with you,' he said, and was convulsed with vomiting, and bent double he retched blood. Then he burst into tears and sobbed like a baby. No coward, no weakling, no craven. Just a city man who had thought to find work at the Granites; who had begged – and received – a lift from Alice Springs to the field after having spent all his money – a pitiably poor store – on the train fare to the Alice."[532]

These extracts give you a glimpse into the prevailing discourses (discussed in more detail in Chapter 6) and indicate that despite much evidence of gold there were a number of men on the goldfield attracted by the paper's stories.

4.7 Madigan's report

C. T. Madigan was employed as the geologist on the Baume/newspaper expedition. He found that there was little geologically to support the idea of a gold rush. After arriving at the Granites he filed a report and this was published in the *Sunday Sun* on 4 December 1932.

> "After spending five days on the field, I sent a preliminary report from the Granites which was published on November 7. In this report I said in effect that there was nothing to warrant a boom and that the position was much as Allan Davidson left it in 1900, which would have conveyed to all mining men who know the report that any valuable ore body had still to be found.

[532] ibid. Baume documents the scenes at the Granites goldfields. Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*. Extract From Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites* p. 91.

A little work had been done since the prospectors left but the results of it were most disappointing, and I refrained from giving details of this work, as I hesitated to condemn the whole field on the evidence of a costeen, and a small shaft and crosscut, the positions of which might not have been chosen to the best advantage.

Further, I had promised the men on the field that I would draw no invidious distinctions in my report, between one lease and another, as the report was to be a general one on the whole field.

I should like at this point to record again my appreciation of the very friendly relations which existed between myself and everyone on the field, and my deep regret that I cannot report more favourably.

Although entirely without pecuniary interest in the field myself, yet on account of the importance of a gold find to Australia, and my love of that part of the country, and sympathy with its pioneers, I was most anxious to find the field a success.

As time went on, hope gradually sank to despair, and it was necessary to sound a strong note of warning … My investigations extended from the region of Thomson's Rockhole, 44 miles on the Alice Springs side of the Granites, to Tanami, 63 miles north-west of the Granites, and I spent thirteen days between those points. Some forty samples were dollied and panned on the field, and nineteen were subsequently assayed at the S.A. School of Mines, assayers for the Mines Department of S.A., as a check on panning …"[533]

4.8 At the Granites: Chapman

Michael Terry, the explorer and road builder, on his second trip to the Granites, found the place completely changed and the gold rush well and truly over. Terry in this excerpt from his book was more excited about the "marvellous" cars and

[533] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites* p. 148. Also quoted in the *Sunday Sun,* 4 December 1932.

motors on the gold site at the Granites goldfields than the futile search for gold his road had taken people to:

> "Popularly known as the Granites, it was indeed changed from its condition when in loneliness, my party searched there five years before. Reports of astonishing riches at the place, flashed over the interstate lines the year before, had caused a lamentably excitable rush to poor old Bugagee. Every sort of person from desperate unemployed to financed opportunities sped-out from Alice Springs in a marvellous array of motors with, so one heard, a marvellous disarray of equipment. Shares of embryo mining companies boomed on the exchange; shrewd fold profited, hapless little gamblers lost their all. 'A new Kalgoorlie has been forged' – the word bounded from mouth to mouth. A balloon of excitement, unparalleled for many years burst with dismaying suddenness. As rapidly as they, in optimism, had come, the gold seekers vanished from the desert – except Chapman and a few of his men, who, with admirable tenacity refused to quit."[534]

The Queensland prospector Charles Henry Chapman came to the Granites during the rush. He bought out leases in the Granites 'gold' area and even though Madigan's report was damning, he kept his lease, and set up the Granites goldmine by controlling all of the leases in the area.[535] The Chapman expedition was well organised. Chapman and his party set up a radio transmitter to maintain communication with Alice Springs via the Overland Telegraph (see following). Baume describes, in the racist discourse of the popular media of the time, the goldfield as he encountered it:

> "To the left of the police hut camp Paddy O'Neil and Paddy Ryan – Black Paddy, whose claim at Bunkers Hill was bought by the Chapman syndicate at a good figure. They arrived back only yesterday from an extended holiday at Alice Springs, merely to peg out more claims forty

[534] *Terry, Sand and Sun: Two Gold-Hunting Expeditions with Camels in the Dry Lands of Central Australia.* pp. 260–261

[535] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

miles south-east. They are men of the Granites temperament – the temperament which holds money as dross and a whisper of gold as manna. 'We saw gold to the south a year ago,' they said. And says another, 'the niggers showed me alluvial two years ago and promised to tell me where to get it next day. But they had a big talk at night and left camp before I woke up.' Thus men go out on camels to the dull sands southward. Sometimes they stagger back. Then when they can walk they leave again on the path to gold – and back to the camp-fires at the Granites."[536]

4.9 Chapman's wireless

Communication with Alice Springs and towns outside Central Australia was sporadic and information on conditions for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous at the site of these camps and general information on conditions, gold finds and water supplies relied on eyewitness accounts that travelled by foot, camel and truck along the Tanami road into Alice Springs or were telegraphed from central points along the Overland Telegraph Line. Chapman, however, brought along and set up his own radio. Baume writes of Chapman's radio, which Chapman powered from a truck on the site:

"On a little hammock, bare, sandy, stand the modern antidote to desert sickness and melancholy. Under a scanty bough shelter, the wireless outfit brought by the Chapman expedition from Queensland, sends and receives from eight until half-past nine every morning. Two poles rise 30ft. from end to end of the hummock, and between them young David Laws speaks to Sinclair of the Government Station at Wave Hill. Sinclair, by the way, is the young man who remained steadily on duty during the awful days of 1929 when Anderson and Hitchcock were missing in the desert. Messages received from Laws' Granites station are sent to Queensland by Wave Hill and thence to

[536] ibid.

> the relatives of the handful of men still at the Granites. The wireless power is obtained from a generator attached to one of the Chapman trucks … Below that radio station is the main Chapman camp, practically the only outfit doing development at present, for we are waiting now for the arrival of the Granites Gold party with the men from Melbourne. For the Chapman Syndicate, Captain Billington of Roma, commands his little regiment at present costeaning and driving on Bunkers Hill, the mine purchased from 'Black Paddy' Ryan. The Chapman men, first syndicate on the desert field after a long trek from Queensland, have organised themselves into a regular community."[537]

After Madigan's report only a small number of prospectors remained.[538] The Chapman and Harris families stayed on with the leasehold, having bought out most other prospectors after the rush appeared to have finished. Warlpiri again congregated in the Granites area (hoping to access reliable water sources and exchange goods).[539] Better relationships developed between prospectors and Warlpiri; these were fostered by Warlpiri now working at the mines in exchange for goods. Far from Warlpiri culture dying out due to contact, Elias documents oral history stories of Warlpiri men working at the mines and returning to country for ceremony.[540]

Chapman employed many Indigenous at the mines but he paid them with rations not money. Kimber says Chapman, under duress, gave out supplies and allowed Indigenous access to water, but the water well wasn't adequate, and Warlpiri had needed other sources. Unfortunately, soon their rock holes "were as dry as a chip in sand".[541] By 1933 and following Madigan's report, the field had dwindled down to only 10 men. Chapman had bought up a number of the leases and he kept the mines going until the 1950s. Chapman mined gold from the 1930s through 1950s, employing Aboriginal men and paying them in rations. He is

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537 ibid. p. 34.
538 ibid.
539 Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 74.
540 ibid. p. 74.
541 Kimber, "Dick Kimber Interviewed at the Strehlow Centre".

reported in the newspaper he started and ran as editor, *The Advocate*, saying that in his 21 years at the Granites he employed mostly Aboriginal labour. Elias says they were paid in rations and worked hard and consistently for many years.[542]

> "Although the Warlpiri worked hard for the new commodities, they had no idea of the purpose of extracting gold as Ronnie Lawson Jakamarra explained: 'They cooked gold in a fire and made it square like they cooked bread. We couldn't understand, what is that one? Are they going to eat it? We didn't understand gold in the early days, we know now. I worked right up until dawn. I don't know what for, just for tucker, trousers and shirt, no money, we worked flat out, people on both sides, Granites and Tanami. We never understood the kardiya (white) law, he never told us – see this gold, we really like it – Chapman and Harris, they never told us like that.'"[543]

4.10 Changes to the Aboriginals Ordinance Act, 1933

Following the national publicity of the "dangers" of the "natives" in the desert centre during the gold rush,[544] the NT government amended the 1918 Aboriginals Ordinance Act. The amendment brought about the biggest change in terms of contact. It attempted to 'protect' Aboriginal people in terms of minimum wages, health and morality. However, at its core was the intention to keep the region open for prospecting, mining and pastoral interests. Permits were issued to employ Warlpiri at the mines. Permits were also given to prospectors to employ people at the mines.[545]

According to Rowse the mines in the Tanami region created contact with the Warlpiri before they were exposed to the pressures of pastoralism.[546] In 1936

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542 Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". Also a reference can be found Chapman, the *Advocate* http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2012/12/10/3651357.htm

543 "Jukurrpa – Golden Dreams". pp. 212–213.

544 "Dangers of Waterhole".

545 Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*; Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

546 Rowse, "Indigenous Citizenship and Self-Determination: The Problem of Shared Responsibilities". p. 54.

wolfram mining began at Mount Harding, Mount Singleton and Wolfram Hill on the Mount Doreen lease before the Braitling's had stocked up on cattle.[547] Rowse also documents how the Tanami goldmine rush and the movement of 'white settlement' had created a psychological bewilderment. He quotes Hartwig:

> "Hartwig had deduced that by 1928 all (Warlpiri) had heard of the white man; that many had had dealings with him; and that this had produced a psychological bewilderment among members of the tribe."[548]

According to Rowse and official statistics at the time, the numbers of Aboriginal people working at stations and mines was minimal: "[when] government officials Brackenberg and Shepherd visited leases within this patrol on 1933–34, they found people working for pastoralists: at Coniston 7; Napperby 12; Ti-Tree 6; Pine Hill 2; Mt Esther 3; Stirling 5."[549] Rowse acknowledges that "the outstanding feature" of the north-west patrol census indicates a lack of supervised camps. However, he believes that from 1940 this may have signified police recognition of the ration-based camps.[550]

> "The absence of supervised camps in the early 1930s possibly reflects a more tense and unsettled relationship between colonists and colonized of the north-western areas in the years after the 1928 Coniston massacre."[551]

To Rowse, the north west of the Central Desert, the Tanami, remained a place of contention even after the massacres. He cites the oral history work of Petronella Vaarzon-Morel (as does Melinda Hinkson, 2014) who interviewed elderly

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[547] ibid. p. 54.

[548] M. C. Hartwig, "The Progress of White Settlements in the Alice Springs District and Its Effect on the Aboriginal Inhabitants 1860–1894" (University of Adelaide, 1965). Quoted in Rowse, "Indigenous Citizenship and Self-Determination: The Problem of Shared Responsibilities". p. 54.

[549] *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia.*

[550] *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*. p. 54.

[551] ibid.

women who lived on Willowra Station. The stories document the colonial settlers harassment of Indigenous people in the 1930s.[552]

Following his analysis of the early days of rationing in Central Australia, Rowse comes to the conclusion that rations for the Indigenous became "metonymic of adjustment and accord. Rationed Aboriginal people would have valued the food which settlers had to offer".[553] He continues to say they "may not, however have been aware of the extent of the exchange for example regarding lands and water [and] women, but many knew, by the summer of 1928–29 that violent defence of proprietary interests invited catastrophe". He believes this and other complexities of the relationship contributed to a "traces of ambivalence" in the local memory.[554]

> "If rationing was the scene of intelligent parasitism, we have no reason to doubt that it has taken considerable efforts of Indigenous intelligence to work out the moralities implicit in rationing regimes which were underwritten by the possibility of violence."[555]

By 1940 rationing, under an implicit threat of violence, was underway in this Central Desert region and an economy "based on the circulation of goods rather than money began to emerge alongside the ancient economy of hunting and gathering".[556]

Elias finds that the introduction of rationing at the Tanami and Granites also proved to be the end point for the Warlpiri in this region: "The decision by the government to issue rations (at the mines) was to prove the catalyst that would culminate in the forced removal of the Warlpiri from the Tanami Desert to permanent settlements on its fringes."[557]

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[552] Vaarzon-Morel, *Warlpiri Women's Voices: Our Lives Our Histories*. pp. 49–59.
[553] ibid. p. 65.
[554] ibid. p. 65.
[555] ibid. pp. 66–67.
[556] ibid. p. 67.
[557] Elias, op. cit. p. 214.

Chapter 5

Strehlow's wagon: on the road to the Granites and Yuendumu

"This story is also about all the back roads that people took to avoid Strehlow's wagon." *Valerie Napaljarri Martin*[558]

"I have written my travel report at very considerable length in order to give an accurate picture of the not inconsiderable difficulties encountered on a patrol trip from Alice Springs to Tanami. I think that my report will make it clear that both Tanami and the Granites are still places of refuge for all sorts of queer and undesirable white birds of passage, over whose movements and activities it is impossible to exercise effective control from such a distant centre as Alice Springs … And at present Tanami and the Granites are the only centres where the natives of this section of the Territory may congregate in large numbers close to a car road. However, my report also shows that at present there are very strong objections to the establishment of a government ration depot in this area; the majority of the roving white prospectors in this area are of particularly undesirable type, and little control can be exercised over them from Alice Springs; and it is most undesirable that the nomadic natives of the surrounding districts should be enticed into such a debasing environment."[559]

"I was a baby one seeing all those people riding camels. Maybe 20 camels. Big mob. I used to go from Coniston to Brookes Well (Yukuru) and from there to a big rock hole. Really big one. They used to get a drink for camels and keep going to Natjuri. Drinking water only for people and they would camp there and go across to Chilla Well. There was spring water. Load 'em up and take them this side of the Granites and after that one next morning I used to go the Granites. Camp there. I used to get water from the wind mill. [The] well. Then I used to go to Tanami Hill – there's a spring there. I'd get water. They used to tell me, the old people, [of the] Tanami and Granites. Big gold mine there long time, and they'd get big mob of food and clothes. Big transport,

[558] Valerie Napaljarri Martin in: Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[559] Letter to the Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Darwin, NT, 18 February 1939. Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".

> and they used to go across there and big mob of camel maybe 20 maybe 30."[560]

In this chapter I will explore in more detail the oral history accounts of Mount Doreen I collected on the trip that formed the basis for my radio documentary, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*. I will also draw on related stories of the road from Coniston Station to the Granites, taking a brief stop at Mount Doreen. The stories centre on the creation of the 'ration depot' at Yuendumu. Firstly, I will briefly explore the post gold rush period at the Granites, after and with the arrival of T. G. H. Strehlow, the first patrol officer. Using the work of Rowse, Elias, McGregor and Indigenous oral history accounts from the 1930s and 40s, I will attempt to re-trace the Tanami Track as it connected the Granites, Mount Doreen and Yuendumu.[561]

5.1 Strehlow: on the road

> "T. G. Strehlow, patrol officer for the Department of Native Affairs travelled along the sandy and perilous track to inspect the health and welfare of Warlpiri and other Indigenous employees."[562]

T. G. H. Strehlow, appointed as patrol officer in 1936, was a fluent Arrernte speaker and familiar with Arrernte culture having grown up in the Hermannsburg community where his father, Carl Strehlow, was a superintendent. Young Strehlow was not a trained anthropologist; his degree was in English literature and linguistics from the University of Adelaide.[563] Strehlow's job as first patrol officer in the NT was attached to the Aborigines branch of the medical department and later transferred to the Native Affairs

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[560] *Thomas Jangala Rice:* Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

[561] ibid.; Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; "The Measure of Dreams. Customary Land Tenure and Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea"; "Jukurrpa – Golden Dreams"; Elias, *Gold Stories from Lajamanu*; McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*; Rowse, *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*; Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".

[562] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

[563] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 185.

Branch.[564] In this role he was to supervise the welfare of the Indigenous in the north-western patrol area, the Tanami, and also plan for the new settlements like the ones at Hermannsberg and Haasts Bluff.[565]

The Administration had introduced new legislation and amendments to the Aboriginals Ordinance Act (1911) in 1933. Protectors of Aborigines could now prosecute negligent employers. Their responsibilities also covered 'the morality' of their 'charges'. As the first patrolman for the NT north-west patrol, Strehlow took his job very seriously. In relation to the Granites and Tanami mines, this meant his aim was to ensure the enforcement of the Aboriginals Ordinance Act as well as oversee and report on relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous.[566]

> "Part of Strehlow's role was to report on 'half-caste' children in the Aboriginal camps and take them. He regularly visited and raided both the Granites mine and on the way to the Granites, the Cattle station of Mount Doreen, where disease from wandering prospectors was beginning to take its heavy toll."[567]

As a patrol officer at this time, Strehlow found that white pastoralists were employing young Aboriginal women as 'stockmen' and paying them only in rations. Some of these girls had contracted venereal disease through their encounters with the pastoralists. Similarly, Aboriginal women were discovered to have been visiting miners' camps: here food was exchanged for sex.[568]

Strehlow reported in his journal in 1937 that government ministers had "[approved], in principle, of Sgt Koop's and my proposed campaign against illicit relationships between blacks, whites and half-castes".[569] Strehlow had taken police with him, but they had been unable to collect evidence sufficient for any

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[564] Natives Affairs Branch is commonly referred to as NAB in contemporary historical texts.
[565] Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".
[566] Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia".
[567] The narrator's text from *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* (2011) comes from letters of Strehlow's to the Chief Protector in Darwin. Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".
[568] Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia".
[569] Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".

prosecutions. According to Chesterman and Douglas, "the law about relationships was essentially unpoliceable".[570]

At the Granites, interest in the mines from prospectors had diminished; however, considerable numbers of Warlpiri continued to live in the central Tanami Desert.

In 1936, Adelaide University's Professor of Pathology, J. B. Cleland, told the Minister for the Interior that the Granites area, following the gold rush, had become a focus of 'detribalising' contacts with 'whites'. Chief Protector at the time, Cecil Cook, made it clear that the Granites were already 'prohibited' to Aborigines.[571]

Strehlow, who reported directly to the Chief Protector of Aboriginals in Darwin, wrote voluminous and detailed correspondence in the late 1930s. His letters and reports to the Department of Native Affairs and the Chief Protector detail trips out to the Granites goldmines during this period. In highly descriptive language he recounts one of these slow drives out to the Granites on the Tanami track:

> **Report on trip to the Granites and Tanami Feb 3rd–8th 1939**
>
> "We had a bad start in the morning despite the efforts of the mechanic on the previous afternoon. The car refused to pull its load smoothly even on the easier portions of the road close to Alice Springs; and we were forced to turn back after about three miles travelling … We made our second start at 25 minutes to 8am. We had a good journey to Aileron, and reached the Woodforde Crossing in fair time. From here the road was badly washed out for the next 80 miles, and the car had to do much heavy gear work while negotiating the innumerable deep gutters, washed-out flats, and creek crossings that abound in this section of the road. The road follows the creek beds closely and

[570] Chesterman, "Their Ultimate Absorption: Assimilation in the 1930s Australia". p. 53.

[571] According to Rowse: "Probably the first gathering of Warlpiri for research purposes was arranged in August 1931 for medical scientists from the University of Adelaide by a Mr Kramer, a missionary, at Cockatoo Creek, about thirty kilometres north east of what is now Yuendumu." (J. B. Cleland, "Anthropological expedition to Central Australia", *Medical Journal of Australia*, December 19, 1931, p. 793 quoted in F1 36/577, "University of Adelaide Expedition to the Granites", 6/10/36. Files are to be found in the Australian Archives, NT Branch, Darwin. Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".

> hence it had suffered exceedingly from the recent heavy rains. The first cars to get through after the rain had preceded us by only a few days, and there was still many boggy, water logged sections in the river beds across our trail."[572]

Several of these investigations were also kept a secret so as not to alert people prior to their arrival. Strehlow would visit to inspect the health and welfare of Warlpiri and other Indigenous employees, and would frequently arrive unannounced. Impending visits to the Chapman camp at the Granites for example were not always forewarned.

> "Upon receipt of instructions from the Aboriginals Department, Darwin, to investigate certain charges made against the white residents at the Granites, Dr P. J. Reilly and I made the necessary preparations for a surprise visit to the Granites in his car. On April 22nd we left Alice Springs at 4.45 pm. We travelled on until midnight, and camped in a creek bed, 112 miles from Alice Springs. Next day we passed through Pine Hill and Coniston stations, in the afternoon we crossed Cockatoo Creek."[573]

Strehlow was particularly concerned with intercultural relationships, the spreading of sexual diseases – often from roving prospectors – and issues of rations and minimum pay.

5.2 Wages and conditions for the Warlpiri at the mines

From the late 1930s interest in gold in the Tanami region had diminished, despite a drilling program and aerial surveys. However, as the prospectors left,

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[572] Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".

[573] Strehlow, Report on trip to the Granites ibid. Also in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*. "Chapman who finally left the Granites in 1953, reported in his newspaper that during the 21 years at the Granites he had used mainly 'native' labour" (*Centralian Advocate,* 10 April 1953). The rise of Warlpiri labour was overseen by patrol officers of the Aborigines Branch, which was later the Native Affairs Branch. Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 7.

the Warlpiri took over as labourers.[574] In 1937, following a visit to the mines, Strehlow made it quite clear in a letter to the Chief Protector that he thought Chapman had become lax in his duties toward the Indigenous at the mines; however, no sanction was recorded:

> "Chapman has not paid any wages into the Alice Springs trust fund last year. If he claims that he has fed and clothed the dependents of these three natives during that time, he will have to give some proof of this and supply the formal exemption from paying wages. Otherwise wages will have to be paid. In the case of wages being paid into the Trust account held by the Deputy Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Alice Springs, an order will have to be issued later on to enable these three men to obtain rations for their wages from the store at the Granites. The only other stores that could come into consideration are at Alice Springs, 380 miles away … Chapman also promises to keep proper books in future, so that all rations, clothing etc., issued to his natives can be checked."[575]

According to Rowse, Strehlow's 1937 patrol to the Granites found no evidence that the Granites had ever been a prohibited area, and noted that licenses to employ Aborigines had been issued to miners there in 1933. Chapman, though, had violated the Aboriginals Ordinance Act for employing Aborigines for rations. But he had simply been let off with a warning.[576]

Strehlow was highly concerned with the threat to what he saw as the 'morality' of the Indigenous people under his protectorate. He was particularly worried about contact between roving prospectors and Aboriginal women. His travel reports document an incident where two roving prospectors, 'Nugget' Hunter and Edward Bolton, were committed for trial (following one of his reported trips) and were sent to jail for four months. In this report in 1939 he also makes it clear he would be advocating for a separate reserve for Warlpiri and

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[574] "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 56.

[575] Strehlow, "Report on trip to the Granites, April 1937", Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre"; Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

[576] Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".

Aboriginal people, but doesn't favour a location at or near the Granites. As in the opening quote in this chapter, and I repeat a key section now, he argued against any reserve or ration depot being based in this area because of the threat it posed, as he saw it, to the Indigenous inhabitants:[577]

> "I think that my report will make it clear that both Tanami and the Granites are still places of refuge for all sorts of queer and undesirable white birds of passage, over whose movements and activities it is impossible to exercise effective control … The majority of the roving white prospectors in this area are of particularly undesirable type, and little control can be exercised over them from Alice Springs; and it is most undesirable that the nomadic natives of the surrounding districts should be enticed into such a debasing environment."[578]

Whether conditions improved after Strehlow's entreaties and reports is doubtful. Patrol Officer Sweeney found Harris (at Tanami) at fault in his failure to issue blankets and clothes, but made no other criticisms.[579] Sweeney estimated the numbers of Warlpiri at the time were around 100 in the Granites and Tanami areas. "He remarked that, generally, young Warlpiri who had left their desert homelands; have no desire to return – they speak of it as 'hungry country'; the older people are still drawn to their old tribal hunting grounds when seasons are good."[580]

Strehlow and Sweeney's patrols also frequently documented (in letters to their counterparts in Darwin) excessive abuses by the miners regarding the proper issue of rations in return for labour. Elias remarks that despite what could be perceived as the exploitative nature of the heavily intensive work the Warlpiri did for these rations, "the Warlpiri nevertheless wanted them to remain in place because of the rations and water supply that could be had".[581] Chapman at the

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[577] "Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".
[578] Letter to the Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Darwin, NT, 18 February 1939 in Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".
[579] Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".
[580] F1 43/65, "Patrol Officer Sweeney Reports on Patrols", 13/7/44, Australian Archives (NT). F1 43/65, "Patrol Officer Sweeney Reports on Patrols", 5/8/44. Quoted in ibid.
[581] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

Granites used many Warlpiri as labourers and did so more frequently following the departure of the prospectors. Elias makes the point that Warlpiri took up the employment opportunities willingly:

> "Victor Simon Jupurrurla's father, Pilala Jakamarra, was encouraged by Chapman to bring Warlpiri people in to stay at The Granites and work. Warlpiri exchanged their labour for goods such as flour, tea, clothes and tobacco and established permanent camps next to both the Granites and the Tanami mining operations. Men such as Henry Anderson Jakamarra and Abie Janagala recall a life of hard work in the mines, interspersed with long visits to relatives who preferred to remain in the desert."[582]

According to Elias, in summertime the Warlpiri men at the Granites would take tobacco and other commodities out to their families and participate in ceremonial cycles before returning to the Tanami to accumulate more goods. Elias found in his recorded interviews that they (Warlpiri) had little understanding of what purpose the gold had.[583] Despite this, there were many more who were attracted to the goldmines for rations, but these could be inconsistent. Rowse found welfare to the Warlpiri ad hoc: "In northern Warlpiri country, miners issued rations; further south Mt. Doreen became a centre for gathering Warlpiri who also received rations."[584] Despite the new patrol officer Sweeney's regular appearance at the Granites, Chapman and Harris (at the Tanami) were again warned to issue blankets and clothes for an estimated 100 Warlpiri in the Granites area in 1944.[585]

Government rations were distributed to Warlpiri in the Granites, although Rowse described the distributions as "not strictly supervised".[586] Many people were undernourished, or suffering health problems. In the mid-1940s, a Catholic

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[582] Elias, D and Bryson, I. *Gold Stories from Lajamanu*. Centre for Cross-cultural Research: ANU, 2000. Video recording. Interviews with Abie Jangala, Victor Simon Jupurrurla, Henry Anderson (Cook) Jakamarra, Ronnie Lawson Jakamarra and Doug Johnson Japanangka. Interviewd by Derek Elias. In English.

[583] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; Elias, *Gold Stories from Lajamanu*.

[584] Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri". *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 3, no. 2 (1990): 174–200.

[585] ibid.

[586] ibid.

lay missionary sent to ration after the departure of the Harris family (who had been distributing the rations until that time), found Warlpiri at the Tanami in very poor health. He wrote: "Never have I seen people living in such appalling conditions." He then asked for a settlement to be established at Police Well, eight miles north-west of the Tanami field, and forecast that any one issuing rations would attract a clientele of 250, none of whom would be able to live off the nearby country.[587]

5.3 Rations at the Granites

In 1945 Patrol Officer Frank McGarry of the Native Affairs Department arrived at the Granites to find 60 people at the Granites and 52 at Tanami. Numbers grew substantially over the following year. Rowse documents 160 Warlpiri at the Tanami settlement in 1946 for example.[588] A medical report found the conditions at Tanami bleak: water was inadequate and the health of the Warlpiri, poor. The report advocated that the Warlpiri at Tanami mines be moved to the Granites, even though water there was 'precarious' also. The Warlpiri were then moved south, at this point, to the settlement known as Mount Doreen. McGarry also found those living at the Tanami in appalling conditions. With the rations he allocated, the number of Warlpiri at Tanami swelled to as many as 163. By 1946 McGarry moved all Warlpiri to the Granites and a more reliable bore.[589]

This brought the total of Warlpiri at the Granites, and another larger group at Mount Doreen, to 377. As Elias summed up: "The physical dislocation of Warlpiri people from their places in the Tanami Desert was completed. Within the space of 50 years, people who had occupied, travelled and lived in an area of nearly 100,000 square kilometres among hundreds of places were now all located together in one place, on the extreme southern edge of their land."[590]

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[587] F. O'Grady, *Francis of Central Australia* (Sydney: Wentworth Books, 1977), pp. 142–3. Quoted in ibid.
[588] ibid.
[589] ibid.
[590] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 78.

At the same time as the goldmine at the Granites and Tanami, there was an expansion of mining activities – especially of wolfram and tin throughout the Central Desert and specifically at Mount Doreen, Mount Treachery, Wauchope and Tennant Creek.[591] Tin mines were also established at Anningie and Coniston. Stock camps at cattle stations such as Mount Doreen, Coniston and Wave Hill began to attract more Warlpiri then, keen to earn goods for their tribes. Since the drought the people had come into close proximity to the cattle stations and were now growing dependent on food, clothes, steel axes … and desired these commodities. To acquire them they would work in European employment.

5.4 On the track: wolfram mining at Mount Doreen

Mount Doreen was the birthplace and home for many Warlpiri, moved and frequently forced from their traditional lands, and also for those who had spent some years at the Granites and Tanami in the 1930s and 1940s. It became a de facto centre for gathering Warlpiri, who also received rations there. The arrival of the Warlpiri at Mount Doreen began after the drought in the late 1920s and as they were forcibly evicted from the sacred water site of Pikilji. In 1926 Walter Braitling occupied Pikilji – a series of waterholes and soakages – a major source of fresh water for the Warlpiri during the atmosphere of intense drought.[592] Braitling had returned from World War I as a decorated serviceman and was granted a lease of 25,000 square miles of land that centred on Pikilji, both a precious water source and sacred site for the Warlpiri, connected to the rainbow serpent dreaming.

In Hinkson's estimation, Braitling had an "us versus them" mentality toward the Aboriginal people. The 'settlers' were the heroic minority; the Indigenous uncivilised savages.[593] After Braitling was accused of cattle thieving from other pastoral leases, he moved the station's main base from Pikilji to Mount Doreen in

[591] Wolfram, also known as tungsten, is a hard rare metal with many uses as an alloy. Tungsten comes from the Swedish language *tung sten*, which directly translates to heavy stone. Its name in Swedish is *volfram*.
[592] Hinkson, *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*.
[593] ibid. p. 56.

the 1930s, but kept a close watch on Pikilji to ensure the Indigenous were kept away from this sacred site so he could continue to access water there for his cattle.[594]

Mount Doreen was settled as a wolfram mining camp and pastoral lease by the Braitlings, (Walter) Bill and Doreen, after the move from Pikilji. Meggitt notes that wolfram mining began to spring up on a small scale at Mount Hardy in 1930 and Mount Doreen, the Braitling family's mine and cattle station, around the same time. The Braitling family's station became the home of a large group of Warlpiri, many of whom worked as stockmen and for the family. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and into the 1940s, Warlpiri came in increasing numbers to other cattle stations in the north such as Wave Hill and Birrundudu. At Mount Doreen, Warlpiri worked in these wolfram mines and assisted with cattle.[595] On the road, in the making of the documentary, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*, we interviewed Thomas Jangala Rice, senior elder from Yuendumu.

> "We're passing Mount Doreen station. Warlpiri elder Mr Thomas Jangala Rice, tells us about his country, Mount Doreen, and how his family made their way there from the Granites."[596]

Jangala, born at Mount Doreen Station, remembered the stories from his father and how they arrived there:

> "My father came to get flour (from South Granites area) and saw the grader track and followed it all the way to Mount Doreen."[597]

Bessie Nakamarra Sims, also a senior member of the Warlpiri clan, remembers growing up at Mount Doreen. She had very clear memories of the Braitling family, who fed many Warlpiri in a communal feeding and rations depot.

> "From the mines the white people would come to Mount Doreen. In the old days the station owner got them all to Mount Doreen and

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[594] ibid.
[595] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.
[596] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[597] Interview with Thomas Jangala Rice in ibid.

> would feed them. I knew. I grew up at Mount Doreen. He [Strehlow] used to come in his car, his wagon. My family, my father and grandfather, all living at Mount Doreen."[598]

Men, women and the young were all employed there. The young women were employed in particular to milk the goats and cows, as well as tending sheep and cattle. Bessie Nakamarra Sims affirms they were paid in rations.[599]

5.5 Warlpiri memories of travelling the Tanami

Thomas Jangala Rice spoke about travelling through the Tanami as a young man from Mount Doreen to the Granites goldfields looking for precious water supplies. These were quickly being exhausted by the increased numbers of camels and explorers. He also remembers seeing camels and the first trucks and cars:

> "I was a baby one seeing all those people riding camels. Maybe 20 camels. Big mob. I used to go from Coniston to Brookes Well (Yukuru) and from there to a big rock hole; really big one. They used to get a drink for camels and keep going to Natjuri. Drinking water only for people and they would camp there and go across to Chilla well. There was spring water. Load 'em up and take them this side of the Granites and after that one next morning I used to go the Granites. Camp there. I used to get water from the wind mill. Well. Then I used to go to Tanami Hill – there's a spring there – I'd get water. They used to tell me, the old people, Tanami and Granites: big gold mine there long time; and they'd get big mob of food and clothes. Big transport, and they used to go across there and big mob of camel, maybe 20, maybe 30."[600]

[598] Interview with Bessie Nakamarra Sims for the documentary ibid.
[599] ibid.
[600] Interview with Thomas Jangala Rice in the documentary ibid.

5.6 The 'other' stories of Mount Doreen

According to both oral history accounts from Watts and Fisher (2001), and Hinkson, Braitling was a brutal boss to the Warlpiri he employed in his wolfram mining business at Mount Doreen. Warlpiri and Indigenous workers were paid only in rations. Braitling employed many over the years, including two 'half-caste' men who were kept on to protect Pikilji against the rest of the Warlpiri who had previously visited the place for thousands of years for its sacred meaning and for its precious water. If Warlpiri ventured into this area they either had their rations withheld or they were beaten.[601] In the meantime, Braitling's cattle herd drank up and poisoned much of this precious water, polluting it and creating permanent damage to the site.

One of the reasons many Warlpiri headed to the Granites can be explained by Braitling's brutal regime, according to Hinkson. After the gold rush in 1932 the Warlpiri began moving into this area to obtain water. Here they frequently found work at the mines. Hinkson, amongst others, catalogues some of the violent behaviour of Braitling against the Warlpiri and even to the young man he had raised as a child, which she covers in more detail in her reflections on the oral history work of Varzon and Meggitt: "Braitling's story covers the worst excesses of the settler attitude – his disregard for the needs and concerns of the Warlpiri people mirrors his disregard for the country and its vital resources."[602]

Following the road to Mount Doreen was also Patrol Officer Strehlow.

Strehlow's (and Sweeney's) patrol area encompassed much of the north-west Tanami region. In *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* we follow Strehlow's drive along the track to Mount Doreen – a very regular occurrence. In the documentary we refer to his diary, where he meticulously recorded his visits to Mount Doreen. On one such visit he documented an outbreak of gonorrhoea, believed to have been brought into the community by prospectors and other non-Indigenous, and circulated amongst the Warlpiri living there:

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[601] Hinkson, *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*. p. 59.
[602] ibid. p. 61.

> "On December 3rd I went to Alice Springs, ready for a journey to Mount Doreen. Reports had been made that gonorrhoea was prevalent … Braitling's explanation for this shocking state of affairs was that two roving prospectors came through Mount Doreen at the end of July of this year and stayed for five days. They infected three young girls. This spread to the remaining part of the population until old and young had become infected."[603]

Strehlow threatened Braitling with removing his Aboriginal labour from the pastoral lease and wolfram diggings unless he got this (venereal disease) under control. According to Rowse, this issue was raised with the South Australian Baptist Union in 1944. Baptist Pastor Laurie Reece inspected southern Warlpiri country by camel in June and July 1944.[604] In his report of the trip, Pastor Reece was scathing of Braitling. He had been informed by some Warlpiri that Braitling was a "proper greedy fellow" and "a larrikin" who enjoyed sexual favours from the young women, keeping two as concubines at Vaughan Springs (Pikilji). Reece's informants were prepared to go to the police with these accusations. Reece found that the area was Ngalia–Warlpiri homelands but these people were alienated from these lands because of fear of Braitling. Reece argued for the Ngalia to have the mission at Vaughan Springs (Pikilji), where the best water was located. Mount Doreen lease would become a reserve, while Braitling could keep the land near Mount Doreen itself.[605]

Following Reece's report to the Administrator in 1944, Braitling was finally investigated. The investigator found that, although not able to speak to Braitling directly, there was good reason to suspect that he was having sex with two girls believed to be infected with gonorrhoea. However, no charge was laid or achieved. After this reported incident, Patrol Officer Sweeney was then equipped with a car to visit the station more frequently.[606] Rowse documents Braitling's

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[603] Strehlow, to the director of Native Affairs, Darwin. "Report on trip to Mount Doreen, December 1940". "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".
[604] Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".
[605] A452 54/552(1) "SA Baptist Union: Mission to Natives at Granites (Yuendumu)", Chinnery 18/4/44, Australian Archives, ACT. In ibid.
[606] ibid. p. 51.

dealings with both Sweeney and the Administration. Sweeney confirmed that the Warlpiri were prevented from using Vaughan Springs (Pikilji) by Braitling. This constituted a violation of the Crown's lands ordinance, which gave Indigenous the use of natural foods and waters on pastoral leases. Sweeney also documents a case of severe beating of one of the Warlpiri by Braitling.[607] Braitling was committed for trial for this alleged offence, with testimony indicating there had been at least eight incidences of flogging of workers in addition to his keeping women for sex. In his diary, Sweeney notes that it wasn't just Braitling but other stockmen too who were brutal to the Indigenous working at the mines, and also used the women for sex. The Supreme Court, however, acquitted Braitling after Indigenous witnesses' testimony crumbled during the cross-examination. Even the man who was beaten, Jimitja, denied any knowledge of the crime. This was not so surprising considering his relationship – he was raised by Braitling and his family – and the level of control exercised by Braitling.[608]

After a thorough and exhaustive investigation conducted by Rowse, there is strong evidence, despite the acquittal, to implicate Braitling as the perpetrator of beatings of Indigenous workers:

> "Though the allegations against Braitling remain unproven, others to whom I have spoken do not doubt their veracity. Baptist Pastor Tom Fleming, resident at Yuendumu from 1950 to 1975, told me in April 1989 that he had no doubt Braitling had flogged Jimitja and others (though he had never asked Jimitja); it was a matter of normal practice in that time and region, he said, to give 'troublesome' Aborigines a 'hiding'."[609]

For Rowse, the Warlpiri testimony became the object of a power struggle between the Native Affairs Branch and the Braitling family. Rowse describes Braitling's control as a form of hegemony over Ngalia–Warlpiri territory.[610] A judicial inquiry following the case "vindicated Sweeney's honesty as a reporter of

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[607] Sweeney F1 43/65, "Patrol Officer Sweeney Reports on Patrols", 13/7/44, Australian Archives (NT). F1 43/65, "Patrol Officer Sweeney Reports on Patrols", 5/8/44. ibid.
[608] ibid.
[609] ibid. pp. 9–11.
[610] ibid. p. 10.

Warlpiri statements, but revealed that, by the time the alleged flogging went to trial, Sweeney's senior officers had already rejected his recommendation to resume about 700 square miles of Mt. Doreen, including Vaughan Springs, as a Warlpiri reserve."[611]

Despite this scandalous history, most of the Warlpiri I spoke to at Yuendumu when making the *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* documentary were very respectful of the Braitling family and were surprisingly kind in their reflections. Dick Kimber was at pains to represent the Braitlings as a family who provided much in terms of food and water and blankets (rations) for the Warlpiri, and who were highly regarded amongst both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in the Central Desert. This was obviously not the case for all Warlpiri.[612]

As mentioned earlier, it was of course not just Braitling and other prospectors and pastoralists: police officers were also found to be violent:

> "Patrol officers continued to track the harsh treatment of Aboriginal people in the region, including one incident in which police investigating the death of an Aboriginal man chained seventeen prisoners and witnesses including women and children and forced them to walk more than 300 kilometres to Alice Springs to face court." [613]

[611] ibid.
[612] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[613] Jeremy Phillip Merrick Long, *The Go-Betweens: Patrol Officers in Aboriginal Affairs Administration in the Northern Territory 1936–74* (North Australia Research Unit: ANU, 1992).

5.7 Olive Pink and T. G. H. Strehlow lobby for a reserve for the Warlpiri: the creation of the new ration depot

In my documentary I recount to listeners how Warlpiri elder and former president of Yuendumu Council, Mr Harry Jakamarra Nelson, spoke to us with Frank Baarda about the beginnings of the ration depot at Yuendumu:[614]

> "I was six when Yuendumu was established as a ration depot by the government. Native Affairs in those days. (My) parents brought me here."[615]

Thomas Jangala Rice also remembered those days:

> "Three times they took 'em to Lajamanu from the Granites to here, Yuendumu. Pick up some from Mount Doreen, some people from there to Yuendumu, and they went across round the bitumen pick up some people from Phillips Creek – just like Yuendumu but bigger. They call them Warlbri. That place. They took 'em up and across to Lajamanu. And some walked back. Long way. No water sometimes two nights on the road. No water. All right from Lajamanu to the Granites – there's soakage there, and creeks. Not from the Granites. It's a long way to Chilla Well and Mount Doreen and Yuendumu".[616]

Lobbying for a Warlpiri mission and reserve began in the 1920s. By the 1930s T. G. H. Strehlow and Olive Pink both took up the fight. In 1939, J. B. Cleland during an inspection of the Granites recommended to the Minister of the Interior that a reserve be created from the northern border of Mount Doreen to the Granites and west to the WA border. His proposal included discontinuing

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[614] Valerie Napaljarri Martin cited in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

[615] Harry Nelson in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track.* Podcast audio. *Hindsight,* 50 minutes, 2011. http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/hindsight/re-tracing-the-tragedy-track/3673122

[616] Thomas Jangala Rice cited in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track.* Podcast audio. *Hindsight,* 50 minutes2011. http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/hindsight/re-tracing-the-tragedy-track/3673122

Braitling's access to the spring 'Chilla Well' to the north-west of his lease.[617] Olive Pink had first made the suggestion of a reserve in 1935. However, Chief Aboriginal Protector in the Territory, Dr Cecil Cook, warned that it would not be favourable for those wanting the Alice Springs stock route.[618] Strehlow also had suggested a sanctuary for the Warlpiri: the great reserve in the south-western corner of the Territory should be extended, he thought, east to the 132nd parallel and north to include the Ngalia homelands, the Davenport Ranges.[619] Cook argued against this, claiming only about 200 Aborigines would initially benefit, and that the Minister must weigh this up against existing pastoral and future mineral investments. In other words, Cook argued that the Braitling interests, and future European interests in the area, were to be protected. He rejected Strehlow's proposal for a reserve for Warlpiri homelands in the Davenport Ranges also, he argued, because it wouldn't benefit all Warlpiri. But the overriding issue, it appears, was a privileging of pastoralists and mining interests over Warlpiri welfare and land rights.[620] "European interests won the day," and despite the lobbying, a reserve would not be established until after World War II.[621]

Olive Pink (see Chapter 2) wanted the establishment of a 'secular' sanctuary for each NT tribe that she, herself, would oversee for the Warlpiri. 'Half-caste' children, in this 'vision' she believed then, should be taken and kept away from full-bloods.[622]

In the late 1930s Strehlow and Olive Pink both made submissions to the government to create a reserve for Aboriginal people in the Granites region. Both lobbied the Department of Native Affairs in Darwin for the establishment of a reserve for Warlpiri in the Tanami, with Pink arguing for a non-missionary

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617 Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".
618 Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".
619 F1 38/418, "Aboriginal Reserve South West Corner Northern Territory", 9/3/37, Australian Archives (NT). In Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".
620 ibid.
621 ibid.
622 Cowlishaw, "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists"; Marcus, "Olive Pink and the Encounter with the Academy".

secular reserve. In letters to the Director of Native Affairs, T. G. H. Strehlow wrote:

> "I have been informed on good authority that the Granites is going to be developed on a larger scale than heretofore. Such a development would bring more miners, and it may soon be necessary to declare the Granites a prohibited area for the natives. It will then be most necessary to have a place for these aboriginals; and the only way to make such a reserve a success will be by putting up a suitable centre within its bounds in order to keep the natives within the reserve …."[623]

Strehlow and Pink, however, disagreed about where the reserve should be located and how it should be run. In a letter to the Director of Native Affairs around the same time, Strehlow notes Pink advocating for a reserve north of Mount Doreen:

> "I understand that Miss Pink desires a reserve to be established in the area north of Mount Doreen and south of the Granites. In this area she is to be the sole white person: all prospectors, Government officials, and missionaries are to be kept out of it. Such a proposal appears to be quite impracticable and undesirable. Miss Pink herself is not by constitution fitted for long and continuous stays in the outback portions of the interior."[624]

Strehlow did, however, agree with the necessity of a reserve in the same area, although he had different ideas as to how it should be run, and by whom:

> "I agree with the suggestions that a reserve should be established for the natives of the Granites, Tanami and Mount Doreen. These aboriginals should be protected against exploitation at the heads of miners and roving prospectors and gin–hunters generally … [I]t

[623] To the Director of Native Affairs, Darwin, NT, 18 September 1939. Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".
[624] Letter to the Director of Native Affairs, Darwin, NT, 15 September 1939, in ibid.

should have a missionary or police official in charge of it in order to keep out the undesirable whites and in order to minister efficiently to the wants of the natives."[625]

Leading up to the eventual establishment of a reserve, various factors meant conditions for the Warlpiri were deteriorating. A drop in wolfram prices had meant that by the early 1940s, the Warlpiri lost employment in the wolfram mines. While a ration depot was established at Bullocky Soak near Ti-Tree, this was not to be the desired solution to the problems as both Strehlow and Pink saw them.[626]

According to Brown, it was partly due to Pastor F.W. Albrecht's intervention in the situation with the Ngalia Warlpiri at Haasts Bluff (where they had moved from Vaughan Springs [Pikilji] and come into contact with missionaries at Finke River mission at Hermannsburg) that Yuendumu was created as a ration depot. "Not only did Pastor Albrecht make known the plight of the Ngalia Warlpiri to government officialdom, he also broached the matter with Rev. Dr E. H. Watson."[627] Watson was the Baptist chaplain to the armed forces based in the NT, and it was he who advocated for a Warlpiri mission at Haasts Bluff in Alice Springs. The South Australian Baptist Home mission supported the location and lobbied for the mission to be set up north of Coniston and west of Mount Singleton.[628]

The Reverend Laurie Reece also had explored and examined the region and the concerns of both Europeans and Indigenous. He reported on Mount Doreen and the Granites region in 1944.[629] According to Brown, "Reece's report stimulated action by the administrator who, whilst agreeing with the principle of establishing a Baptist mission in the Mount Doreen area, stated that the Baptist Home Mission would have to negotiate directly with the Braitlings." Despite the

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[625] ibid.
[626] McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*. p. 241
[627] T. Brown, *Yuendumu: Legacy of a Longitudinal Growth Study in Central Australia* (University of Adelaide Press, 2011). p. 26.
[628] ibid. p. 27.
[629] ibid. Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".

Braitling's opposition, the federal government finally established the ration and welfare depot in 1946.

Brown, along with Rowse and Meggitt, says the depot alleviated pressures on the Haasts Bluff depot and stopped the drift of Warlpiri to townships along the Stuart Highway. Rowse, however, sees the beginnings of Yuendumu as being tied, inexorably, to a site of research: "Notwithstanding the failure of the reserve proposal, it was in choosing Yuendumu's site that an unprecedented politics of research was briefly attempted."[630]

The Native Affairs Branch named the new site an Aboriginal reserve.[631] Many Warlpiri moved temporarily to the site for rations. Brown explains: "the creation of Yuendumu acted as a magnet for the Warlpiri people in the Mount Doreen and Granites area. As people migrated toward this supply source it became more of a settlement than a distributional centre."[632] The federal government had opened the ration depot of Yuendumu to control the drift of Aboriginal people and this, it appeared, was now exactly its effect.[633]

> "Despite a constant flow of people walking back through the Tanami Desert along the road the established regime of work for rations and the food and goods offered at the settlements of Lajamanu and Yuendumu finally prevailed over Warlpiri's desire to drift back into the desert and ensured people remained at the settlements."[634]

In 1946 all Warlpiri in the region were moved to the new site. Originally known as Rock Hill Bore, the Native Affairs Branch subsequently renamed the site Yuendumu.[635]

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[630] Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".
[631] Brown, *Yuendumu: Legacy of a Longitudinal Growth Study in Central Australia*; Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*; Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".
[632] Brown, *Yuendumu: Legacy of a Longitudinal Growth Study in Central Australia*. p. 28.
[633] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*; Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri"; "Indigenous Citizenship and Self-Determination: The Problem of Shared Responsibilities".
[634] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 79.
[635] Brown, *Yuendumu: Legacy of a Longitudinal Growth Study in Central Australia*; Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".

5.8 Yuendumu, Lajamanu and the back tracks

The removal of the Warlpiri from the Granites and Tanami and the establishment of Yuendumu and Lajamanu (Hooker Creek) are essential parts of the story of the Tanami road. Thomas Jangala Rice remembers first coming to Yuendumu in 1946 when the government moved people from Mount Doreen: "Came across to Yuendumu when government moved everyone." But he and his family were homesick for Mount Doreen: "Homesick, would like to go back there and work back in Mount Doreen."[636]

Yuendumu today is one of the largest remote Aboriginal communities in the Central Desert. It is located near the south-eastern edge of the extent of land traditionally owned by the Warlpiri. The Anmatyerre lands were/are to the east, the Pintubi/Luritja land to the south and Kukatja land to the west. The community government area comprises almost 23,000 square kilometres and up until the NT National Emergency Response (often called 'the intervention'), the traditional owners controlled the land.[637] The word Yuendumu is associated with the dreaming (Jukkurpa means 'dreaming'). It is a derivative of the word, Yurntumulya, which means 'dreaming woman'.[638] The Warlpiri call the place Yurtulmu, while the NT Administration called it Yuendumu.[639] A report from the NT Administration in 1946 declared their name for this new government ration station, however, was actually taken from the native name for a line of hills in the area.[640]

Yuendumu is situated approximately 300 km north-west of Alice Springs. Its population fluctuates both in number and language group. For instance, many

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[636] Thomas Jangala Rice interviewed in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

[637] Brown, *Yuendumu: Legacy of a Longitudinal Growth Study in Central Australia*. p. 23. "The Northern Territory National Emergency Response (aka "the intervention") was broad sweep of changes to welfare provision, law enforcement, land tenure and other measures, introduced by the Australian federal government under John Howard in 2007 to address allegations of child sexual abuse and neglect in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities. Including: Compulsory acquisition of townships currently held under the title provisions of the *Native Title Act 1933* through five-year leases with compensation on a basis other than just terms. (The number of settlements involved remains unclear. And suspension of the permit system which Yuendumu operated under.)"

[638] Peggy Rockman Napaljarri and Lee Cataldi, *Warlpiri Dreamings and Histories* (Rowman Altamira, 2003); ibid. and Brown, 2011.

[639] Brown, *Yuendumu: Legacy of a Longitudinal Growth Study in Central Australia*. p. 23.

[640] ibid. p. 23.

Warlpiri are also linked to or have descendants that are Amatjerryere or Luritja, so usually Warlpiri children speak a number of Warlpiri dialects as well as other languages such as Pintubi or Amatjerryre.[641] The creation of Yuendumu as a base for a number of different tribal groups also forced Warlpiri and other language group/clans into uneasy contact with one another. The NT Administration therefore opened another ration depot at Lajamanu (known in English as Hooker Creek). In the late 40s and early 50s the Administration moved a section of the people to Lajamanu (Hooker Creek) by truck. Many of the men recall digging the road as they went. Warlpiri who were moved there from the Granites and Yuendumu – against their will – attempted to move back several times to the places they had come from.[642]

When making the documentary *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*, I spoke to a number of people about this story and it is documented in Meggitt, Elias as well as Rowse and others.[643] The anecdotal stories I discovered indicate that the men were taken in several lots from Yuendumu and the Granites to Lajamanu (Hooker Creek) and they were forced to build the road as they went. They were also used as labourers (for rations) at Vestey's Wave Hill Station. When the men arrived at Lajamanu, some made their way, on foot, back to Yuendumu. Oral history interviews recorded in Yuendumu brought many recollections of the movements of Warlpiri from late 1940s through to the late 1950s from Yuendumu.[644] Thomas Jangala Rice remembers well how Warlpiri people were moved several times from Yuendumu and the Granites to Lajamanu. Each time they would make the treacherous walk –along the road, and the back tracks back, hundreds of kilometres, to Yuendumu. I interviewed Thomas Jangala Rice for the documentary and included most of the interview in the documentary for *Hindsight*:

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641 Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*; Rowse, "Indigenous Citizenship and Self-Determination: The Problem of Shared Responsibilities. ," *Citizenship and Indigenous Australians: Changing conceptions and possibilities* (1998).

642 Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert".

643 Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert"; Elias, *Gold Stories from Lajamanu*; Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*; Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri".

644 Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Elias, *Gold Stories from Lajamanu*.

> "Three times they took 'em to Lajamanu from the Granites to here Yuendumu. Pick up some from Mount Doreen some people from there to Yuendumu and they went across round the bitumen pick up some people from Phillips Creek – just like Yuendumu but bigger. They call them Warlbri. That place. They took 'em up and across to Lajamanu. And some walked back. Long way. No water sometimes two nights on the road. No water. All right from Lajamanu to the Granites there's soakage there and creeks. Not from the Granites. It's a long way to Chilla Well and Mount Doreen and Yuendumu."[645]

Senior Warlpiri elder Harry Jakamarra Nelson was born at Mount Doreen. He was six when Yuendumu was established. Harry remembers people being moved from Yuendumu when he was possibly 12 years of age. He recalls people being moved in cattle trucks to Lajamanu, and he was told it was because there were too many people in Yuendumu:

> "Too many. Late 40s to the late 50s and the government thought it was too crowded here: that's when they started moving people up to Lajamanu and to Phillips (sic) Creek and they were then moved across to Warrabri now called Ali Curang … People taken in 1958. First lot. Anyway, around about that time. It was a workforce made up of young men went up to Hooker Creek. They helped build an airstrip up there – part of the Wave Hill Station, Vestey's property. A few years later the second lot of Wave Hill people shifted up there. I remember two big cattle trains in 1956 or 1958 around that time, two big transports (cattle trucks) loaded up with people. The rest of the Warlbri tribes' members were brought in from Tanami mine, the Granites mine and a place called Bullocky Soak near central Mount Stewart."[646]

Harry Nelson also clearly remembers the people walking back from Lajamanu to Yuendumu, several times.

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[645] Thomas Jangala Rice interview quoted in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[646] Harry Nelson interview quoted in ibid.

Frank Baarda has run the Yuendumu Mining Company in Yuendumu for many years. It's a cooperative mining company that assists the community in running projects aimed at financial benefits for the community. Baarda is closely connected to many Warlpiri senior elders including his friend Harry Nelson, whom he has known for many years. For a European non-Indigenous he has a good grasp of Warlpiri history and knows much about the road and the history of the settlement.

> "Lajamanu is not on Warlpiri country. Yuendumu sort of is but is pretty well in no-man's land between Warlpiri and Amatjerryre country and (in) those days the authorities, the Welfare Department all under the Protector of Aboriginals, the precursor to today's 'Closing the Gap' initiative, actually was: What are we going to do with all these Aboriginal people? We should put them on missions and welfare stations and look after them. It was all part of the dying pillow mentality and we had the taking away of children. In Yuendumu there I believe were some people actually taken away during the Stolen Generations episode, but there were also some that were successfully hidden from the authorities, part Aboriginal people, that have survived to this day. The authorities don't seem to have learnt anything from those mistakes of the past."[647]

5.9 The story of Francis Jupurrurla Kelly: avoiding the wagon[648]

The Tanami Track may have been the road to gold but it increasingly became the road for the patrol officers and welfare department looking for 'half-caste' children. Founder and current chairman of Warlpiri Media,[649] Francis Jupurrurla Kelly, has a story of particular significance as he was a child from a 'mixed-race' relationship, although he was protected and hidden from welfare by his Warlpiri

[647] Frank Baarda interview quoted in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[648] Francis Jupurrurla Kelly interview quoted in ibid.
[649] PAW MEDIA, "Board of Directors," http://www.pawmedia.com.au/about-us/board

family. His story is recorded in *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.[650] Francis Jupurrurla Kelly is also a very well-known film maker and collaborator with David Batty (of *Bush Mechanics* fame and the TV series *Manu Wana* amongst other productions). He learnt his filmmaking skills working alongside revolutionary anthropologist and filmmaker Eric Michaels.[651] Michaels collaborated with Kelly in filming and recording stories from the community, especially the stories of elders. Police and welfare officers picked up Francis Jupurrurla Kelly at the age of four, however once in the children's home at Phillip Creek he was spirited away by his uncle 'Engineer Jack'. His story is included in some detail in *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*:

> "In that time there was Welfare looking around for half-caste kids to take to Rita Dixon home, Phillip Creek and to the Bungalow, all those areas, and that's the time that Lovegrove saw me and I was just hiding under the blanket and there was church around and they (asked); 'Any half-caste kids around?' And they spotted me and took me to Phillip Creek. In that time and I was only about four years old. I remember a little bit but I couldn't understand English. One old man, my mother's brother called 'Engineer Jack', he went there, took dingoes' scalp for flour (and rations); he saw me then. I didn't know he was my uncle, and he said to me: 'I'll come back and pick you up tonight.' When we line up for supper he was there; he tricked that fella! He went inside and he said he wanted to see the little boy. He put me in a hessian bag, then he took me back all the way along. We were never on the road; we used to be off the road – off the bitumen, back tracks. When we used to go off the road I would walk along. When we were on the road I used to sleep in the hessian bag – wee, poo in the hessian bag, all the way along on the donkey. One of the people used to go up – and welfare in those days was really looking out for us like an eagle. When we got to Wycliffe Well one of those fella asked, 'Any half-caste kids you gottem?' And they said 'No'. And

[650] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[651] Michaels, *The Aboriginal Invention of Television*; *For a Cultural Future: Jupurrurla Makes TV at Yuendumu*, Art and Criticism Monograph Series (Melbourne: Art and Text, 1987).

> they looked at the donkey but I, as in that hessian bag, lucky. I didn't move. Sit still and they took off in a Land Rover. I didn't even go to the station owner's place. I used to stay away and they used to paint me up with black charcoal, to be a black. We came to Yuendumu. I was in Mount Doreen all that time and they gave people citizen rights and I was all right. I went to Yuendumu school for a while but I was staying at Mount Doreen looking after the nanny goats. In 1966, that's the time I came back to school, when they had citizenship for Indigenous."[652]

According to Elias, the relocations as described here and the impact in the immediate period after were to be defining moments in the history of the Tanami Desert and for the Warlpiri. He writes:

> "The physical dislocation of Warlpiri people from their places in the Tanami desert was now completed. Within the space of 50 years, people who had occupied, travelled and lived in an area of nearly 100,000 square kilometres among hundreds of places were now all located together in one place, on the extreme southern edge of their land.[653]

[652] Francis Jupurrurla Kelly interview quoted in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[653] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 78.

Chapter 6

The Tragedy Track, cultural studies, postcolonialism and critical discourse

Part I

6.1 Back to the future: colonial discourses in *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*

> "Settler societies, like all imperial and colonial formations, depend upon specific racial narratives to install Europeans as the rightful owners of the land. The story of Aboriginal dysfunction, for example, confirms that Aboriginal people are not yet fit to enter modernity, and cannot then be trusted with ownership of the land … [it produces a space where] violence comes clothed in the language of improvement, a space through which the settler can come to know himself or herself as legitimate owner of the land through his capacity to improve Native Others."[654]

In this chapter I examine journalism at a critical juncture in its history: during the 1930s. Through the lens of colonialism studies and using method and practice found in cultural studies, specifically, discourse theory, I will turn to the original text and news stories that are included in Baume's *Tragedy Track*,[655] upon which I based my radio documentary. I will discuss the process of making the documentary in Chapter 7. At the core of this chapter will be an analysis of the colonial discourses around race which have circulated in settler colonial discourses in Australia since Captain Cook to uphold "the legitimising fiction of *terra nullius*".[656] I will attempt to examine how these racialised regimes of power were reinforced and buffered by the newspaper stories of the 1930s, for example, those found in Baume's *Tragedy Track*, and how these colonial stories reinforced discourses of 'protection' in the context of the fiction of *terra nullius*. To chart and make these connections from the colonial to the contemporary I

[654] S. H. Razach, "The Space of Difference in the Law: Inquest Iinto Aboriginal Deaths in Custody," *Somatechnics* 1, no. 1 (2011). p. 89.
[655] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.
[656] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 4.

draw on the groundbreaking work of scholars Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Irene Watson, and the work of Jillian Kramer, amongst others.[657]

Kramer, in her detailed thesis, meticulously documents the work of Moreton-Robinson, Watson, Razack, Pugliese and others[658] in mapping the genealogy of "the racial arsenal inscribed in this legal fiction (*terra nullius*) which continues to operate within laws, political discourse and media texts in the context of the contemporary settler colonial state".[659] Moreton-Robinson, Watson and Kramer reveal how race and, in particular, whiteness "[w]ork as a priori within the state's political, judicial and economic infrastructure in order to assert, legitimate and secure possession of unceded Indigenous country".[660] For Kramer, the policies associated with the intervention – and I will reflect briefly on these in unpacking Kramer's work – "reproduces biopolitical regimes of governmentality," and have their antecedents in discourses around race from the earliest colonial interventions.[661] The colonial discourses of race and power we see circulating through the newspapers of the 1930s are seen in the newspapers and periodicals and literature of the 1830s and 1840s and again reappear as almost exact replicas of the pervasive 'deficit discourses' we see today.

In the second part of the chapter I will analyse the language used in *Tragedy Track*, the primary source material for this thesis and for the documentary. As I have earlier outlined, this book drew on a series of published newspaper reports and essays written from the explorer perspective. This was entirely a white (colonial) perspective, which used the language of the prospectors, the miners and the voices of the news media or journalists of the day. The type of discourse in Baume's *Tragedy Track* was popular during early contact between white

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657 ibid. Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"; Watson, "In the Northern Territory Intervention What Is Saved or Rescued and at What Cost?"; Moreton-Robinson, "Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of Patriarcha White Sovereignty".

658 J. Pugliese, "Race as Category Crisis: Whiteness and the Topical Assignation of Race," *Social Semiotics* 12, no. 2 (2002); D. F. da Silva, *Towards a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' up to the White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism*; Moreton-Robinson, "Writing Off Indigeous Sovereignty: The Discourse of Security and Patriarchal White Sovereignty".

659 Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. iii.

660 ibid.

661 ibid.

colonists and Indigenous first Australians and had catastrophic implications for Indigenous people for the 20th century and up to the present day, where these very same discourses circulate and recirculate until they appear to be a kind of 'truth'. The stereotypes we find in the newspapers *then* and *now* become discourses as Kramer describes, acting as legitimising fictions to uphold 'white sovereignty' and to aid and abet the removal of Indigenous people from their land.[662]

Using Foucault's analysis of discourse and how discourses operate and interlink "with other discursive practices in society in order to circulate, reproduce and constitute social formations",[663] I will attempt to deconstruct some of the most damning and pervasive stereotypes of Indigenous people in the Central Desert in the 1930s as well as examine the state and Commonwealth's use of punitive action against Aboriginal people reliant on the 'discourses of truth' around *race*, *white sovereignty* and *terra nullius*.

6.2 Back to the future: the National Emergency Response (aka 'the intervention')

While I have been examining the political, cultural, economic and social implications of Indigenous people being removed from their land in the Central Desert in the 1920s, 30s and 40s, an analysis of *contemporary* settler–colonial discourse is a necessary departure point. What are the predominant stereotypes today? And how were they legitimised by stories from last century? In other words, how do stories, stereotypes and systems of knowledge from the past come to be re-imagined in what we regard as 'truth' in the present? Here I found the work of Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Irene Watson on raciality, whiteness and race war to be most pertinent.[664] Kramer too also draws on settler-colonial

[662] ibid.

[663] ibid.

[664] Professor Irene Watson is the Pro Vice Chancellor Aboriginal Leadership and Strategy, and Professor of Law with the School of Law, University of South Australia Business School, where her teaching and research focuses primarily on Indigenous peoples in both domestic and international law. Professor Watson belongs to the Tanganekald, Meintangk Boandik First Nations Peoples of the Coorong and the south-east of SA. Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson is the Dean, Indigenous Research and

critical race and whiteness and legal theories to argue that 'the intervention' in particular, cannot be regarded as "exceptional" or extraordinary, but rather "demonstrates the ways in which the legal fiction of *terra nullius* continues to operate in the context of the contemporary settler-colonial state".[665]

Understanding the all-pervasive discourse of *terra nullius* then, became crucial for me to address so I can unpick the stories from last century. But going back also meant constantly confronting the present with the prevailing discourses during the intervention (and as we see in Kramer's thesis with the Hindmarsh and Wik cases of the 1990s and the *Mabo Native Title Act 1993*). One hears in all these cases a continuous reverberation of the discourses of the 1930s.[666]

Kramer makes the compelling case for the 2007 and ongoing intervention in Aboriginal communities to be regarded as part of a much wider "genealogy of colonial violence".[667] In her thesis she argues that "[i]n spite of the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act [Cth] [RDA]", the intervention "[c]an be reconceptualised as a continuation of racial warfare; the legal fiction of *terra nullius* (which) already works within white laws to obliterate Indigenous sovereignty over country".[668] Calling on the work of Watson and Moreton-Robinson amongst others, she carefully deconstructs and examines "[t]he foundational role of race, specifically whiteness within the political and juridicial infrastructure of early colonisation", and "(h)ow its scripts targeted Aboriginal subjects and spaces as threats that can be lawfully eliminated in the name of the white-state's security".[669]

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[665] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. iii.

[666] ibid.

[667] ibid. p. 3.

[668] ibid. p. 18.

[669] ibid.

6.3 The old stereotypes reworked in the present

In the lead up to the 'emergency response' or 'intervention', Kramer finds Mal Brough, then federal Minister for Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, drawing on "[l]ongstanding historical representations of Aboriginal people as 'primitive', 'anarchic' and in need of 'protection' and 'civilisation'. Andrews and Brough reproduced a racial arsenal that would be leveraged in the weeks and years that followed in order to prepare the ground for a series of Government interventions …"[670] Representations of Indigenous as primitive, archaic and in need of protection are precisely the newspaper discourses circulating, as we have seen, in the 1930s, and we find their beginnings not only in anthropological and government circles but also and significantly, for this analysis, in the journalism found in *Tragedy Track* and the series of newspaper reports and stories published throughout the country during the 'gold rush' to the Granites.[671]

While Kramer in her thesis examines the "[r]acialised regimes of power that underlie the 'Emergency Response'",[672] she finds these have a specific relationship to the racialised regimes of power we have seen existing in the 1920s and 1930s with government and anthropology. The current 'intervention' "[r]epresents a continuation of forms of racial warfare instantiated with the originary assertion of *terra nullius*".[673] Aileen Moreton-Robinson also finds in her groundbreaking work that the 'intervention' is *not* an exceptional situation but completely normal in the colonial history of Australia.[674]

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[670] ibid. p. 3.

[671] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*. See also Chapter 2 and Chapter 6, Part II.

[672] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 4.

[673] ibid.

[674] Moreton-Robinson, "Writing Off Indigeous Sovereignty: The Discourse of Security and Patriarchal White Sovereignty"; Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' up to the White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism*; "Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of Patriarcha White Sovereignty"; Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".

6.4 Colonial power, colonial discourse studies: a multidisciplinary approach

Both Franz Fanon and Edward Said claim the colonisation of the mind to be more pervasive and dangerous than physical domination in the colonial world. Paul Nursey-Bray and Pal Ahluwalia interpreted this similarly: "The physical presence of the coloniser can be removed but the mental presence is harder to dislodge."[675] Colonisation of the mind exists, according to Bill Ashcroft, when a dominant narrativity locks the non-European subject into a Western worldview.[676] This Western worldview Ashcroft describes as a "false symmetry of a history", which is linear in its progression and "conceals the many histories, the many narratives which constitute social life".[677]

Evidence of the West's persistent construction of representation through a dominant and colonial discourse was revealed in Edward Said's pivotal work *Orientalism*, which explores the discourse of power inherent in the objectification of the Orient.[678] *Orientalism* critiqued the knowledge that circulated in Western literary forms about the Orient. This key text revealed how Europeans constructed the 'other' – through naturalising a wide range of 'oriental' stereotypes and assumptions. Said drew on Foucault's concept of discourse and discourse analysis to reveal the connections between the visible and the hidden – specifically the subjective nature in which literary and cultural forms were interpreted and represented. "The function of stereotypes is to perpetuate an artificial difference between 'self' and 'other'", he wrote.[679]

In Australian colonial texts about the desert, stereotypes of Indigenous people are abundant. In "Thinking the unthinkable: the imaginary white savage of T. G. H. Strehlow", Shane Hersey analyses the early colonial writings of anthropologists such as Strehlow, Spencer and Gillen. He finds in their work the

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675 Paul Frederick Nursey-Bray and Davinder Pal Singh Ahluwalia, "Frantz Fanon and Edward Said: Decolonisation and the Search for Identity," in *Post Colonialism: Culture and Identity in Africa* (Commack, NY: Nova Science, 1997).

676 B. Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformations* (London: Routledge, 2001).

677 ibid.

678 ibid.

679 E. W. Said, *Orientalism* (London and Henley: Routledge, 1978).

invocation of an imaginary Aboriginal savage: "Spencer, Gillen, Strehlow created the personalities that they were comfortable with then projected that image onto Aboriginal people with whom they came in contact … they created, supported and documented that collective imaginary savage."[680] Hersey also places these imaginary personalities under the rubric of 'Aboriginalism', a term related to 'Orientalism', coined by Stephen Muecke working in this field: 'That is, just as the West imagined the Orient and within it the Oriental, so too people like Spencer, Gillen and Carl Strehlow imagined the Aboriginal savage."[681]

This stereotype of the imagined Aboriginal 'savage' is embedded in a range of early colonial journalism as well as canonical literary texts. In *Tragedy Track*, a popular history, Baume also uses the text to expunge his fear and project his imaginary savage onto the peoples he encounters. Although they come from a variety of language groups and cultures, Baume reduces Aboriginals here to just one: one culture, one 'black', one 'he' who becomes "cruel, treacherous and unstable".[682] In this way he renders the Aboriginals he encounters mute, sometimes quite literally, as demonstrated in the following example:

> "The difference between the treatment of the natives by new chums out here and the few old prospectors left is apparent. When Joe the Nark or Jack Dempsey or O'Leary or Simon Rieff tell a native to do anything, he does it quickly. There is something in the tone which demands action, and there is no conversation apart from the order. 'You bin takem this feller drum gettem quadja (water)' is the order. There is no smile, no word wasted: the water is got. But the new chum smiles at the black and 'yabbers' with him. The black giggles and becomes contemptuous, taking twice as long to do the job for the new chum as for the prospector or bushman, and then, the job done, he squats by the camp and pleads for boots, jam, onions or tobacco – and

[680] Hersey, "Thinking the unthinkable: the imaginary white savage of T. G. H. Strehlow". p. 143.
[681] ibid. p. 143.
[682] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*. p. 136.

> gets what he wants … The desert black is cruel and treacherous and unstable."[683]

This is a remarkable portrayal for its blatant dehumanisation of Indigenous people the white men (prospectors) encounter. The new 'chums' or white prospectors are firstly differentiated by colour: 'they' are not 'black' They are friendly 'chums'. Their skin colour is not a differential.[684] The Aboriginals that the prospectors encounter are one homogenous group: they are not individuals; they are 'the blacks'. The 'blacks' become synonymous with all Indigenous that the prospectors have, and will meet: "the desert black is cruel and treacherous and unstable". No longer human, they are the 'other', an enemy obstructing the 'civilised' men from getting a 'real' job done. But what is even more insidious is the implied threat: "When Joe the Nark or Jack Dempsey or O'Leary or Simon Rieff tell a native to do anything, he does it quickly. There is something in the tone which demands action, and there is no conversation apart from the order." The newer arrivals to the prospectors' camps have not been subjected to the regime of control the older ones have already experienced. (Is it physical violence, or implied violence or are they shown the gun?) From this brief excerpt – by no means exceptional to the tone of the rest of the book either – we deduce how the 'blacks' have become indentured slaves to their white masters. This short vignette illustrates part of the brutal settler–colonial relationship and the role of race. Franz Fanon in his classic study from 1961 summed up the need to understand colonisation not just from a Marxist perspective but in terms of race:

> "[t]his world cut in two is inhabited by two different species. The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality, inequality and the immense difference of ways of life never come to mask the human realities. When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging or not belonging to a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you

[683] ibid. p. 136.
[684] In the prevailing discourse of race of the day – see 'race' later in this chapter.

> are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem."[685]

Loomba identifies how Fanon "maps race and class division onto one another".[686] The question of race, she asserts, demands rethinking: while colonialism and culture are tied up with economic practices, they cannot be understood unless we examine cultural processes as vigorously as economic ones, and this includes the highly contestable concept of 'race'. I will return to this later in the chapter in an analysis of Aileen Moreton-Robinson's groundbreaking work. [687]

6.5 Foucault: discourse, race and power

> "Discourse is a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world – including knowledge, identities and social relations and in this way it creates specific social patterns. Our social world is constructed socially, and discursively people's identity does not have fixed characteristics or essences. Social processes maintain the way we understand the world: "knowledge is created through social interaction in which we construct common truths."[688]

According to Jorgenson and Phillips, for example, we don't take our knowledge of the world as an objective truth: our knowledge and representations are the by-products of discourse. [689] For Jorgensen and Phillips, all analytical approaches to discourse converge with respect to their views of language and the subject. Our understanding of reality is through language. We construct reality and meanings

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[685] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. C. Farrington (New York: Grove, 1961). p. 32.
[686] A. Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2015). p. 42.
[687] Moreton-Robinson, "Writing Off Indigeous Sovereignty: The Discourse of Security and Patriarchal White Sovereignty"; Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' up to the White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism*; "Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of Patriarchal White Sovereignty"; Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".
[688] M. W. Jorgensen, & Phillips, L. J., *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method.*(Sage, 2002). p. 5.
[689] ibid. p. 5.

through representations in language. Our idea of what is real gains meaning through discourse. Language here then constitutes the social world.[690]

Edward Said's *Orientalism* offered new insights to the workings of the colonial imagination and its connection to colonialist power. It also provided a new way of critiquing colonialist thought, becoming a foundational text for colonial discourse studies. Said's reliance on Foucault's theory of discourse and its emergence in his work proved to be groundbreaking for colonial/postcolonial studies. The way we understand and represent the world and exchange information about it is historically and culturally specific and contingent, but our worldviews and identities can change over time. Discourse is a form of social action then, that plays a part in producing the social world.[691] Discourses, according to Foucault, are:

> "[w]ays of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations … [d]iscourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern."[692]

Foucault charts the historic shift from 'sovereign power' to 'disciplinary power', in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*,[693] and in doing so reveals a method which produces a genealogy of social control and power. From the 17th century we see the epicentre of social control in the form of physical coercion and punishment diffusing from a central point (the sovereign) to a more insidious form of social surveillance and a process of 'normalisation'. Foucault illustrates this point through an examination of Bentham's Panopticon: "[a] nineteenth century prison system in which prison cells were arranged around a central watchtower from which the supervisor could watch inmates, yet the inmates could never be certain when they were being watched, therefore, over

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[690] ibid.
[691] M. W. Jorgensen, & Phillips, L. J., *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method.*(Sage, 2002).
[692] Foucault quoted in Weedon, C. "Discourse, Power and Resistance," in *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (1987). p. 108.
[693] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish.* (A. Sheridan, Trans.).

time, they began to police their own behaviour. The Panopticon has become the metaphor for the processes whereby disciplinary 'technologies', together with the emergence of a normative social science, 'police' both the mind and body of the modern individual."[694]

For Carey and Mutua, the legitimisation of knowledge and truth emerges from a position of dominance. They quote Mills: "Colonial power enables the production of knowledge, and it also maps out powerful positions from which to speak."[695]

Foucault provided, as I have outlined, the analytical framework for discourse analysis, "revealing the normalizing tendencies of total institutions and the discursive production of epistemological spaces through technologies of power".[696] According to Foucault, each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: "that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable a person to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true."[697]

Foucault argues though, in *The Order of Discourse*, that the 'will to truth' is the major system of exclusion that forges discourse and which 'tends to exert a sort of pressure and something like a power of constraint on other discourses', and goes on further to ask the question: "what is at stake in the will to truth, in the will to utter this 'true' discourse, if not desire and power?"[698]

For Foucault, then, power is acquired through subjugation and a form of external discipline. In another example, Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* examines how a discourse of madness came to govern and control the lives of regular citizens. Madness, he found, as an aspect of human identity, is produced and reproduced

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[694] Pinkus, J. "Foucault". Online publication: http://www.massey.ac.nz/~alock//theory/foucault.htm (1996). She cites Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, pp. 143–67.
[695] L. Cary & Mutua, M. K., "Postcolonial Narratives: Discourse and Epistemological Spaces," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 26, no. 2 (2010).
[696] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish.* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). p. 131.
[697] ibid.
[698] Pinkus, J. "Foucault". ibid. She cites Shapiro 1984, pp. 113–4.

by signs, rules, systems and discourse on madness in modern society, and is therefore "anchored in institutions such as madhouses and in practices such as psychiatry".[699]

There are discourses that constrain the production of knowledge, dissent and difference and some that enable 'new' knowledges and difference(s). The questions that arise within this framework are to do with how some discourses maintain their authority: how some 'voices' get heard whilst others are silenced, and who benefits and how; that is, questions addressing issues of power, empowerment, disempowerment.

Foucault's concept of discourse and the order of discourse have had a profound impact as we have seen, influencing "[t]he entire conceptual territory on which knowledge is formed and produced. This includes not just what is thought or said but the rules which govern what can be said, and what not; what is included as rational and what left out; what is thought of as madness or insubordination and what is seen as sane or socially acceptable."[700] Discourse then could seem to function as a means to suppress and control the colonial subject; thus we have the core idea that "[i]n disciplining the body, persons as subjects become governable, thus marginalising the need for coercion in the regulation of the population".[701] Discourse analysis in the context of colonialism, "[a]llows us to see how power works through language, literature, culture and the institutions which regulate our daily lives".[702]

Kramer goes further and takes her point of departure from Foucault's argument that "[d]iscourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized".[703] Here she focuses on Foucault's arguments that the production of discourse is a technique of power: "[p]ower works via the

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[699] M. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (Vintage, 1988). p. 56.
[700] Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. p. 56.
[701] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*. (A. Sheridan, Trans.). p. 92.
[702] Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*.
[703] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 110 quoting Foucault, 1984.

construction, reproduction and dissemination of tactical discourses that constitute subjects, institutions and cultural domains".[704]

Aileen Moreton-Robinson maps how race was deployed in early colonial discourse to discipline, regulate and punish Aboriginal people while dispossessing them of their land:

> "Disciplinary knowledges that developed and deployed 'race' as a biological concept in the eighteenth century in Australia did so through a prevailing racist discourse. Indigenous people were considered a primitive people, nomadic, sexually promiscuous, illogical, superstitious, irrational, emotive, deceitful, simple minded, violent and uncivilised. We were perceived as living in a state of nature that was in opposition to the discourse of white civility. This racist discourse enabled patriarchal white sovereignty to deny Indigenous people their sovereign rights while regulating and disciplining their behaviour through legislative and political mechanisms and physical and social measures."[705]

While Moreton-Robinson looks at how a pervasive and disciplinary regime of control was enforced in the early days of colonisation via various control mechanisms and punitive actions, this control has taken many new and more perverse twists and turns with the 'intervention'. The founding or originary colonisation though which punitive and disciplinary measures were introduced to dispossess Indigenous people from their land and quell Indigenous insurgency, Moreton-Robinson finds, has never really ended. And one more mechanism to keep this alive has been through the media: the use of negative and racial stereotyping is amply evident in "a tendency towards conflictual and sensationalist reporting on race matters".[706]

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[704] ibid. p. 15.

[705] Moreton-Robinson, "Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of Patriarchal White Sovereignty". p. 65.

[706] Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". pp. 71–73. She quotes from *The National inquiry into Racist Violence 1991 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity.*

While stereotypes of Indigenous people in a perpetual state of 'deficit' appear almost normative in media reporting over the last two decades,[707] particularly around the Hindmarsh, Wik and Mabo cases, Moreton-Robinson sees this situation linked very closely to the very early portrayal of Indigenous people in the media in the 19th century, and through what she calls the discourse of pathology within the race war, "[e]nabling the impoverished conditions under which people live to be rational". Citizenship for Indigenous people, she highlights, became a weapon of race war, as Aboriginal people who weren't 'performing' as proper citizens could be regarded almost as illegitimate. Moreton-Robinson targets *The Bulletin*'s reporting:

> "The print media's representation of Indigenous pathology in the race war was actively promoted by the national magazine *The Bulletin* in the late 1880s. Cartoons of drunken and destitute were a regular feature over the subsequent century in its promotion of the White Australia policy. This pathologising took a different form in the negative stories that circulated and began building in the 1970s after land rights were granted in the Northern Territory."[708]

6.6 Race war and biopower

In Irene Watson's scholarship we find colonisation operates through sovereign right as a "race war".[709] The origins of sovereignty in Australia are predicated on the myth of *terra nullius* (the construction of an un-possessed continent),[710] "[w]hich functioned as a truth within a race war of coercion, murder and appropriation carried out by white men in the service of the British Crown".[711] In her analysis Watson stresses also that sovereignty was both gendered and racialised. "Race surfaces," she says, " as a biological construct in the late 18th

[707] See 'deficit' discourse discussion later in this chapter.
[708] Moreton-Robinson, "Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of Patriarchal White Sovereignty". pp. 70–71.
[709] Watson, "In the Northern Territory Intervention What Is Saved or Rescued and at What Cost?" p. 64.
[710] See next section Chapter 2 on *terra nullius.*
[711] Watson, "In the Northern Territory Intervention What Is Saved or Rescued and at What Cost?" p. 64.

century because disciplinary knowledges came into being and regulatory mechanisms were developed to control the population".[712] In addressing the current intervention, Moreton-Robinson finds:

> "The emergency response to the 'Aboriginal crisis' has misrepresented the causes of violence against woman and children and reinforced the colonial myth that violence against women is inherent in Aboriginal culture, rather than considering the source of violence lies in the invasion and colonisation of Australia and the imprisonment of its indigenous population."[713]

We have seen in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 how notions of race and racial difference were defining features of government policy toward Indigenous people throughout the country. In the work of anthropologists as well as governors, 'protectors' and state legislators, race was categorised, pathologised and measured. Watson reiterates how Foucault's analysis illuminates the concept that race and war are intricately connected to sovereign rights, and in this way, "race becomes a means of regulating and defending society against itself".[714] Drawing on Foucauldian analysis, Watson reminds us that the existence of race war continues unabated: "[r]ace war continues in modernity in different forms, while sovereignty shifts from a concern with society defending itself from external attacks to focus on its internal enemies".[715] Race then becomes a way and means and *justification* to secure Australia for white Australians: "[t]he settler colonial state uses *race* to position the policy as a means to 'protect' and 'secure' the white Australian population".[716]

Taking Foucault and Aileen Moreton-Robinson's lead, Kramer looks historically at the concept of sovereign power, and the emergence of two specific kinds of

[712] ibid. p. 64.
[713] ibid. p. 56.
[714] ibid. p. 64.
[715] ibid.
[716] ibid.

sovereign power: firstly disciplinary power, and in the late 18th century and early 19th century, 'biopower'.[717]

> "[w]hile disciplinary power attempts to produce efficient and docile individuals, this new form of power seizes control of the 'biological and biosociological processes characteristic of the human masses … [B]iopower, Foucault argues implicates the subject's biological life within complex mechanisms of intervention and regularisation. Their body – including health, physical characteristics, fertility rate, illness and death – become the 'object of a political strategy' that works to guarantee hegemonic forces."[718]

Kramer demonstrates how within the context of 'knowledge-power' the body is "exposed to biological discourses that both constitute and seek control over it".[719]

She demonstrates Foucault's argument that biopower 'dovetails' into disciplinary power and operates concurrently within state institutions. Here she acknowledges that racism becomes a 'mechanism of power': "those at the top of the hierarchy are rendered the more biologically 'superior race' while those at the bottom are rendered 'inferior threats'.[720] Foucault's examination of sovereign authority and the sovereign's role of exterminating, removing or permanently controlling those seen as inferior "maps the biopolitical infrastructure that – traversed by racist and colonial discourses – comes to constitute the modern Australian state".[721]

Relying on Aileen Moreton-Robinson's analysis of 'whiteness' and Indigenous sovereignty over country, Kramer directs her analysis to "contest and interrogate representations of whiteness that attempt to assert, legitimate and

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[717] Kramer *Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention*, quotes Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College De France, 1975–76*, trans. D. Macey (New York: Picador, 2003).
[718] Kramer, *Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention*.
[719] ibid. p. 6.
[720] ibid. p. 6.
[721] ibid. p. 9.

secure white possession of Indigenous country".[722] To this extent she also poses the questions: "How does the intervention construct white Australia? How does it perpetuate colonising narratives that script white subjects as 'benevolent' and 'civilised' protectors? How does it reproduce the analytics of raciality inscribed in the legal fiction of *terra nullius* in order to position white subjects as legitimate sovereigns?"[723]

I'll add to this my question: where do these narratives come from historically? Can we trace back – through media texts – the arrival of these discourses in media representations of Indigenous people?

6.7 Discourses that appear and reappear in *Tragedy Track* and Australian colonial history: *terra nullius*, whiteness and race / race war

Returning to Baume's *Tragedy Track* and other historical records we understand all too well that the Granites mines used labour, Indigenous labour, which they paid for in rations *only*. In this type of 'exchange', for Indigenous people *not* to be paid, to be treated differently, they must remain inferior. If they are deemed inferior they can also, as we have seen, be physically coerced. Not only were Warlpiri and other non-white workers at the mines forced into indentured slavery, the land they once occupied (for thousands of years) was no longer theirs. Indigenous labour must also be seen to *consent* to the unequal status the colonisers have relegated them to. This requires a specific discourse in order to legitimise it.

> "Patriarchal white sovereignty's possessive logic determines what constitutes Indigenous peoples' rights and what they will be subjected to in accordance with its authority and law. These subjections are always exclusionary for Indigenous peoples because

[722] ibid. pp. 6–9.
[723] ibid. pp. 6–9.

> the divine right of patriarchal white sovereignty prevails and the definition and circumscription of rights become methods by which subjugation is carried out."[724]

Here I will look at how Kramer addresses Aileen Moreton-Robinson's discourse of whiteness and Watson's analysis of *terra nullius* as two interlocked discourses that legitimised the 'taking' of Indigenous land.[725]

Firstly, a brief overview of the "legal fiction of *terra nullius*".[726]

6.8 *Terra nullius*

> "The cultural disposition that produced *terra nullius*, particularly attitudes to the exploitation of nature and the belief that property is created by use, permeated the entire experience of European expansion. It was for this reason that the legal history that produced *terra nullius* was able to stand for some time as a reasonable account of how Europeans justified colonisation in Australia. *Terra nullius* was not just a description of those justifications (as Henry Reynolds has argued in his own defence) but their product."[727]

The discussion surrounding (and history of the phrase) *terra nullius* is voluminous. It has become the central discourse in examining the context of colonial discourses around sovereignty and dispossession. I will briefly look at the term's arrival in the English lexicon and its passage from European scholarship to the English juridicial system, and both its acceptance as an argument of natural law (*res nullius*: law of the first taker, and *ferae bestiae*: law of the beasts) and a by-product of colonisation through a short discussion of the detailed and illuminating work of legal scholars, Andrew Fitzmaurice and Stuart

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[724] Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". p. 656.

[725] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 20.

[726] While this phrase is used frequently in Kramer's work it has its antecedents in Moreton-Robinson and Watson's work, amongst others.

[727] Andrew Fitzmaurice, "The Genealogy of Terra Nullius," *Australian Historical Studies* 38, no. 129 (2007). pp. 1–15.

Banner. However, this discussion will be brief, and as such will exclude a great deal of the very interesting history of this discourse.

> "[O]ur understanding of the history of the law of colonial occupation would be very superficial if we did not attempt to understand how the idea of *terra nullius* was generated by nineteenth and pre-nineteenth-century discussions of colonisation. *Terra nullius* was not born adult. It did not emerge spontaneously into the world."[728]

Fitzmaurice argues the term *terra nullius* was absent in philosophy of the 18th century and had its Latin antecedents in different terms altogether: *res nullius* (no one's object), *ferae bestiae* (law of the beasts) and also *territorium nullius* (no sovereignty).[729]

The passage of *terra nullius* to become a doctrine in British jurisprudence was via Roman law and later, European scholarship in the 16th and 17th centuries.[730] We can see it resurfacing in the 19th century work of Hanoverian diplomat and professor of law, Georg Friedrich von Martens, a central figure, according to Fitzmaurice in the 19th century, involved with codifying the law of nations. "In 1800, in his *Precis du droit des gens* (first written in 1788), Martens declared that 'in the primitive state of man, nobody has the right of property over the things that surround them: in that sense they [the things] are *res nullius*'."[731]

Fitzmaurice in his study of the etymology of the phrase *terra nullius* finds that it was natural law arguments which came to dominate decisions around property ownership and sovereignty in the 17th and 18th centuries and these became tied to ideas of cultivation of land. If it was perceived as not being in use it wasn't owned. That is, if the land wasn't cultivated – the British understood this in terms of specific agricultural production and practises – it didn't belong to a person or group.[732]

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[728] ibid. p. 6.
[729] ibid. p. 286.
[730] ibid.
[731] ibid. p. 8.
[732] ibid.

Fitzmaurice argues here that even at the time of Captain Cook there were vigorous arguments in Europe against the notion of dispossession of Indigenous people from their lands on the basis of *res nullius*. However, the phrase *res nullius* became, over time, converted to *terra nullius*. How this happened is a startling example of the circulation of a discourse to become a form of 'truth' or knowledge.[733]

Fitzmaurice points to scholarship in Europe and conferences in Germany and in Europe in the late 19th century establishing principles of 'behaviour' (even if they weren't always recognised) around sovereignty:

> "[f]oremost of which was the rule of 'effective occupation': namely, that sovereignty could not be claimed by flag raising or other such ceremonies but only through the effective exploitation of the land. This was, of course, a formalisation of the natural law principles that had been applied to colonisation since the sixteenth century. The corollary of this principle, recognised the conference, was that where native peoples had established effective occupation their sovereignty could not simply be usurped (hence the subsequent enthusiasm for 'protectorates')."[734]

Fitzmaurice and Banner find it surprising how *terra nullius* became a part of the discourse of dispossession post Captain Cook's arrival, since the term *terra nullius* did not exist in colonial institutions at this point, but *territorium nullius* and *res nullius* did.[735] "It was not until the 18th and 19th centuries that the term *res nullius* became reified as a doctrine of the law of the first taker in the law of nations regarding the status of conquered property (including property conquered in wars on the European continent)."[736]

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[733] ibid. p. 13.
[734] ibid. p. 10.
[735] S. Banner, "Why Terra Nullius? Anthropology and Property Law in Early Australia," *Law and History Review* 23, no. 1 (2005). pp. 95–131.
[736] Fitzmaurice, "The Genealogy of Terra Nullius". p. 10.

The passage of the phrase *terra nullius* (no man's land) from *res nullius* (not yet an object of rights) revolved around sovereignty and arguments over natural law and these, Fitzmaurice argues, became part of a "[t]axonomy … a progressive anthropology … [i]n which people were placed on a developmental ladder".[737]

Here I quote Fitzmaurice in full:

> "[*t*]*erra nullius* referred to an absence of property. It hardly needs to be added that it also indicated an absence of sovereignty since it is fairly obvious that where there is such a low level of exploitation of nature that property has not been created, it follows that the far greater degree to which nature must be exploited to create sovereignty is also lacking. The notion of *territorium nullius* conceded the possibility of property existing without sovereignty having been established. It thus could allow colonisers to establish *imperium*, or sovereignty, over territories while acknowledging local property rights. What was at work in this taxonomy was a progressive anthropology (which began to be elaborated in the sixteenth century) in which peoples were placed on a developmental ladder. Their position on that ladder would determine the degree of colonial intervention that could be justified. The differences deserve some serious historical research because they have implications for subsequent uses of both terms in the Australian context as well as in other former colonial states."[738]

So, we find the term *terra nullius* came into usage to refer to an absence of property *and* an absence of sovereignty and these could be proved through the notion of 'land exploitation'. The ideas that ownership of property is based upon use (later also expressed by John Locke) and more broadly that we demonstrate that we are human through the exploitation of nature (or that we are not human if we fail to do so) are fundamental to European history.[739]

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[737] ibid. p. 13.
[738] ibid. p. 13.
[739] ibid.

Arriving in Australia, Cook, Banks, Tench and later, Arthur Phillip, re-established the discourse of the 'primitive' nature of Aboriginal people to justify this 'taxonomy' or 'progressive anthropology', and to prove that the Aboriginal peoples in Australia were in their opinion on a lower level "on the developmental ladder".[740] Banner details how Cook was originally told to negotiate with the Indigenous people of the country as the British Empire had done with other colonies. However, Banner finds they didn't negotiate and these reasons pivot explicitly on race and racial difference which later became overt justifications for the wholesale *taking* of land.[741]

Cook and Banks 'discovered' in their limited exploration of coastal areas in the east of Australia that the continent *appeared to be* sparsely populated and not farmed.[742] From this they assumed there was no private ownership. They also determined the Aboriginals they encountered were 'lesser' developmentally because they didn't barter or exchange or even accept the Europeans' gifts.[743]

Arthur Phillip, arriving as first Governor of NSW, was not told to negotiate. He was told, on the basis of Cook's descriptions of the 'lesser' nature of the Indigenous he encountered, "to seize the land with force if necessary".

> "Immediately upon your landing after taking measures for securing yourself and the people who accompany you as much as possible from any attack or interruptions of the natives … proceed to the cultivation of the land." [744]

Banner documents in detail the discourses around this 'lesser' status of the First Nation people. They were based around what the Aboriginal people looked like, what they wore (or didn't) and how they conducted themselves. British Enlightenment sensibilities were shocked and disturbed by people they had no understanding of. For Banner, the tone of these discourses was set by William

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[740] Banner, "Why Terra Nullius? Anthropology and Property Law in Early Australia"; Fitzmaurice, "The Genealogy of Terra Nullius".
[741] Banner, "Why Terra Nullius? Anthropology and Property Law in Early Australia". p. 104.
[742] ibid. p. 104.
[743] ibid. p. 104.
[744] ibid. p. 104.

Dampier as early as 1688, who recorded that "the inhabitants of this country are the most miserable people on earth".[745]

Banner details numerous writers, from explorers and travel writers to religious leaders, politicians, judges and editors, who found the Aboriginal people in the early days of colonisation to be 'ugly', 'repulsive' and 'filthy'; and they were described in numerous accounts and texts also as 'lazy', 'dirty' and 'indolent'.[746]

By the early 19th century these judgements and ruminations were being reinforced and entrenched by British scientists and other government officials. "In 1809 the naturalist George Caley sent to NSW by Joseph Banks to gather botanical specimens, could sum up two decades of British observations. 'I believe it is universally said', Caley told Banks, 'that the natives of NSW are the most idle, wretched and miserable beings in the world.'"[747]

The physical appearance of the Indigenous became an entrenched discourse to prove they were 'lesser': to the British they were simply 'ugly'. "Indeed, British writers often compared the Aborigines with monkeys. Sometimes the comparison was meant to be a metaphor. The marine Robert Scott, for example, told his mother: 'I never saw such ugly people. They seem to be only one degree above a beast. They sit exactly like a monkey.'"[748] But in other instances it was a direct description. The idea he says was 'commonplace' in literature "at least as early as the 1830s when Charles Napier found it necessary to refute all those who have called the natives of Australia 'a race which forms the link between men and monkeys.'"[749] Numerous references to monkeys and primates *proved* they were 'primitive'. They lacked clothing and therefore were also 'stupid'.[750]

To return to Loomba briefly, we find it is texts, journals, newspapers and literary texts which ultimately "[e]ncode the tensions, complexities and nuances within

[745] ibid. p. 105.
[746] ibid. p. 105.
[747] ibid. p. 106.
[748] ibid. p. 107.
[749] ibid. p. 109.
[750] ibid. p. 107.

colonial cultures".[751] Literary texts also reveal much about the ideological and cultural filters of the European traveller. To conquer new lands these colonial discourses required explorers to see the 'native' 'primitive' 'other' as lesser: "[h]ence Medieval Christian associations of blackness with sin and dirt … [also] provided a justification for colonising and enslaving blacks," she writes.[752] A 'primitive' 'other' became a justification for a free or stolen labour force. "English renaissance notions of beauty developed in tandem with early modern conquest and exploitation were a crucial aspect of English contact with black peoples."[753] Literature and language describing the colonial encounter *inevitably* bear the mark of colonial encounters.[754]

These demeaning and racially spurious descriptions contributed to the most damning of all the discourses: that Indigenous people were in a 'state of nature', 'were primitive' and lacked agricultural practises and therefore had no rights over their land.[755] We also find numerous missionaries, church leaders and influential bishops weighing in with their opinions decrying the Indigenous as in a 'state of nature', not 'Christian' and therefore 'primitive', again supporting an idea that they could not possibly be responsibly in charge of property, or its custodians.[756]

> "Even if *terra nullius* had been unjust, others argued, there was no point worrying about it because the Aborigines were dying out. The land would belong to the British soon enough anyway. Belief in the eventual extinction of the Aborigines has of course proven false, but in the first half of the nineteenth century the Aboriginal population was declining. It was not unreasonable to conclude that the decline would continue."[757]

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751 Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. p. 82.
752 ibid.
753 ibid.
754 ibid.
755 Banner, "Why Terra Nullius? Anthropology and Property Law in Early Australia". pp. 107–109.
756 ibid. p. 118; also see Chapter 2 here.
757 ibid. p. 125.

As we have seen in Fitzmaurice's study of the emergence of *terra nullius* in the British lexicon, this perception of lack of cultivation and European-style agricultural practises meant, under the natural laws of Anglo/European jurisprudence, that the Indigenous lacked property rights: "[t]he absence of agriculture implied the absence of any property rights the British were bound to respect and more broadly reinforced the prevailing belief".[758]

Here we see Fitzmaurice's analysis of the taxonomy of 'lesser beings' start to swing into mainstream circulation and conventional opinion: *terra nullius* became a perceived wisdom, a kind of *truth*. If the Aborigines were still in a 'state of nature' they, by definition, did not own their land. The land was *terra nullius* according to this governmental and legal discourse and, notwithstanding, "the people who lived and cultivated the land for tens of thousands of years lacked sovereignty over it".[759]

For Banner, it was no coincidence that this term became part of the lexicon after British settlement, and he finds it existed for a quite a long time, until it was tested in legal cases during the 19th and 20th centuries when it became partly enshrined as a doctrine, and then apparently, a fait accompli.[760] In legal cases before the Crown and Commonwealth, "[w]henever the question of land ownership came up the government always resolved it in favour of *terra nullius*. *Terra nullius* then became difficult to dislodge."[761] While there was, as Fitzmaurice writes, an awareness of injustice and a period of humanitarian understanding, it became the right of the virtuous to ensure the Aborigines learnt proper agricultural practises.[762] Aileen Moreton-Robinson spells this out

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[758] Fitzmaurice, "The Genealogy of Terra Nullius". p. 13.

[759] ibid.

[760] Banner, "Why Terra Nullius? Anthropology and Property Law in Early Australia". p. 110.

[761] ibid. p. 125.

[762] "It's important to note here once the colonies were established the Commonwealth and Imperial governments did all they could to ensure there was no ceding of rights to Indigenous people over the land despite numerous test cases; here the South Australian Colonisation Commission makes it plain that no proprietary right to the land exists as the tribes "have not yet arrived at that stage of social improvement …" ibid. p. 121 "The Commission pointed out that the land in every colony in Australia had simply been allocated to settlers, regardless of whether it was inhabited by Aborigines. Banner finds the Commission ensured its correspondences seemed to be 'respecting Aboriginal property rights without actually committing itself to doing so'". Cited in ibid. pp. 122–125. The SA government complied with the Colonial Office by authoring the Protector of Aborigines, "a colonial official [as we have seen in Chapter 2] to participate in the process by which settlers selected plots of land". ibid. p. 122.

in *Virtuous Racial States: The possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty*,[763] discussed in the next part of this thesis.

So Banner finds even the critics of *terra nullius* "[t]ended not to argue in favour of recognising Aboriginal property rights. They proposed two remedies for the injustice of *terra nullius*: compensating the Aborigines and setting aside unallocated parcels of land as permanent Aboriginal reserves. No compensation was ever paid. Even the critics of *terra nullius* thought 'protectorships' were the best outcome."[764]

The argument over the English words and the subsequent discourse can appear to be a pedantic misrepresentation of the event and what Pugliese calls the "event trauma" of colonisation.[765] Professor of law and First Nations academic, Irene Watson puts it succinctly as she exposes the genocidal practises behind the violent arrival of Cook and the subsequent arrival of British military: "Cook violated the laws of the Eora People when he and his crew stepped ashore in 1778 and these violations never stopped." In *Raw Law*, Watson[766] exposes these violations of colonisation and inverts the British attempts at 'sovereignty over *terra nullius*' with a detailed oral history and legal examination of genocide post-invasion:

> "[t]hey created their own colonising myths of emptiness, through massive depopulation due to frontier violence and deliberately introduced diseases, causing the deaths of thousands of First Nations People."[767]
>
> "The founding fathers' doctrine of discovery and *terra nullius* underlay the myth of invisibility: Nungas and our laws were deemed invisible to their eyes." [768]

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[763] Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".
[764] Banner, "Why Terra Nullius? Anthropology and Property Law in Early Australia". p. 127.
[765] Pugliese, "Race as Category Crisis: Whiteness and the Topical Assignation of Race".
[766] Irene Watson, *Aboriginal Peoples, Colonialism and International Law: Raw Law* (Routledge, 2014).
[767] ibid. p. 110.
[768] ibid. p. 111.

Watson finds the stories of what happened to the Indigenous over the past two hundred years "rarely mentioned in colonial histories": either they were 'left untold' or "colonists in their shame glossed over the darkest aspects of colonial history and tell a different story". Yet, she continues; "[t]he survivors of the genocidal policies of the coloniser lived to retell their stories".[769]

6.9 'Whiteness' other discourses

Kramer teases out Moreton-Robinson's theories on the way whiteness "[o]perates through racialised application of disciplinary knowledge and regulatory mechanisms to preclude recognition of Indigenous sovereignty".[770] For Moreton-Robinson, 'whiteness' becomes a regime of power not just evident in discourse but as a creator of the discourse "[t]hat emerges from the nexus between disciplinary techniques, biopolitical mechanisms and racial and colonial discourse".[771] She also makes it amply clear that whiteness needs to be understood in the academy to disrupt its universality: "the task today is to name and analyse whiteness in all texts to make it visible in order to disrupt its claims to normativity and universality … [W]hiteness as a regime of power that secures hegemony through discourse has material effects on the entire social structure and is an area of study worthy of investigation and critique."[772]

For Moreton-Robinson, gender and race were linguistic markers from the period of sovereign absolutism in the 17th century to the present day: "[t]he foundations of modern sovereignty have a gendered and racial ontology – that is, sovereignty's divine being as a regime of power is constituted by and through gender and race".[773] Using Moreton-Robinsons theory of 'whiteness', Kramer argues that Moreton-Robinson exposes the process of universalising whiteness

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[769] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention" quotes Moreton-Robinson p. 116.
[770] ibid.
[771] Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". p. 387 and also Kramer op. cit. p. 10.
[772] Moreton-Robinson pp. 87–88 quoted in Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention".
[773] Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". p. 645.

as both normative and supreme and the whiteness epistemology deploys race to "exclude racialised subjects as rights bearing subjects".[774] This becomes even more insidious as we find Moreton-Robinson unpacking how governments legitimised their actions by frequently invoking 'virtue': "[g]overnments dehumanised Indigenous people in order to legitimise their actions and then sought to make us fully human by exercising benevolence and virtue in its many forms".[775]

This analysis is very relevant to my discussion on the role of the media to bolster government and anthropological involvement in the removal of Aboriginal people from tribal desert homelands under the guise of 'protectionism', as this was seen as a kind of 'virtue'. Nation states, as we can see in Moreton-Robinson's essay on virtue, use types of 'morality' under the guise of 'virtue' as justifications for genocidal practises: and now we can see this is clear for the both the emergency response or intervention, as for the history of colonisation. For Moreton-Robinson this represents what she describes as 'the possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty'. 'Virtue' becomes a function, and is employed strategically: it's a moral value used historically to divest or dispossess Indigenous people from their lands.[776] She continues, "[s]overeign power is a state's internal self-realisation of its truth and virtue whereby will and possession operate discursively".[777] Moreton-Robinson illuminates this with her argument that *terra nullius* provided the rationale and sovereign will to dispossess Indigenous people of their lands: "[i]t was their divinely ordained destiny to redeem the lesser humans of the world through the application of their unique moral virtues …" Here, virtue functions, she finds, within the ontology of possession where the people are perceived to 'lack the will' or appear to be "open to being possessed".[778]

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[774] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 11.
[775] Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". p. 645.
[776] ibid. p. 644.
[777] Moreton-Robinson, "Writing Off Indigeous Sovereignty: The Discourse of Security and Patriarchal White Sovereignty". p. 646.
[778] ibid. p. 646.

Moreton-Robinson regards this as part of the reasoning for the "[i]mposition of sovereign will-to-be on Indigenous lands. The state's claim to ownership becomes "normative behaviour, rules of interaction and social engagement embodied by its citizens".[779] And ultimately it is manifested in the state and judiciary. Here punitive action is part of the means of subjugation. She finds this plays out particularly in the racial states of Australia, Canada, US and New Zealand:

> "[w]hereby patriarchal white sovereignty as a regime of power is the defining and refining condition of their formations ordaining them ontologically with a sense of divinity … thus possession and virtue form part of the ontological structure of patriarchal white sovereignty that is reinforced by its socio-discursive functioning."[780]

I'll look at this statement later in relationship to the newspaper articles and the book *Tragedy Track*. I'll look at what Kramer has described as its use of punitive actions as a technique of subjugation: "Since colonization began, patriarchal white sovereignty has deployed punitive action as a technique of subjugation in its relations with Indigenous people."[781]

6.10 Other discourses

Race and racial violence

Kramer reveals "[s]overeign power and racialised discourses form a powerful alliance". Kramer here draws on the work of Denise Ferreira da Silva, who argues that "racial violence is always justified in the context of the settler-colonial states."[782]

> "[R]ace must be understood as a productive politico-symbolic arsenal that works as an a priori through political, juridical and economic

[779] ibid.
[780] ibid.
[781] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 73.
[782] ibid. p. 11.

> infrastructure in the name of the settler-colonial state's self-preservation … As it produces whiteness – and white bodies and colonial laws – as always already lawful, ethical, self-determined and universal, it also necessitates specific modes off academic inquiry …"

In this context, Sheren Razack argues that "[r]acial violence is constitutive of and sanctioned within colonial narratives". [783] Irene Watson's analysis is also crucial to recall here: "[e]arly colonial frontier violence was pitched against first peoples' laws and cultures, a foundational violence which established a colonial sovereignty …"[784] Contemporary violence is more complex, Razack argues; it is characterised by violence of Aboriginal against Aboriginal, "[b]ut the violence of the state also retains its original character against Aboriginal peoples' laws and cultures. It is a colonial violence which re-enacts itself to support the claim to legitimate foundation and the Howard Emergency measures are such a re-enactment."[785]

6.11 'Possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty' and 'event trauma' of colonisation

Deploying Aileen Moreton-Robinson's 2004 theory of a 'possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty' and Joseph Pugliese's notion of 'the event trauma', Kramer re-examines *terra nullius* and how these twin theories "expose the ways in which whiteness and sovereign power interlock to take possession of Aboriginal land".[786] She shows how the theories identify the regimes of power that produce recurrent violence and "provides the means to chart its manifestation since white invasion".[787] Here, Kramer explores the "colonial relations of power that underwrite contemporary politico-juridical rhetoric".[788]

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[783] Sheren Razack, 2011, quoted in ibid.
[784] Watson quoted in Kramer ibid. p. 48.
[785] ibid. p. 48.
[786] Pugliese, "Race as Category Crisis: Whiteness and the Topical Assignation of Race"; Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 20.
[787] "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 20.
[788] ibid.

Looking intricately at the Mabo 2 decision she charts the way *terra nullius* and Australia's originary event trauma "[work] to naturalise white sovereignty".[789] She finds these two theories, Moreton-Robinson's and Pugliese's, demonstrate that the intervention – and the constructions of whiteness it reproduces – cannot be viewed in isolation.[790]

Pugliese's event trauma is viewed as "foundational moments of origin saturated with violence, both physical and symbolic, that are generative of ongoing violence, even after their seeming recession over the horizon of history".[791] Moreton-Robinson's theory of the possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty traces the 'whiteness' and specifically the whiteness in relationship to 'ownership' and dispossession to Captain Cook's landing: here "patriarchal sovereignty works to maintain the originary fiction of white sovereignty".[792]

As we found in the preceding argument on *terra nullius* and race, Kramer finds this belief in 'white superiority' pivots on two specific ideas: firstly, that white men were "civilized, supreme and entitled to land"; secondly, that Aboriginal people were 'other' and positioned within a spectrum from "uncivilized" to "non-human that do not possess humanity, legal systems and forms of property".[793] She argues that "Pugliese and Moreton-Robinson demonstrate that this event trauma is routinely reproduced in line with contemporaneous expediencies in order to reassert possession of the continent", adding that "[t]hey not only challenge articulations of state violence as singular and self-contained events; but also demonstrate that sovereign violence must be contextualized within two hundred and forty years of colonial warfare".[794]

Kramer maps a genealogy of colonial warfare, marking specific moments, biopolitical regimes of government and the "legal apparatus that administers them". Sovereign power, she maintains, "[f]orged a critical nexus with both

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[789] ibid.
[790] ibid.
[791] ibid. p. 24.
[792] ibid. p. 23.
[793] ibid. p. 23.
[794] ibid. p. 27.

disciplinary power and government rationalities".[795] And racism inscribed this legal fiction into the institutional and governmental framework of the country. Kramer supports Watson's arguments that "misrepresentation of Indigenous people as primitive and non-human rendered white law as an arbitrary tool of dispossession",[796] and the classifications of "[c]ivilized/primitive, human/non-human and British subject/non subject, were mobilized in whichever way necessary to manage targeted Indigenous populations" since colonisation and most recently during the 'intervention'.[797]

As demonstrated by Markus in his groundbreaking work, *Governing savages*,[798] Kramer finds government refused to recognise Indigenous people as an organised force: "Moreover, it criminalized Indigenous people to provide legal justification for the use of punitive – or lethal – violence against them."[799] The attempt to classify Indigenous people as 'non-human' and 'primitive' was in order to "[b]oth validate Indigenous peoples rights under British law and manage targeted populations without recourse". This move, Kramer argues, sanctioned the colonists' right to force Aboriginal people off their land without compensation, and allowed for Indigenous deaths to go un-investigated. Governments repeatedly failed to effectively prosecute white people for crimes against Aboriginal peoples.[800]

6.12 A brief history of the recurrent racial stereotypes in colonial discourse

As discussed in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, colonisation created and reinforced images and narratives of Indigenous people of Australia as 'primitive', 'savage', 'children', 'wild,' 'noble' and son on, and these images and stories appeared and reappeared in newspapers, journalism and the so-called scientific new discipline

[795] ibid. p. 28.
[796] ibid. p. 28.
[797] ibid.
[798] Andrew Markus, *Governing Savages* (Allen & Unwin, 2000).
[799] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 29.
[800] ibid.

of anthropology. Ideas and images of the inferiority of the Indigenous were paramount to justifying the taking of the land and settlement by colonial forces. Colonial discourse analysis concerned with stereotypes, images and knowledge of colonial subjects and cultures ties in with the institutions of economic, administrative, judicial and biomedical control. According to Gilman and Loomba, stereotypes involve a reduction of images and ideas to a simple and manageable form: a method of processing information. And their function inevitably leads to the binary of 'them' and 'us':[801]"the function of stereotypes is to perpetuate an artificial sense of difference between 'self' and 'other'."[802]

How can we reconcile increasing knowledge about the diversity of peoples and lands with colonial stereotypes about Europe and its others? The roots of colonial stereotyping can be found in the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th century accounts of European explorers. Over this long course of history, travellers and explorers were creating new categories of people. Loomba attends specifically to the myth of the 'cannibal' in history and historical revisions of this trope. She also examines the 13th century images of Muslims portrayed as barbaric, degenerate, tyrannical and promiscuous.[803] These are also the images examined by Said earlier in *Orientalism*. Loomba finds these images were constantly reformulated examples of pictorial images of Africans, Turks, Muslims, barbarians, 'men of Inde' and other outsiders. She discovered how these images circulated within Europe for a considerable time before colonialism, although their more widespread appearance coincided with the creation of the 'other' in various colonial discourses.[804] These images were the representation of visual ideas, constantly shaped and reshaped during colonial contact. As the contact between Europe and other parts of Asia increased, so did the flow of images: "[c]olonisation was perhaps the most important crucible for their affirmation as well as construction".[805]

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[801] Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness.* (Cornell University Press, 1985). A. Loomba, *Colonialism/ Post-Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998).
[802] Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness.* p. 19.
[803] Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. p. 72.
[804] Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. p. 72.
[805] ibid. p. 72.

Clifford and others found that the early travel writings of Europeans – documenting eating habits, religious beliefs, clothing and social organisation of diverse peoples – mark the beginning of anthropology:[806] "previously held notions about the inferiority of non-Europeans provided a justification for European settlement, trading practices, religious missions and military atrocities".[807] Racial stereotyping was a way of connoting difference. Eighteenth century explorers and colonists documented, and ultimately misrepresented, those 'others' they came into direct contact with. Developing Western scientific discourses would also posit that skin colour connoted a difference that was pathological; that is, an attribute not superficial to human identity, but constituted it. By the late 19th and early 20th century science had not shed earlier prejudice about inferior races.[808] Darwin's theories, while representing a genuine advance for science, were widely misused to bolster views of racial superiority. The debates we have looked at in Chapter 2, in government and anthropological circles, reveal that Indigenous knowledge and intelligence were largely refracted through a prism of prejudice, and "[s]cientific language was authoritative and powerful precisely because it presented itself as value-free, neutral and universal".[809] It was also difficult to challenge the claims of science particularly in the realm of eugenics.[810] Stepan and Gilman found the intrusion of scientists' own cultural and political identities prevented them from exploring and challenging many scientific theories such as the bogus 'science' of eugenics. Increasingly their theories marginalised the Indigenous people they hoped to understand.[811]

For many cultural and postcolonial theorists modern Western knowledge systems and histories are embedded within and shaped by colonial discourses. These same knowledge systems were imprecated in racial and colonists'

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[806] J. Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[807] Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. p. 72.

[808] See Chapter 2 and the work of McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory 1880–1939*.

[809] Nancy Leys Stepan and Sander L. Gilman, "Appropriating the Idioms of Science," in *The "Racial" Economy of Science*, ed. Sandra Harding (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993).

[810] See Chapter 2 on the history of eugenics in anthropology in Australia.

[811] Stepan & Gilman, "Appropriating the Idioms of Science".

perspectives. For Loomba, "[t]he central figure of western humanist and enlightenment discourse … the human and knowing subject now stands revealed as a white male colonist".[812]

We see this theory also writ large in the work of Aileen Moreton-Robinson.[813]

Cartography was also a new science born from the colonial encounter, with images of 'savages' a new category. The images along with the travel writing were "revisited, reworked during the tragedy of British imperialism", writes Loomba.[814] Graham Huggan explores mimesis within cartography. He finds that producing a plausible reconstruction of a specific geography has been repeated since the time of Plato. Reflecting on the work of Homi Bhabha and Edward Said, Huggan shows how cartography – like other kinds of texts developed and created and recreated in a colonial context – served the colonists discourse and, in turn, "justifies the dispossession and subjugation of so-called 'non Western' peoples. The representation of reality endorsed by mimesis is, after-all, the representation of a particular kind of reality: that of the West."[815] Huggan sees the mimesis of map-making as attempts to stabilise a falsely essentialist view of the world which negates alternative views. Huggan also uses colonial discourse to examine the colonial world of cartography through the lens of cartographic discourse.[816] Racial difference as we have seen in the earlier arguments charted by Kramer, Watson, Moreton-Robinson and Pugliese, amongst others, becomes then the discursive tool to subjugate, dispossess, control and contain Australia's First Nation people.

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[812] Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*.

[813] Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".

[814] ibid.

[815] G. Huggan, "Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism and the Cartographic Connection," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 20, no. 4 (1989).

[816] ibid.

6.13 Stereotypes, misconceptions and casual racism

In his ethnographic work with Warlpiri elder Darby Jampijinpa Ross,[817] Liam Campbell recalls the prospector/explorer Michael Terry, and the language Terry used in his accounts of forging the road through hostile and difficult terrain.[818] For Campbell, the populist accounts of prospector-colonists like Terry, are littered with stereotypes and misconceptions about the Indigenous people.

> "The Warlpiri, Pintubi and Anmatjerre people (like Darby) of his populist accounts blend into the background of a frontier landscape as childlike black caricatures. They are the 'niggers', 'boys', 'bucks', 'lubras' and 'gins' of typical 1930s accounts. Darby did not use this language himself. He spoke mainly of Warlpiri, or English mixed with Warlpiri and the north Australian stock-man's Kriol. He occasionally referred to other Indigenous stockmen as 'boys', but he would also identify them as Alyawarr, Anmatjerre or Warlpiri. Darby made reference to local identity above all, and made distinctions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with the Warlpiri words 'yapa' and 'kardiya'."[819]

Campbell's ethnographic portrait of Darby explores oral history interviewing within the rubric of Indigenous history, Jurrkurpa (dreamtime), and cross-cultural engagement. Campbell's own involvement in the project as a non-Indigenous white man is also explored. Campbell encounters Darby Jampijinpa Ross telling his stories in an entirely different way to that of the explorers and prospectors like Michael Terry (who we encountered in chapters 4 and 5). Darby, as Campbell identifies here, tells his story as part of a tradition and songline: "When Darby spoke, it was this grounding in Jukurrpa that he used as a platform to deliver the stories to tape." He identifies this telling as a "discourse that Foucault (1998: 289), who often pushed against the idea of traditional disciplinary boundaries, at one time authenticated", thus Campbell is "more

[817] Campbell, "Walking a Different Road: Recording Oral History with Darby Jampijinpa Ross".
[818] See Chapter 4; also Terry, *Hidden Wealth and Hiding People*.
[819] Campbell, "Walking a Different Road: Recording Oral History with Darby Jampijinpa Ross". pp. 1–9.

intrigued by the existence of discourses, by the fact that words were spoken". He continues: "Those events functioned in relation to their original situation, they left traces behind them, they continue to exist, and they exercise, in that very subsistence in history, a certain number of manifest or secret functions."[820]

Campbell here also draws on Foucauldian discourse analysis, to contrast the discourse – and specifically the language used – in a non-Indigenous (whitefella) contemporary exploration: a 2002 camel journey crossing the Tanami by foot written by Kieran Kelly.[821] For Campbell, the language in this text again draws on the voice of the early explorers, the hero-battlers, and in a similar vein to Terry, denies Indigenous people their voice. "Yet," he writes, "authors like Kelly enjoy an audience on national radio and through their writing perpetuate a colonising discourse of inaccurate historical stereotypes of Australian Indigenous people."[822] Campbell believes the writing of Kelly and others (including Baume) reminds academics, intellectuals and those non-Indigenous working within Indigenous perspectives and histories to interrogate their own subject positions and roles within the discourses they are involved in if they are to work towards "decolonising established traditions of writing about Australian Indigenous people".[823] I have listened to Campbell's advice in this thesis as I have attempted to interrogate the non-Indigenous colonial voices that existed during the early periods of government and policymaking, and the anthropology conducted in the NT, which also affected these policies. I have also reflected on Moreton-Robinson's groundbreaking work on 'whiteness'.[824] I will now specifically attend to the newspaper discourses, which also denied a voice to the Indigenous.[825]

Drawing on Moreton-Robinson, Watson, Kramer and Campbell's analysis among others, I wish to examine how the language of white explorers in the 1930s, the popular media and publishing worlds, propagated inaccurate historical

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[820] M. Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology, Volume Two of the Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, ed. J. Faubion, tran. by R. Hurley (New York: The New Press, 1998). p. 289 quoted in Campbell, "Walking a Different Road: Recording Oral History with Darby Jampijinpa Ross". p. 8.

[821] K. Kelly, *Tanami: On Foot across Australia's Desert Heart* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2003).

[822] Campbell, "Walking a Different Road: Recording Oral History with Darby Jampijinpa Ross". pp. 1–9.

[823] "Commonwealth Government Records About the Northern Territory"; "Walking a Different Road: Recording Oral History with Darby Jampijinpa Ross"; Kelly, *Tanami: On Foot across Australia's Desert Heart*.

[824] Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' up to the White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism*.

[825] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

stereotypes. I do this in my analysis of *Tragedy Track*. The use of words like 'niggers', 'boys', 'blacks' is repeated throughout these and many other published news stories and published journal essays of the period. Baume's simplistic interpretation and representation of Indigenous people, syndicated in *Tragedy Track*, was part of a discourse that also existed in public perception, government policy and anthropological inquiry. Newspaper stories from this period, however, actively helped to shape this discourse. I also want to examine and reflect upon how this racist discourse shaped settlers' and prospectors' views of, and relationships with, the Indigenous people they encountered. We might then ask, what was the role of journalism in fuelling and reinforcing the racist colonial discourse that in turn both informed and legitimised the colonial policies and practices in anthropology and government that saw the complete removal of Indigenous people from their land? Part of the impact of these representations also lies in their ongoing presence: thus we might also ask, how have they managed to persist? As we shall discover, perhaps not unexpectedly, these stereotypical discourses exist – almost in their entirety – in the representation of Indigenous people in the desert highlighted in media reporting to this day.[826] During the (2007–ongoing) 'intervention' in the NT we saw the repeated use of a discourse relying heavily on images and representations of Aboriginal people being drunk, violent and welfare dependent.[827] Meadows, Waller et al. find remnants of this language persisting today in what they refer to as a 'deficit' discourse about Indigeneity.[828] I explore this more fully in the next section of this chapter.

[826] J. Altman, *Beyond Closing the Gap: Valuing Diversity in Indigenous Australia.*(Canberra: Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research: ANU, 2009); Hinkson & Altman, "Very Risky Business: The Quest to Normalise Remote-Living Aboriginal People," in *Risk, Welfare and Work* (2010).

[827] For example: K. McCallum, Meadows, M., Waller, L., Dunne Breen, M. & Reid, H. *The Media and Indigenous Policy: How News Media Reporting and Mediatized Practice Impact on Indigenous Policy* (Canberra: University of Canberra, 2012); M. Meadows, *Voices in the Wilderness: Images of Aboriginal People in the Australian Media* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001).

[828] *Voices in the Wilderness: Images of Aboriginal People in the Australian Media*.

6.14 Deficit discourse

Deficit discourse is an order of discourse that has been prevalent in the mainstream media since colonisation. In effect, it's another form of disciplinary control and dovetails with Moreton-Robinson's analysis of whiteness and white patriarchal sovereignty. Dodson, quoted in Fforde et al., finds that colonial discourse uses predominantly loaded language that characterises Aboriginal people in terms of what they lack under the gaze of the colonising culture. 'Aboriginality' in this context is not recognised as a daily practice, but rather is a "problem to be solved".[829] According to Dodson the conceptualisation of Aboriginality in terms of racial theory follows these categories:

- blood quotients
- noble savage
- biological determinism
- concepts of authenticity.[830]

The deficit discourse in Indigenous policymaking is described in detail in the work of Fforde et al. This paper identifies all the scholars, including Hinkson and McCallum, who have identified a 'deficit' discourse that surrounds Aboriginality throughout the media, and consequently throughout social and economic spheres.[831] For Fforde et al., this discourse is "across different sites of representation, policy and expression, and is active within non Indigenous and Indigenous Australia".[832] Fforde et al. illuminate how this deficit discourse has the characteristics of Foucault's 'discursive formation', and they demonstrate how the approach is both constitutive and productive: that is, "that it is a social action which frames and constrains understanding, and also productive of a

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[829] Cressida Fforde, Lawrence Bamblett, Ray Lovett, Scott Gorringe and Bill Fogarty, *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, vol. 1, Media International Australia (2013); M. Dodson, "'The Wentworth Lecture: The End in the Beginning – Re(De)Finding Aboriginality'", *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1 (1994).

[830] "The Wentworth Lecture: The End in the Beginning – Re(De)Finding Aboriginality".

[831] Fforde, *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia, 1.* Hinkson, "New Media Projects at Yuendumu: Towards a History and Analysis of Intercultural Engagement". McCallum, *The Media and Indigenous Policy: How News Media Reporting and Mediatized Practice Impact on Indigenous Policy.*

[832] Fforde, *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, 1.

knowledge in social relationships".[833] Fforde et al. explain how this in turn produces and defines the objects of our knowledge and governs the way a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned.[834] "In adopting a Foucauldian approach, what is 'known' in a particular period about 'Aborigines' has a bearing on how people are regulated and controlled (or regulate and control themselves)."[835]

Fforde et al. invoke Kerin's definition of the power play implicit in the construction and reconstruction of identity that occurs within discourse:

> "Those who have the ability to shape discourse define what is possible to think, while suppressing other ways of thinking. The ability to shape discourse, legitimise and reproduce it, builds power. By defining what is possible to think and suppressing others, those with institutional power – like governmental agencies – do not need to draw on coercive force to change people's behaviour because the dominant discourse has established a framework, or 'rules of the game' that individuals and groups must 'play to' be recognized and participate."[836]

Within the colonial context, Fforde et al. applies these Foucauldian concepts to Aboriginality. Here they argue that deficit discourse is a mode of thinking, identified in language use that "frames Aboriginal identity in a narrative of negativity, deficiency and disempowerment. We argue that such a discourse adheres to models of identity still embedded within the race paradigm, and is interwoven with notions of authenticity".[837] Fforde et al. find that Indigenous deficit characterises the philosophy of colonialism.[838] Accusations and assumptions of cultural deficit "have saturated the history of cultural relations in

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[833] ibid.
[834] ibid.
[835] ibid. p. 164.
[836] J. Altman and Kerins, S., "People on Country: Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures," Federation Press, Sydney; Fforde, *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, p. 1.
[837] *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia, 1.* p. 164.
[838] ibid.

Australia since contact and are a key component of racism and prejudice". These constructed 'truths' about Aboriginal people have little value.[839]

Dodson, quoted in Fforde et al., finds that "defining characteristics were described in unanimously loaded language that predominantly identified Aboriginal people in terms of what they lacked".[840] Fforde et al. draw out how these misconceptions of aboriginality came to be accepted as valid: "[c]conceptualisation of Aboriginality in terms of racial theories based on blood quotient, coupled with the notions of the 'noble savage' and the tenets of biological determinism, formed the basis of deeply pervasive (and persistent) concepts of authenticity".[841]

The construction and representation of Aboriginal identity by white Australians has been covered by many, including Cowlinshaw, Dodson, Langton and Meadows.[842] The use of Foucauldian theory, Fforde et al. point out, is in evidence also in the work of Arnold and Attwood, and Fforde. Fforde cites Nakata as reflecting on aspects of Aboriginality.[843] Forde also opens up the analysis to include the field of 'whiteness studies' seen in the writings of Aileen Moreton-Robinson to reveal an understanding of superiority (of white) as central to the construction of white identity:[844]

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[839] ibid.

[840] Dodson, "'The Wentworth Lecture: The End in the Beginning – Re(De)Finding Aboriginality'"; Fforde, *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, 1.

[841] *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, 1.

[842] Gillian Cowlishaw, "Studying Aborigines: Changing Canons in Anthropology and History," *Journal of Australian Studies* 16, no. 35 (1992); "Euphemism, Banality, Propaganda: Anthropology, Public Debate and Indigenous Communities"; M. Dodson, "'The Wentworth Lecture: The End in the Beginning – Re(De)Finding Aboriginality'" ibid. (1994); M. Langton, *" Well, I Heard It on the Radio and I Saw It on the Television": An Essay for the Australian Film Commission on the Politics and Aesthetics of Filmmaking by and About Aboriginal People and Things* (Sydney: Australian Film Commission, 1993); McCallum, *The Media and Indigenous Policy: How News Media Reporting and Mediatized Practice Impact on Indigenous Policy.*

[843] B. Attwood and J. Arnold (eds), *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines* (Bundoora, Vic: La Trobe University Press, 1992); C. Fforde, "Collecting, Repatriation and Identity," in *The Dead and Their Possessions*, ed. J. Hubert and P. Turnbull (London: Routledge, 2002); Fforde, *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, 1; M. Nakata, *Disciplining the Savages, Savaging the Disciplines* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007).

[844] Fforde, *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, 1.

> "Disengaging non Indigenous and Indigenous Australians from such discourse may be fundamental to affecting change, but there are obstacles to this, which derive from factors such as tenacity, subtlety and pervasiveness of this mode of discourse, its powerful currency in the current socio-political climate and sensitivity of the topic."[845]

Fforde et al. also cite the discourse of the intervention as a discourse deficit around Indigenous identity, language and representation. While there has been a critique of 'the intervention' itself, there has been little in the analysis of discourse involving political leaders, government documents or news media.[846] Although as we have seen earlier in this chapter, Kramer has re-engaged with this in a powerful way:

> "Constructions of Aboriginality deployed to justify the intervention are formulations that link Aboriginality to the abuse of children. This alignment establishes a political debate about the nature and future of Aboriginality in a discursive terrain in which the authority and perspectives of Indigenous people are problematised. In deploying constructions that attempt to situate and contain Aboriginality temporally and spatially, the intervention's settler advocates seek to resolve the 'problem' of Aboriginality by subduing the savage and deploying the primitive in spaces they designate an authentically Aboriginal domain."[847]

Fforde et al. highlight the fact that the language employed in the 'closing the gap initiative' carried 'an implicit assumption of deficit' – another attempt at 'normalisation' of Aboriginal people.[848] The discourse of deficit is found not only in overt racism but also in more nuanced forms. Fforde includes a case of English literacy promotional material designed by state and federal governments which

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[845] ibid. p. 163

[846] Hinkson has also written on the discursive ploys in justification of the intervention in Altman & Hinkson (eds), *Coercive Reconciliation: Stabilise, Normalise, Exit Aboriginal Australia*, 2007.

[847] A. Macoun, "Aboriginality and the Northern Territory Intervention," *Australian Journal of Political Science,* 46, no. 3 (2011). p. 531 quoted in Fforde, *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, 1.

[848] *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, *1*. p. 166.

was embedded in deficit discourse. Once this was deliberately changed, assumptions about literacy readdressed and programs developed outside this frame, the outcomes also changed dramatically.[849]

> "Indigenous health was most likely to be reported through the dominant frame of the Indigenous health crisis. In both 1988–89 and 1994–95, stories about Aboriginal health standards and living conditions were the most frequent topic of news stories. Analysis of news headlines demonstrated that, in 1989–89, coverage of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) generated most news stories concerning Aboriginal health. Five years later, the Indigenous health crisis remained the most prominent frame for reporting Indigenous health."[850]

McCallum point outs that while Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was no longer in the news, stories about Indigenous health were still framed within the discourse of disparity and intractability – often framed in the discourse as 'Australia's shame' and something to be 'fixed'. Later this deficit discourse was reframed through the lens of 'policy failure'.[851] Later still, McCallum documents how the deficit discourse on Indigenous health came to be configured in the context of 'individual blame' as the discourse swung to a neoliberal position on drug and alcohol misuse. Other news frames McCallum cites from the Australian media, consistently used in deficit discourse, include the "failure of Indigenous leadership".[852] As we have seen, Watson, in her extensive examination of genocidal practises brought against Aboriginal people since colonisation, found even the stories of what happened over the past 200 years to have been 'glossed over':

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[849] ibid. ; McCallum et al., *The Media and Indigenous Policy: How News Media Reporting and Mediatized Practice Impact on Indigenous Policy.* McCallum also reveals this in the current health discourse around Indigenous health.

[850] *The Media and Indigenous Policy: How News Media Reporting and Mediatized Practice Impact on Indigenous Policy*

[851] ibid.

[852] ibid.

> "The survivors of the genocidal policies of the coloniser lived to retell their stories. Colonists in their shame glossed over the darkest aspects of colonial history and tell a different story. Indigenous peoples are rarely mentioned in colonial histories."[853]

I will now look more closely at the material directly relating to the Tanami, the Tanami and Granites mine and the Warlpiri residing in this area in the 1930s through and analysis of the colonial discourse evident in the newspaper stories of the period. These kinds of stories, Fforde et al. maintain, became the "sole point of reference and understanding … for non-Indigenous". These are primarily stories about Aboriginal people, not told by them.[854]

[853] Watson, *Aboriginal Peoples, Colonialism and International Law: Raw Law*. Routledge, 2014.
[854] Langton (1993:33) quoted in ibid. p. 164.

Part II

> "In contradistinction to the discourses that construct Indigenous peoples relation to the land as singular and affective 'affinity', colonial texts script ostensibly white land uses such as farming and mining as 'industrious' and necessary for economic prosperity … [w]hite Australians are represented as *entitled* to juridical standing in order to reproduce that narrative that is encapsulated in the notion of *terra nullius*: that the continent was lawfully settled by an illustrious and productive sovereign."[855]

6.15 Analysis of Baume's *Tragedy Track*: images and text

The images and journalism of *Tragedy Track* literally encode the colonial encounter in terms of black and white. Here, images of the Indigenous signify the primitive, violence, nakedness and dirt: all familiar representations of the colonial paradigm. The Indigenous people photographed are never named – in complete contrast to the Europeans depicted. 'Aborigines' are instead treated as group subjects and this is another way of devaluing them. The European subject 'achieves individuation', while colonised people represent land or nature or tribe.

To return to Loomba, and the colonial discourse theory she develops, we find the "interrelatedness of literary with non-literary and the relation of both to colonised discourses and practices".[856] Journalism in this way (the non-literary text; the syndicated story) is woven together with the author's musings and opinion as well as Marcard's photographic images.[857] The *Sun Herald* newspaper

[855] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 49.
[856] Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. p. 89.
[857] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*. Marcard's photographs are scattered throughout this text.

expedition also creates a discourse of 'native threat' or 'black threat', a deficit discourse that denigrates the knowledge, intelligence and humanity of the Indigenous in colonial encounters. The stories from this expedition are perhaps the only representation of Indigenous people of this region that non-Indigenous migrants on the east coast of Australia will have from the 1930s. Ideas and thoughts about Aboriginal people are thus developed, retained then repeated, and recirculated. This is how the stories of the Indigenous in the desert transform over time into a discourse of 'truth', and this truth becomes prominent in the public perception. All the while the sale and publication of the stories is quietly driven by the newspapers' economic contingencies.

6.16 *Tragedy Track* and 'black rapist' stereotype

The representations of rape and plunder in the colonists' mythology are very easy to locate, and we can deconstruct them particularly in books like *Tragedy Track*. Here, we find the colonised country likened to a naked woman and the colonisers as masters/rapists. With the threat of rebellion, the stereotypes can shift quickly too, and the Indigenous or black-skinned tribal men are transformed into the rapists who come to exist purely to rape the white women. The women in turn come to symbolise European culture.[858]

According to Loomba, the 'black rapist' stereotype is a permanent feature of the colonial landscape.[859] Sharpe found that rape stories allowed the British in India to consolidate their authority.[860] The European version of the Coniston massacre is replete with rape stories.[861] Valerie Napaljarri Martin (from Chapter 4) has heard the oral history account of the events from Indigenous family members, including her father, who were present on that day and the subsequent days as Warlpiri were rounded up and shot.[862] I quote here from Napaljarri Martin:

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[858] ibid.
[859] Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*.
[860] Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (University of Minnesota Press, 1993). p. 4.
[861] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.
[862] Valerie Martin, co-narrator in Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

> "People used to come here from all over the countryside. They used to come here. Live here. Some Warlpiri people used to live here too. Used to be a big camp here, in those days, in 1928. In those days they used to have cleaning ladies, Aboriginal women, 'lubras' they used to call them. They used to bring back tobacco, rations and get themselves a feed. Then one day this old man was waiting, waiting for his wife. That old Brookes he had her up in the house. So he went up there checking on it and seen them two together and in a jealous rage he murdered him with an axe. That's how it started. In those days, so many (killed)."[863]

Napaljarri Martin's oral history explanation as we travelled along the Tanami road is in stark contrast to Baume's oral history / journalistic account of the Coniston massacre. Baume only received second- and third-hand accounts of the massacre, yet he wrote up and published exactly what he was told by the "kind, old" bushman, Randal Stafford. That the Europeans were raping Aboriginal women and/or using them as domestic labour, in effect domestic and sexual slaves in exchange for material goods, is never in contention here.[864] Rather, Baume's depiction is of the 'kindliness' of the bushmen,[865] contrasting this with the way the Indigenous 'send in' their women in exchange for food and other goods, then are ungrateful. According to Baume, when the tribe is wiped out for killing "Old Brookes", justice has simply been done:

> "There has been much controversy, and Randall Stafford's name has been linked often with the tragedy which occurred in 1928 only thirty odd miles from Coniston homestead at Brook's soak, fifteen miles from the fringe of the spinifex desert and last water for many weary miles. Old Brookes was a wandering prospector and a staunch friend of Stafford. When the blacks were hungry he gave them food. It was his invariable practice. He did not interfere with their women – though the practice of the desert tribes is to send in their gins as an

[863] Valerie Martin in ibid.
[864] ibid.
[865] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

> offering for food. But his kindliness did not prevent the blacks he befriended from cutting him to pieces one day, near the soak which bears his name, and hiding (or attempting to hide) the poor butchered remains in the rabbit holes near the grave which today, surmounted by a headstone placed there by old man Stafford, stands mutely to remind the overlander of the tragedy. Constable Murray, Randal Stafford and others saw that vengeance was done. Many blacks were shot. The missionaries claim that the shooting was brutal and unnecessary, but after having heard from trustworthy men like Stafford, Rieff, trooper Lynch and others of the habits of some of the desert tribes, I will not listen again to the charge of brutality leveled by some well-meaning men against the police and the posse which saw that justice was done."[866]

Back on the road, the journalist Baume finds danger lurking in every corner of the bush. He feels "black eyes" on him watching in a sense of malevolence. The possibility of danger lingers five years after the massacre. Yet, according to Indigenous people, there were so many killed in this massacre that most Warlpiri living in the area at the time did not survive and those that did survive were driven out completely:

> "Once out from Coniston the trail cuts through blacks' country. We were stuck in the sand about fifteen miles from Cockatoo Creek, just on the border of spinifex country, when a boy of about 16, carrying a boomerang only, stepped out of some mulga scrub and stood boomerang in hand, looking at the strangers … three or four blacks, unclothed men, stood off in the scrub. They did not bother about spears. But nothing happened, and the boy turned slowly and went back into the bush.
>
> That night even the stolid Simon Rieff was perturbed. Just before midnight the dingoes began to howl. Simon however, was convinced

[866] ibid.

> that they were nigger dogs and that a blacks' camp was not far off. However, he was wrong."[867]

Here we have a number of competing stereotypes. In the first extract, the 'gin' or 'lubra', and in the second and third an ever-present discourse of the jolly swagman/ bushman / Aussie battler. The term 'lubra' was used extensively in colonial discourses to denote an Aboriginal woman. Both the term 'gin' and word 'lubra' are regarded by Indigenous women and (many others) as highly derogatory and offensive. The word 'lubra' has seen consistent appearances in historic discourses. Much in the same way that we saw Aboriginal men classified as 'chums' 'cruel treacherous and unstable'[868] we find the words 'lubra' 'and 'gin' to have equally derogatory references for Indigenous women throughout colonial settler history. The etymology of the 'lubra' can be found in the extensive writings of Liz Conor amongst others.[869]

The other stereotype is of the lonely and embattled white male prospector. We see him here re-imagined in contemporary history as 'the white Aussie battler'. In Baume's discourse all white men are individuated. They are given names. They are strong and bold but also fair and virtuous and always up against the odds. Pugliese and Perera find the image and creation of the 'battler' an inherent and regular feature in white Australia's history: "[t]hey argue that this figure represents an exclusively white male who through trial, tragedy, mateship and generosity – overcomes a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to (narrowly) survive".[870] In contemporary history he becomes one of former Prime Minister John Howard's *Aussie battlers*.[871]

> "White Australian popular culture has long been based on a victim narrative where the forces to be combated involve not only hostile land and too powerful friends and enemies. It also traditionally

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[867] ibid.
[868] ibid.
[869] Liz Conor, "The 'Lubra' type in Australian Imaginings of the Aboriginal Woman from 1836–1973," *Gender and History* 25, no. 2 (2013).
[870] Perera (1997) and Pugliese quoted in Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 56.
[871] Perera (1997) and Pugliese quoted ibid. p. 56.

entailed a stunning reversal of the relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people."[872]

Kramer finds this character is reconfigured in the Hindmarsh and Wik cases "to solidify histories of white ascendency". John Howard, she shows, brought the battler once again into full focus, "[t]o silence indigenous counter-histories".[873]

6.17 White man's disease in the desert: another discourse

Venereal disease amongst the Indigenous in the Central Desert in the early 1930s, particularly at the Granites goldmining site, was another discourse as we have seen in Chapter 4, and was spoken and written about at length both in Strehlow's reports to the Administration, government legislation and documents, as well as being regularly reported on by the Murdoch and Packer press. Both Strehlow and Baume write about the case of two white prospectors at the Granites site who carried the disease and infected many Aboriginal women – whether by rape, force or as a means of trade.[874] The venereal disease from these two white prospectors also allowed colonial administrators to invoke and reinforce the ideological discourse of the time – *the dying pillow* – the need to isolate blacks, as Strehlow, Daisy Bates and Ernestine Hill lobbied, or to convert Indigenous women to white through the process of assimilation (the preferred method of Dr Cecil Cook and others). These negative discourses about Aboriginal health and sexuality allowed the Territory administration under the control of the Commonwealth government to consolidate its authority. "Simply put, in adopting a Foucauldian approach, what is known in a particular period about 'Aborigines' has a bearing on how people are regulated and controlled (or regulate and control themselves)." As Hall notes, "[k]nowledge does not operate in a void … it is out to work, through certain technologies and strategies of

[872] Perera (1997) p. 121 quoted in Kramer ibid. p. 57.
[873] ibid. p. 57.
[874] Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".

application, in specific institutions, historical contexts and institutional regimes."[875]

But the stereotype of the 'black rapist' is strangely inverted and re-imagined in Baume's *Tragedy Track*. The Indigenous man is a site of ridicule: both threatening and 'ape-ish' while the Indigenous woman, or 'lubra', can be suitably redeemed if made to serve the white man.

In her groundbreaking work on Warlpiri drawing during Mervyn Meggitt's years working with the Warlpiri, *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*, Melinda Hinkson examines Baume's journalistic contribution to the formation and continuation of these colonial stereotypes.[876]

> "Baume's story is not simply an account of the dangerous seduction of gold, a melancholy tale of hopes dashed and lives lost. It is a romantic saga crafted to draw the curiosity of the metropolitan newspaper reader providing a rare glimpse of a foreign world unknown to many Australians …"[877]

Hinkson looks at two portraits that Baume paints with his newspaper stories; "two postures of mimicry and mimesis that are enacted cross-culturally again and again in accounts of colonial Australia".[878] We have the brutal and primitive image of Worraborra man who is irredeemable in his wild and wily ways … civilised only to become greedy, "aping the white man and boosting to his tribe".[879] The other portrait Hinkson invites us to inspect is Baume's description of the redeemed and redeemable Alice, the "lubra of unusual education and intelligence".[880] Alice is the cook for Randall Stafford at Coniston Station and Baume expends a great deal of written text eulogising Stafford (as we have seen earlier in this chapter). While Worraborra is a 'savage' destined to die out, Alice,

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[875] Hall (2010:76) quoted in Fforde, *Discourse, Deficit and Identity: Aboriginality, the Race Paradigm and the Language of Representation in Contemporary Australia*, 1. p. 164.
[876] Hinkson, *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*. p. 51.
[877] ibid.
[878] ibid. p. 52.
[879] *Baume, Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites* quoted in Hinkson*, Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing.* p. 50.
[880] *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*.

"embodies the only positive future imagined for her kind,"[881] and she is celebrated for leaving her people and her 'ways' behind. Both these images, Hinkson reminds us, are continuous with a single way of seeing Aboriginal people.

> "Moreover, they had to be *made* to vanish as their savage ways stood as a deterrent to civilization and development fully taking hold in the Northern Territory. Baume's description of Worraborra's garish mimicry conveys a sense of the multiple threats that Aboriginal people were imagined to pose for settler society if their separateness was not maintained. Local Aborigines were contaminating – they were infected with venereal disease (seemingly by their own actions, they polluted water supplies and threatened cattle … They were crude and … untrustworthy, and likely to murder a man as much as look at him."[882]

As we have seen, these stereotypes were completely false. Venereal disease was brought into communities from local (white) prospectors, the waterholes were polluted by cattle, and white men were the killers and rapists. Hinkson also finds Baume's portraits to be are "highly gendered". Aboriginal women could and would be able to make a transition to become submissive adjuncts to white male authority as both servants and breeders "[s]howing loyalty to the white boss while acting traitorously to their own people". While the men, Baume caricatures, are "problematic, threatening and unpredictable". [883] For Hinkson:

> "[s]uch primitivist fantasies legitimized Aboriginal dispossession: Too primitive to develop the land, these poor wretches must be moved aside, they must be contained in ways that would enable the pioneers of the Territory to do their heroic work, unhampered. By the twentieth century such ideas had been comprehensively laid down and would continue to shape policymaking for decades to come." [884]

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[881] ibid. p. 51.
[882] ibid.
[883] ibid. p. 52.
[884] ibid. p. 51.

6.18 Applying discourse analysis to interrogate specific accounts of frontier representation from Tragedy Track journalism and book

A cultural studies approach – which uses colonial discourse analysis – gives us a very good theoretical framework for deconstructing the narrative in newspapers. In this instance, I am going to use this technique with specific examples of newspapers and journalism from the 1930s. Stories about the 1930s gold rush in Central Australia ran for a significant period before, during and after a newspaper expedition along the Tanami track to the Granites goldfields. This section of the chapter then will be concerned with the representation of Indigenous people in these newspaper stories generated during the gold rush of 1932, and the language used in these stories and representations. As I have introduced the key term already:

> "[d]iscourse has been described as a system of thought composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that shape reality by systematically constructing the subjects and the worlds of which they speak. Discourse plays a role in wider social processes of legitimation and power; emphasising the constitution of current truths, how they are maintained and what power relations they carry with them."[885]

Using critical discourse analysis, I aim to deconstruct several of the stories published in *The Telegraph*, the main (Sydney based although syndicated nationally) broadsheet of the day, as well as stories in the book *Tragedy Track* from 1933. A critical discourse analysis of the texts will lead to a recognition and understanding of the prevailing discourse of *gold*, *race / race war*, *whiteness* and *terra nullius* and will give us the tools to see how the Indigenous of the Central Desert were characterised and represented in newspapers, journals, books and anthropology in these discourses. Not only can we gain crucial insights into the discourse around gold, mining, colonial conquest and Indigenous representation

[885] Altman, J. and Kerins, S. "People on Country: Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures". Federation Press, Sydney. pp. 26–44.

in 1932–33 in Australia, we will also be able to examine the language of the text, ascertaining the discourse(s) and the impact of these in the community, especially how the discourse asserts colonial authority. One way to understand the working of colonial authority is through the "colonial discourse" which "draws upon the notion of discourses as an absent power that gives authority, validation and legitimization."[886] Usher and Edwards add that while "[a] discourse author-ises certain people to speak", a key effect of this is to silence other voices, or "at least makes their voices less authoritative. A discourse is therefore exclusionary."[887] The discourses examined here refer to silenced Indigenous voices; in most cases these voices have been deliberately excluded and devalued.[888]

6.19 The Tragedy Track newspaper stories

While this expedition focused on the search for gold, these newspaper stories told their syndicated readers (around the country) another story: a story which highlighted the very real clashes and sometimes 'imaginary' clashes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous along the newly created Tanami road.

This section examines a selection of these news-stories about gold and goldmining in the Granites area over a six-month period during the years of 1932 and into 1933, although for this thesis I have randomly chosen seven newspaper stories from the three months up to and during the expedition, including the first stories as the expedition begins, is then underway, and then concludes. Through discourse analysis I hope to shed light on the newspaper's obsession with gold and the Granites, and how this expedition became a media-led expedition. News frames here reveal the representation of Indigenous in public discourse – indeed a particular constructed version of Aboriginality. Using

[886] Cary, "Postcolonial Narratives: Discourse and Epistemological Spaces".
[887] R. Usher & Edwards, R., *Postmodernism and Education* (London: Routledge, 1994).
[888] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

McCallum, Moreton-Robinson, Pugliese, Kramer and others we can approach these in four modes:[889]

- the representation of Indigenous people as 'natives' and 'savages'; that is, 'wild', 'uncivilised', unintelligent, even malevolent and destructive, deliberately impeding prospectors finding gold
- Aborigines as a dying race with 'reserves' the only option for their protection
- colonists, prospectors, and Europeans represent the 'good' and progress: they are always 'right'; the myth of the 'Aussie battler'
- gold saves 'white' people from the economic depression and prospecting on any land becomes an unassailable right.

6.20 The newspaper headlines: creating and recreating representation of Indigenous Australians

The very first newspaper headline from the beginning of the expedition is a front page call to adventure (Illustration 3, Story 1).

[889] *McCallum, The Media and Indigenous Policy: How News Media Reporting and Mediatized Practice Impact on Indigenous Policy;* Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"; Moreton-Robinson, "Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of Patriarcha White Sovereignty"; Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention"; Pugliese, "Race as Category Crisis: Whiteness and the Topical Assignation of Race".

ALL FEEL THE GOLD LURE

CENTRALIA IS THE ADVENTURE CALL

PARTIES SET OUT

(SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT)

ALICE SPRINGS, Monday. — Unusual tenseness marked the departure this morning of four parties for —"The Granites" goldfield. A Melbourne explorer was included.

TWENTY leases were registered on Saturday morning. All leaves have been taken within 200 yards of the lode, which runs like a horseshoe for six miles.

Prospects are said to be excellent. A dump from two shafts has averaged 2¼oz. to the ton.

Illustration 3 **ALL FEEL THE GOLD LURE**

– CENTRALIA IS THE ADVENTURE CALL

– PARTIES SET OUT

***The Daily Telegraph,* 4 October 1932 [Story 1]**

The headline is "All feel the gold lure". The subsequent headline is "Centralia is the adventure call". The first sentence is declarative. It states "ALL" feel the lure of gold: there is an assumption and ambiguity in the headline that everyone – "all"– are *Australians* and it gives the impressions that *all Australians* want gold. According to anthropologist Derek Elias, this couldn't be further from the truth. Indigenous Australians were disinterested in gold. "(Gold) is discussed by Warlpiri in terms of travelling and of it running under the ground in a manner not unlike their own Jukurrpa (dreamtime). Gold is then spoken of as a 'white man's dreaming'."[890]

The headline for the 1932 article also states, "Centralia is the adventure call": another declarative headline, this time a 'call to arms' for adventure. The readership of the newspaper is invited to participate in the goldmining adventure. This article briefly describes some level of tension amongst the parties as they embark on their journey to the Granites goldfields. Four parties are included in the expedition. The newspaper includes the fact that a number of mining leases in the region have been added to by an additional 20 despite no definitive findings in the field. However, according to the newspaper: "Prospects are said to be excellent".[891]

Over the next week as the Granites / Sun-Telegraph expedition begins, the newspaper headlines promote further gold findings: "Another rich find at the Granites gold fields" (Tuesday October 11) and other headlines indicate the discovery of further gold.[892]

It is important to note here that Australia was in the grip of an economic depression and gold was seen by the newspaper as a means of alleviating the financial position of many white/European/colonial Australians. Hinkson sums it up thus:

> "The promise of gold had a lure much sharpened given this was 1932 and the country and global economy were in the grip of depression.

[890] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". p. 17.
[891] Baume, "All Feel the Lure of Gold: Centralia Is the Adventure Call", *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 October 1932.
[892] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

> That year the Australian stock market hit its lowest level, export income plummeted and unemployment peaked at 30 percent. Thousands of men were suffering post-war trauma. But that same year the Sydney Harbour Bridge was completed. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation was launched. Nation-making was occurring apace. And through the misty-eyed haze of the desert heat, Baume, like so many writers drawn to explore the inland in this period, appealed to his readers to embrace the centre, a new greenfields of adventure and unknown possibilities." [893]

There is no recognition of the land where the goldmines are situated as Aboriginal land; there is no mention of negotiating for the land. The land is assumed to be *terra nullius*. It is taken as a given, a right that the land belongs to no one and subsequently it can be taken by the white men prospectors. It is their unassailable and sovereign right to do so.

Pronouns as a tool of differentiation

Here I wish to look briefly at how pronouns are deployed in written discourses as what Foucault called a "tool of differentiation".[894]

Kramer's analysis of Howard's speech post–9/11 finds Howard constantly using the pronoun 'we' to mean 'white Australians'. This is both an exclusory ploy and a tool of marking and making difference. 'We' are all white Australians, the rest who aren't white, are not Australians. 'We' are not only presumed to be white Australians; we are represented, alongside 'free [white] people around the word,' as those who are bound by our common values and a fundamental right to protect ourselves.[895]

Here Kramer finds the call to all Australians and the Australian 'we' represents whiteness and its attendant values. Here we see biopower at work: "[w]e are dealing with the mechanism that allows biopower to work", she writes, "so

[893] Hinkson, 2014 p. 50.
[894] Kramer, 2016 p. 128.
[895] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 128.

racism is bound up with the workings of a State that is obliged to use race, the elimination of races and the purification of the race, to exercise its sovereign power".[896] Kramer goes on to highlight how Foucault identifies racism, biopower and sovereign power as interlocking "to perform 'colonizing genocide'."[897]

Kramer's' analysis of the 'we' pronoun used by Howard to differentiate his audience and to address white Australians about a national Indigenous 'emergency' in 2007 is another 'back to the future moment'. This 'we' resounds with the same tones as that made to white Australians in the newspapers of the 1920s and 1930s. Howard's words of 2007 could easily be applied to the stories and discourses we have found in *Tragedy Track*:

> "Replete with rhetorical flourishes, this statement uses the pronoun 'we' to address white Australians and in turn, represent 'us'– white Australians – as those enlightened subjects who possess facts and the 'elements of a civilized society'. In contradistinction, Howard's repetitive use of the word 'civilised' and his emotive rhetorical question attempt to reproduce targeted Aboriginal spaces and subjects as ungoverned entities that must be colonized in the name of extending rationality, justice and civility across the globe."[898]

[896] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College De France, 1975–76*. Quoted in Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 128.
[897] Foucault, 2004 p. 257 quoted in "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention". p. 128.
[898] ibid. p. 135.

LATE EDITION

The Daily Telegraph

DESERT GOLD OR GRANITES MIRAGE?

NEW FIELD TO BE TESTED BY EXPERT FOR SUN-TELEGRAPH

PROFESSOR TO DETERMINE IF IT IS ANOTHER COOLGARDIE

EXPEDITION BY PLANE AND TRUCKS

MAY SAVE LIVES

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

WATER VITAL, BUT RAIN DANGEROUS

THE INHOSPITABLE "GRANITES"

Ireland's Optimism Fades

U.C.P. AND MINISTRY

State Saves £26,000 on Dole Bread

CONFERENCE TO END IN FIASCO, SAYS MINISTER

GLOOMY FEARS FOR PEACE IN IRISH FREE STATE

DOMAIN BAN ON LOUD-SPEAKERS

The Daily Telegraph LATE NEWS

BIG IMPROVEMENT IN STATE FINANCES

WOMAN TELLS ON WOMAN

FEARED KNIFE MORE THAN TOMAHAWK

HER HEAD PAINED

WOMAN CHARGED

AT ST. ANDREW'S

TAX RELIEF TALK

RISE IN CUSTOMS REVENUE

MAN KILLED ON RAILWAY

REVENUE RISES £2,301,931 IN FIRST QUARTER

EXPENDITURE CUT BY £3,350,065 UNDER 1931 PERIOD

REVENUE:

EXPENDITURE:

INTEREST PAYMENTS

BANKSTOWN CHARGE

HOLLAND HAS PRIORITY IN TIMOR

TREATY CLAUSES

Illustration 4 **DESERT GOLD OR GRANITES MIRAGE?**
– NEW FIELD TO BE TESTED BY EXPERT FOR SUN-TELEGRAPH
– EXPEDITION BY PLANE AND TRUCKS
***The Daily Telegraph,* 12 October 1932 [Story 2]**

This story kept up the high level of excitement and tension as well as momentum. It had a specific functioning of letting the readership know that an expedition will 'test the field'. The first paragraph reads:

> "From the Granites, far out in the heart of Australia 490 miles north-west of Alice Springs, come stories of gold discoveries. It is either a tremendous thing for Australia, or it is a matter over which many persons may be misled.
>
> It has been decided by Associated Newspapers and the Melbourne "Herald" to secure the best and most reliable evidence available about the position."

The story sets up a sense of excitement and adventure through the four headlines: 'Desert gold', 'New field to be tested', 'Expedition by planes and trucks', and then the paragraphs bring the reader immediately to a place, the Granites "far out in the Heart of Australia" where stories of gold are being told.

There is a call to nationalism with "the heart of Australia" and to national pride. Also to the 'white' heart of Australia because there is an assumption as in the previous story that the land is empty; it is uninhabited and belongs to no one.

The following paragraph asserts it is "either a tremendous thing for Australia, or it is a matter over which many persons may be misled".[899] Here the writer assumes that if gold is found then all Australians will be happy and it will be a great boon for the country: this means for all of its white inhabitants. There is no mention of the people already living on this land, who own this land or in fact, any people existing here at all. It is simply *terra nullius*, peopled randomly as we shall see by 'savage blacks'.

Another minor assumption appears in paragraph two; the newspaper, "[c]an secure the best and most reliable evidence".[900] The geologist on the expedition, C. T. Madigan, would report on the findings. Here we have a newspaper stepping

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[899] F. E. Baume, "Desert gold or Granites mirage: New field to be tested by expert for Sun-Telegraph," *The Daily Telegraph* 1932.
[900] ibid.

outside its social practice or order of discourse and going beyond the conventional genre of reportage to become the story it is to report on. In other words, the newspaper has decided to create the story of the expedition and then report on it.

News is expected to be "objective", which in discourse analysis is impossible. But given that Associated Press is to report on an expedition and is funding and organising it, the line between objective reporting and commercial enterprise is very uncertain. It is worth noting that in the same paper on the same day, *The Daily Telegraph* makes it clear that the expedition and the story are essentially about *gold*, the *white male prospectors*, and their inherent right to the gold – as they are *entitled* to, since the land is assumed to be *terra nullius* and implicitly *theirs for the taking*.

During this week in October, prior to the expedition on the ground, the headlines about the 'gold rush' appeared every day on the front and third pages. These created and reinforced the gold discourse.[901]

At this point in time, October 1932, the expedition is on its way to the Granites. The stories between October 4 and October 15 generate excitement for this colonial expedition, particularly as it approaches Alice Springs by car and track.

There is also a news story every day. Leading up to, and at the beginning of, the expedition these stories are on the front page but once the expedition is under way and the obstacles to mining are made clear – poor conditions, arid interior, lack of access to drinking water – these *boys own* styled 'adventure stories' give way to stories of hardship and 'hostile Indigenous' 'savages' and 'the blacks'.

[901] "Gold Rush: Granites Shares in Keen Demand," ibid., 3 November.

GOLD RUSH ON 'CHANGE

GRANITES SHARES IN KEEN DEMAND

MANY COMPANIES

SEVEN public companies have already been floated to acquire options or take up leases at The Granites goldfield, in Central Australia.

In every case the shares have been readily taken up, and most are at substantial premiums on the Stock Exchange.

The companies are:—

The Granites Gold, N.L., £6000 in 600 shares at £10 each. Issued capital, 500 contributing and 50 fully-paids, with 50 in reserve. Contributing shares paid to £1, with another £4 due to-day. Directors: Ambrose Pratt, chairman; H. E. Thonemann, M. P. Cordier, A. D. Douglas, and A. Nelson, M.H.R. for Northern Territory. The original company secured 28 leases on The Granites. Last sale, £51.

Granites West, N.L., £200,000 in 400,000 shares of 10/ each, to take up certain options held by the original company on the western end of the field. Public issue of 265,000 shares offered at 1/ a share on application has been over-subscribed. Provisional directors: A. H. Merrin, Ambrose Pratt, H. E. Thonemann, G. C. Klug, and one other director to be elected. Gold Mines of Australia, Ltd., with capital of £500,000, and in which the leading Broken Hill companies are interested, has undertaken to apply for 60,000 shares in Granites West. Last sale, 2/5.

Granites Development, N.L., £150,000 in 300,000 shares of 10/ each, of which 200,000 shares are offered for subscription at 1/ a share on application, the balance of 9/ a share being payable in calls when required, whilst 30,000 shares fully paid are to be allotted to The Granites Gold, N.L., for the transfer by it of certain options to purchase mining areas at The Granites, and 70,000 shares are to be held in reserve out of which the share consideration payable for the options, if and when exercised, will be provided. Provisional directors: A. Pratt, H. E. Thonemann, A. D. Douglas, and two others to be appointed. Last sale, 3/.

Chapman's Gold Mines, N.L., £225,000 in 450,000 shares of 10/ each, of which 300,000 are being issued at 10/ a share, payable 4/ on application and balance in calls, whilst 66,000 are to be issued as fully-paid to 10/ to the vendor syndicate, and 84,000 to be held in reserve. Provisional directors: Charles Henry Chapman, Wm. J. Denny, Wm. Cowper Ward. Last sale, 6/8.

Illustration 5 **GOLD RUSH ON 'CHANGE**

– GRANITES SHARES IN KEEN DEMAND

***The Daily Telegraph,* 12 October 1932 [Story 3]**

GET JOBS IN FOUR MONTHS

CHIDE IS DEAD

HOODOO HORSE HAD STRANGE CAREER

SAD OWNER

Chide, the gelding which cost his owner a fortune; Chide, "the unluckiest horse in N.S.W.", Chide, which should have been a Second Phar Lap, is dead.

Ending an unfortunate career with an unfortunate accident—the racehorse broke a fetlock while spelling at West Maitland—it has been destroyed.

YOUTH CARRIES ON VENDETTA

TRIED TO AVENGE HIS FATHER'S DEATH

CHERRY RIPE

YOUNG DUTCH

TWO LITTLE dancers who will appear in the Russian Ballet Revue, to be held at Her Majesty's Theatre today in aid of the Unemployed Women.

Sing Sing Singers Sang of Victory

(SPECIAL SERVICE)

ALBANY (N.Y.), Monday.

THERE were glad hearts in Sing Sing on Saturday night. The gloomy corridors rang with song all night.

Vengeance had been wreaked on the police.

They had been beaten, crushed, and wiped off the face of the earth. For once the hope of the "Big Stripe" had got the "dope" where they wanted them.

Sing Sing football team, without their star forward, who had been released on Friday—none said it was a mere police trick—had taken "its coat" by 3 to nil in the annual clash.

Now there is a scurrying of heads to see who will be "back" next year to help hold the "sales."

U.S. BANK MEN WATCHED

ANTI-SPY CAMPAIGN IN JAPAN

(SPECIAL SERVICE)

HONG, Monday.

Extraordinary precautions are being taken against espionage in Japan. Americans are being singled out for special attention by the Japanese detective force.

A month ago executives of the Tokio branch of the Bank of New York were refused permission to send to their head office pictures of Japan for use in advertising propaganda.

The latest step is the campaign commenced yesterday when a party of bank officials on an excursion by car to Kyoto were escorted throughout their holiday by detectives, who permitted any photographs being taken.

Their car was boarded soon after the start of the holiday, and they were handed over to other parties at various stages of the journey.

Diplomatic pressure is to be brought to bear in order to ease the situation.

PROMISING STRIKE IN QUEENSLAND

BRISBANE, Monday.—A discovery of gold, crushing four ounces to the ton, has been made at Rock Creek, near Dungree, by Donald Mather, of Carisbrook, Victoria, acting for a Sydney syndicate, of which Mr. Arthur Vickers, of Sydney, is head.

Ten mining leases of 25 acres each have been taken up.

The gold recovered is practically pure, and it is proposed thoroughly to prospect the areas with a view to carrying on operations on a large scale.

DANGERS OF WATERHOLE

BLACKS MENACE PROSPECTORS

GRANITES RUSH

(From Our Special Representative with The Granites Expedition)

ALICE SPRINGS, Monday.—Blacks have been showing truculence at the waterholes, according to Killeen, a prospector who was the last to arrive back here from The Granites before the rains.

THERE has been no violence so far, as the white parties have moved on when the natives showed their annoyance, and made towards their spears, after a peaceful approach.

To-day there are about 40 men at The Granites. Many of the prospectors who made the first finds are at Alice Springs, awaiting to-morrow's train for Adelaide. It will be the "optimo train," as each some have been paid to the miners, and all but a few propose to holiday in Adelaide and Melbourne.

A great champagne supper is to be given there to-night, and a special dance in Alice Springs dance hall, which stands 30 feet up on posts.

ROADS IMPASSABLE

Five cars and trucks are shown to have left The Granites within the past few days, but the tremendous rains have made big sections of the road impassable.

One of Chapman's lorries is reported from the 18 mile, bogged. Two trucks have gone to pull him out. He will be the first to leave The Granites since last week.

WAGES DISPUTE

Granites Gold has instructed Mr. Powell, its mining manager, not to pay the men 30/ a day, as asked.

Local men and new arrivals say they will refuse to work on lower terms, and fresh men may be called for, from Alice Springs or Adelaide.

There was no unruliness when the decision was announced.

GAVE WAD AWAY

In Alice Springs, despite the local boosts, there is no wild talk about The Granites. Even the Sandstone Ducks Committee—Jack Atherton, Barnet, and Lewis—do not talk of El Dorado. Enough to-day they have gnoole to their pockets.

To-day Jack Atherton, bearded, tall, and very out, could not find enough cash for his opinion money.

Across the road from the hotel he saw a little half-caste girl, not ten years old.

"Here, kiddie," said Jack, "you want to buy some sweets."

He was known how many notes were in the wad he passed over to the little girl.

The Granites gold party and the Madigan party have petrolized and made final arrangements for leaving, but they may not get out until the end of the week, owing to the rains.

TO-DAY'S Daily Telegraph

	Page
Turf	2 and 3
General Sport	3 and 4
Sunnyslopes	4
Crossword	4
Lost List	4
Junior Telegraph	5
Land	5
Editorial	6
Shops	10
Social	10, 11
Finance	12
Broadcasting	13
Classified Advts.	13
Shipping	13

A CHALLENGE TO DEFENCE

'KINDNESS BEFORE BOMBS'

(SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT)

CANBERRA, Monday.—"Adequate military protection for Australia would be to create a condition of financial and moral bankruptcy."

This comment on Colonel Hamilton's advocacy of improved defence was made by the president of the N.S.W. Methodist Conference (Rev. J. W. Burton), at the Y.W.C.A. general senior conference to-night.

"Suspicions must be got rid of," said Mr. Burton. "The arms accumulations are increased the greater the danger to which the nations expose themselves.

"Seven millions of the world's best youth perished in the last war, and nearly the same number of unborn souls and survived.

"Are their daughters to bear children to be blown to shreds or blackened by poison gas?

"Kindly gestures mean more than dreadnoughts or bacterial bombs."

WATER BOARD INQUIRY

The special committee appointed by the Minister for Works (Mr. Weir) to investigate Water and Sewerage Board matters held a preliminary sitting yesterday, and adjourned until Monday.

Discussion was limited to the amount of documentary evidence which would be available.

Illustration 6 **DANGERS OF WATERHOLE**

– BLACKS MENACE PROSPECTORS

– GRANITES RUSH

***The Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 1932 [Story 4]**

DANGERS OF WATERHOLE

BLACKS MENACE PROSPECTORS

GRANITES RUSH

(From Our Special Representative with The Granites Expedition)

ALICE SPRINGS, Monday.—Blacks have been showing truculence at the waterholes, according to Killeen, a prospector who was the last to arrive back here from The Granites before the rains.

THERE has been no violence so far, as the white parties have moved on when the natives showed their annoyanee, and made towards their spears, after a peaceful approach.

To-day there are about 40 men at The Granites. Many of the prospectors who made the first finds are at Alice Springs, awaiting to-morrow's train for Adelaide. It will be the "options train," as cash sums have been paid to the miners, and all but a few propose to holiday in Adelaide and Melbourne.

A great champagne supper is to be given them to-night, and a special dance in Alice Springs dance hall, which stands 20 feet up on posts.

ROADS IMPASSABLE

Five cars and trucks are known to have left The Granites within the past few days, but the tremendous rains have made big sections of the road impassable.

Illustration 7 **DANGERS OF WATERHOLE**

***The Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 1932 [detail] [Story 4]**

> "Blacks have shown truculence at the waterholes, according to Killeen, a prospector who was the last to arrive back her from the granites before the rains.
>
> There has been no violence so far, as the white parties have moved on when the natives showed their annoyance, and made towards their spears, after a peaceful approach.
>
> Today there are about 40 men at the Granites. Many of the prospectors who made the first finds are at Alice Springs, awaiting tomorrow's train for Adelaide. It will be the 'options train', as cash sums have been paid to the miners, and all but a few propose to holiday in Adelaide and Melbourne."[902]

The story develops to talk about the prospectors in Alice Springs and their views on gold findings. But the first few paragraphs are entirely concentrated on the 'truculence' of the 'blacks': this story is of particular interest here. Other than the headlines and the first two paragraphs there is no more mention of what happened at any particular waterhole. There is no mention of what the 'menace' is, or was, other than general Indigenous resistance or suspicion of the prospectors. No incident is clearly described or defined. Only a prospector called Killeen is included as a primary source of information, or oral account for this story. No other details are supplied. In fact, the second paragraph of the story completely contradicts the headline: "there has been no violence so far …"

This story is also of particular importance to the discourse analysis here, as it lets us see the 'popular' language that is being used in regard to Aboriginal people in the Central Desert. They are "blacks" and 'natives" that "menace" and are of "danger" to "whites". They appear mysteriously, and are "truculent". They are one group and they are the enemy. There is no recognition of the Indigenous inhabitants occupying their own ancestral lands, drinking from their own water supplies as they have done for tens of thousands of years. In a bizarre reversal

[902] "Dangers of waterhole, Blacks menace prospectors, Granites rush", *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 October 1932.

based on the prospectors' / white mens' belief in their inalienable right to this 'uninhabited land', the 'blacks' are the interlopers. We are offered only that in this time and context: "blacks" are the "danger".[903]

The following day another story appears in *The Daily Telegraph*.

> "Savage blacks, according to Sgt. J. C. Lovegrove of Alice Springs, have driven Jack Dempsey, a prospector, in from Hatche's creek, 200 miles north-east, to the Granites.
>
> He is reported as being safe at the Granites, but according to the scanty information available, had an amazing escape from death, doing day and night stages by camel."[904]

Yet we soon discover, it is nature, and not any Indigenous fault, just as earlier prospectors were killed round Tanami and the site of the present Granites field because of a lack of water!

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[903] ibid.

[904] "Pursued by Blacks, Ride for life to the Granites, Six-shooters, Nature took heavy toll in desert", *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 October 1932.

"BOWLS AT THE MAN"

ENGLISH MINISTER ATTACKS BOWES

"DISGUSTING"

(SPECIAL BEAM SERVICE)

LONDON, Saturday

"Bowes bounces the ball down simply to hit you, not the wicket," declared Rev. J. H. Parsons, vice-captain of Warwickshire, speaking at Rugby.

"IT is a disgusting show, and I told him so. It is a pity that this type of bowling has crept into cricket.

"The people have got the gate to demonstrate it. If it is continued somebody will be killed, and then they will shut the stable door.

"If Bowes adopts bouncing in Australia the Australians will retaliate, and cricket will deteriorate."

LORD TENNYSON (former English captain) concedes that four players have gone to Australia who might never have been selected.

He would like to have seen Jupp, Hobbs, Mitchell, and James Langridge included.

FAST BOWLING SCARES

BOWES REVIVES MEMORIES

"Fast game was ever worth a rap
For a national race to play,
Into which no accident, no mishap,
Could possibly find its way."

By JACK FINGLETON

Wisden does not tell us whether Adam Lindsay Gordon was a fast or a slow bowler, but had the poet been present when the attack was made on the bowling of Bowes, he would have smiled.

From time to time there have been scares about fast bowlers who bowl "at" the batsmen; or, in other words, who pitch the ball short, and cause it to fly round the batsman's head.

Gregory, especially, and McDonald were frequently accused of these tactics when they rode over the stream of English cricket in their tour of 1921.

In more recent years, Jack Scott comes to mind as a bowler who gave the batsmen many anxious moments.

The bowler is always harshly criticised if he thinks of a new dodge to beat the batsman.

REIN AND THE STITCHES

Dominoger might like a little rein, to give him a better grip of the ball, and Malley might like to "rug" the stitches.

Old members of the Cricket Ground were shocked two seasons ago, when an umpire pointed an admonishing finger at Don Blackie, and asking him to extract from lifting the stitches of the ball.

It is the bowler's right, if he wishes to use it, to bump the ball at the batsman, and try and get him away from his wicket.

It is not nice to have a whizzing ball create a vacuum around your head, but it must be remembered that a batsman has two eyes, and, generally speaking, it is only the short ball that bumps.

HOME RULE FOR SCOTLAND

PURSUED BY BLACKS

RIDE FOR LIFE TO THE GRANITES

SIX-SHOOTERS

NATURE TOOK HEAVY TOLL IN DESERT

(From the Special Representative with The Granites Expedition)

ALICE SPRINGS, Sunday.—Savage blacks, according to Sgt. J. C. Lovegrove, of Alice Springs, have driven Jack Dempsey, a prospector, in from Hatche's Creek, 200 miles north-east, to The Granites.

He is reported as being safe at The Granites, but according to the scanty information available, had an amazing escape from death, doing day and night stages by camel.

Yet nature, not the natives, killed earlier prospectors round Tennant and the site of the present Granites field.

CARRY GUNS

To-day in Alice Springs the young adventurers after gold strut the town with miniature cannons holstered to their waists. A bag of sweets does the older chap, who knows the ropes, and prefers a rifle stuck away somewhere near the blankets.

Already the number of men at work makes the field as safe as a city suburb—from the natives' point of view.

Official reports obtained by Mr. Lionel Gee, S.M., at Tennant, in 1911, give the list of Tennant area deaths—certified deaths—as eleven. Of these, one was murdered by a Myall in November, 1910. He was J. Stewart, and he was speared right at The Granites.

FEVER AND THIRST

For 21 years after that, wandering prospectors were not killed, although some were attacked and beat off their assailants. Then Brooks was killed by a mulla-mulla at a soak outside Coniston Station, actually on the last fresh waterhole on the way to The Granites.

But Nature took a far heavier toll of those who defied her in the dry desert.

Fever and thirst killed J. Brown as he was coming in from Gordon Downs, and he died six miles north-west of Coniston. In January, 1913, F. Morris, a West Australian prospecting party leader, was lost somewhere near Old Stuart's Creek Station. They found him dead.

In the following month herbert accompanied for S. Spencer, who died at Stuart Creek, on the road to from Tennant.

Leading a prospecting party in from the eastward in the following month, W. H. Frayne died of thirst and exhaustion probably near Mount Farewell.

LOST IN DESERT

That March was a deadly month. Strauss, travelling from Mooka, was lost and found dead later near Coniston; while W. Smith, going in from the field at Tennant, succumbed to heat-beat.

In the month following, one Pearce, travelling south of Tennant, died near Delamere from fever and exhaustion, and in May the same fate claimed J. Sanagan, trekking from Tennant. He died between the goldfield and Wave Hill, as did Beatty in the same month.

Doyle, who fell from his horse, was the only fatality by accident on the field.

To-day water will save life, and prospecting parties are urged to make ample provision and to bring with them the necessary chemicals with which to fight the disease which lurks in the muddy pools and stinking wells.

LOOKS BLACK

IRISH PARLEY FAILS

CLAIM TO SHARE OF BRITISH ASSETS

NO SURRENDER

(SPECIAL SERVICE)

LONDON, Sunday.

NEGOTIATIONS between the representatives of the British Government and Mr. de Valera and his colleagues on the subject of Irish land annuities and other financial matters yesterday broke down.

The Dominions Secretary, Mr. Thomas, will make a statement on the subjects in dispute in the House of Commons on Tuesday, and Mr. de Valera will inform the Dail Eireann on Wednesday.

The collapse singularly lacked drama.

Mr. de Valera adhered to new arguments beyond asserting that the treaty entitled the Free State to claim a share of Britain's assets, despite the Free State's cancellation of its liabilities.

ARBITRATION PROPOSED

Recourse to the original proposal of arbitration also failed because Mr. de Valera maintained his previous attitude.

He was never optimistic about the outcome, and considers that he is not responsible for the failure, in view of what he regards as Mr. Thomas' negative attitude.

The Free State delegates lasted to their hotel. After Mr. Thomas had said good-bye through the window of the vehicle they discussed the situation and later hurried their return passages.

Mr. de Valera declined to discuss the breakdown.

BRUTAL ATTACK BY THREE MEN

VICTIM KICKED INTO INSENSIBILITY

Knocking down by three men in a lane between Norton Street and Edgeware Road, Enmore, on Saturday night, Herbert Naylor (36), of Marrickville, was kicked into insensibility.

He was found by Constable Blackwood, and taken by Newtown-Marrickville Ambulance to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

Naylor had both eyes blackened, two front teeth were knocked out, his nose broken, and he suffered a cut forehead and concussion.

AIRWAYS PROFIT

£66,296 OF REVENUE WAS FROM SUBSIDY

(SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT)

PERTH, Sunday.—The annual balance-sheet of W.A. Airways, Ltd., shows that after marking off depreciation of £25,122 the company made a net profit of £10,480 in the financial year to June 30.

Total revenue for the year was £66,296, of which £65,296 came from subsidy and the balance from mail route earnings and other receipts.

The company paid a 7½ per cent. dividend in March, absorbing £6,000.

Hoover Losing In Straw Vote On Presidency

(SPECIAL SERVICE)

NEW YORK, Sunday.

THE "Literary Digest," running a straw vote on the Presidential election, so far has received 2,000,000 ballots, Governor Roosevelt (Democrat) leading in 31 out of 38 States tabulated.

President Hoover (Republican) leads in the old New England States, but Pennsylvania, even surprising the Democrats, is strongly for Governor Roosevelt.

California favors the Democrat by two to one, but in New York, with the fight against Tammany on his hands, Governor Roosevelt is barely ahead.

Hiram Johnson, the famous California Senator, refuses to support President Hoover.

Republican leaders generally are feeling worried about the outlook, but some the hope that a big reaction will come in favor of the President in the last few days of the campaign.

HIGH MASS

ARCHBISHOP KELLY at yesterday's High Mass celebration at St. Canice's, Rodeye Gardens.

MISSED TRIP FOR INJURED MAN

SEATS IN PLANE GIVEN UP

(SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT)

BRISBANE, Sunday.—To bring an injured constable from Charleville to Brisbane for treatment an air liner was called into service to-day.

Illustration 8 **PURSUED BY BLACKS**

– RIDE FOR LIFE TO THE GRANITES

– SIX-SHOOTERS

– NATURE TOOK HEAVY TOLL IN DESERT

***The Daily Telegraph*, 19 October 1932 [Story 5]**

PURSUED BY BLACKS

RIDE FOR LIFE TO THE GRANITES

SIX-SHOOTERS

NATURE TOOK HEAVY TOLL IN DESERT

(From Our Special Representative with The Granites Expedition)

ALICE SPRINGS, Sunday.—Savage blacks, according to Sgt. J. C. Lovegrove, of Alice Springs, have driven Jack Dempsey, a prospector, in from Hatche's Creek, 200 miles north-east, to The Granites.

He is reported as being safe at The Granites, but according to the scanty information available, had an amazing escape from death, doing day and night stages by camel.

Yet nature, not the natives, killed earlier prospectors round Tanami and the site of the present Granites field.

CARRY GUNS

To-day in Alice Springs the young adventurers after gold strut the town with miniature cannons holstered to their waists. A bag of sweets does the older chap, who knows the ropes and prefers a rifle stuck away somewhere near the blankets.

Already the number of men at work makes the field as safe as a city suburb—from the natives' point of view.

Official reports obtained by Mr. Lionel Gee, S.M., at Tanami, in 1911, give the list of Tanami area deaths—certified deaths—as eleven. Of these, one was murdered by a Myall in November, 1910. He was J. Stewart, and he was speared right at The Granites.

Illustration 9 **PURSUED BY BLACKS**

***The Daily Telegraph*, 19 October 1932 [detail] [Story 5]**

CARRY GUNS

"Today in Alice Springs the young adventurers after gold strut the town with miniature cannons holstered to their waists. A bag of sweets does the older chap, who knows the ropes and prefers a rifle stuck away somewhere near the blankets.

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Official reports obtained by Mr. Lionel Gee, S. M., at Tanami in 1911, give the list of Tanami area deaths-certified deaths as eleven. Of these one was murdered by a myall in November 1910. He was J. Stewart, and he was speared right at the Granites."

FEVER AND THIRST

"For 18 years after that, wandering prospectors were not killed, although some were attacked and beat off their assailants. Then Brooks was killed by a nulla-nulla, at a soak outside Coniston station, actually on the last fresh waterhole on the way out to the Granites.

But nature took a far heavier toll of those who defied her in the dry desert."[905]

The rest of the story is concerned with the number of people who died of fever, thirst and general illness prospecting in the region over the 20 years prior to the current expedition.

The story is completely disingenuous in a number of ways. Firstly, it implies through its dramatic headline that the "pursuit of blacks" lead to a heavy loss of lives: "nature took heavy toll", but as we read in the seventh paragraph of the news story the heavy loss of lives occurred from 1910 up until 1932 from *natural causes*. This is qualified in paragraph three after the drama of the pursuit and the "savage blacks" have already been described and headlined. Some of the

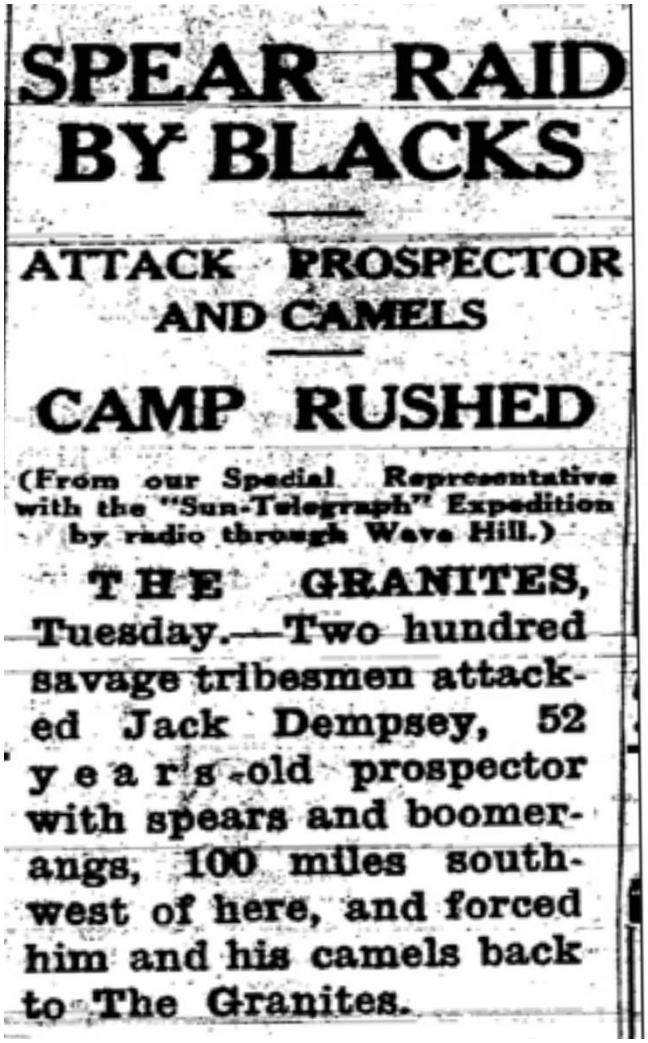
[905] ibid.

paragraphs also don't make sense. The paragraph following the breakaway headline "Carry guns", talks about prospectors with guns and bags of sweets, though it is not clear what the meaning of this paragraph is. "Carry guns" would suggest from the first headline to be a response to the pursuit – that prospectors carry guns to keep at bay "savage blacks" and it is their inalienable right to do so.

As we have seen these 'savage blacks', a non-human group who are cruel, treacherous and unstable, do not belong and are not part of the white colonial narrative. They must be kept at bay, and this is why guns are essential. This story condones casual violence and murder of these non-white inhuman interlopers, these 'savage blacks'.

The story continues to say that the prospectors at the goldfield are as safe as a city suburb as far as "the natives point of view". In other words, the story says *the men are safe, there is more danger from lack of water and poor environmental conditions than by being killed in an attack*. The men, the prospectors, do carry guns, as opposed to 'the blacks' who are 'natives', and it is assumed, do not carry guns. If you read the headline you would assume the story is about Indigenous people hunting prospectors with the intention of killing them. This is not what the story is about. It is about white men dying from thirst because they are in a foreign country.[906]

[906] ibid.



SPEAR RAID BY BLACKS

ATTACK PROSPECTOR AND CAMELS

CAMP RUSHED

(From our Special Representative with the "Sun-Telegraph" Expedition by radio through Wave Hill.)

THE GRANITES, Tuesday.—Two hundred savage tribesmen attacked Jack Dempsey, 52 years old prospector with spears and boomerangs, 100 miles southwest of here, and forced him and his camels back to The Granites.

Illustration 10 **SPEAR RAID BY BLACKS**

– ATTACK PROSPECTOR AND CAMELS

– CAMP RUSHED

***The Daily Telegraph*, 2 November 1932 [Story 6]**

Another story of menace and savagery is headlined on the front page and it is again about the prospector, Jack Dempsey.[907]

> "The Granites, Tuesday. Two hundred savage tribesmen attacked Jack Dempsey, 52 years old prospector, with spears and boomerangs, 100 miles south-west of here, and forced him and his camels back to the Granites.
>
> When Dempsey, who has been prospecting here and in West Australia, since 1900, turned up with his story, the miners committee thought he was making excuses for watering his twelve camels.
>
> But blacks, who later reached the camp, verified his story.
>
> Dempsey set off from the Granites on September 24 with his camels, short of water. After hard travelling, he discovered a limestone spring, in the Gibber Desert, and also some scattered desert mallee scrub."[908]

Here we have a story that seems to be about another spear raid at the Granites involving Jack Dempsey. However, on further reading, the story is about the previous "spear raid" and simply a rehash of the one a week before but made more terrifying. Dempsey who, having left the Granites, stops at a waterhole which is obviously a meeting point for Warlpiri and possibly a site of great signification. They don't kill Dempsey; rather, they frighten him and he returns to the Granites. Firstly then, the headline is misleading. If a reader had been following the stories in the newspaper (on a daily basis) they would assume from this headline that the Granites goldmine camp had been rushed: "Camp rushed". The fact that it is called a "spear raid" implies an organised raid on the part of the Indigenous inhabitants. 'The blacks' one could assume, attacked a prospector and rushed the Granites camp, when in fact a prospector wandered

[907] "Spear raid by blacks, Attack prospector and camels, Camp rushed", *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 November 1932.
[908] ibid.

into a place of Indigenous significance – which would explain the large numbers at the one site – for a ceremony.[909]

From how the story is framed and explained it can be assumed the waterhole at which Dempsey finds himself is up for grabs; and in fact, is anybody's.

This story serves to remind readers that the land is peopled by "savage blacks" who wield spears and boomerangs and who will frighten and or even kill prospectors. If we consider the previous stories and the discourse for gold – it's good for all Australians; it will be "tremendous" boon for the country etc. – and then consider the plethora of "savage black" stories and "pursued by blacks" and "dangers of waterholes", then we can assume that there is another obstacle standing between the prospectors' success for gold (other than the arid inhospitable environment which is the *real* and *palpable* threat). Indigenous people are portrayed in every instance as "native", "savage" and implicitly and explicitly violent, even when there is no actual account or witnessing of this violence. They are seen constantly as "dangerous", "unpredictable" and armed (with boomerangs and nulla-nullas).

The Aboriginal people encountered on the expedition are not the heroic Australians in search of better financial prospects, they are an obstacle to finding gold; they are not included in the concept of "all" Australians. It follows from this argument that this threat must be contained. The 'natives' must be removed, controlled, regulated and civilised. The fear of the 'other' is palpable in these newspaper stories, when, in fact, the biggest hurdle to discovering gold is the lack of water and the harsh environment.[910]

I want to look briefly here at Kramer's introduction of Perera's notion of borderspace, "in order to think through the violent relationships between representations of space, time, sovereign occupations and forms of governance". As Kramer writes, citing da Silva: "[t]hese relationships are particularly significant in the context of the Intervention. Enmeshed with biopolitical

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[909] ibid.

[910] See Chapter 2 and also Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites.*; C. T. Madigan, "No development to warrant boom," *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 November 1932.

discourses generated over the course of 2001 to 2007, these relationships reproduce targeted Aboriginal communities as 'ungoverned', 'evil' and 'external' spaces within which the material ground and the body of the racialised subject are rendered co-extensive.[911] These spaces are scripted as threatening external territories within which the white settler-colonial state can *lawfully* assert its sovereignty and occupy space."[912]

While Kramer's analysis *isn't* an analysis of the 1930s, rather the portrayal of Aboriginal people since the intervention, it's entirely pertinent to my analysis of the newspaper stories of this period. I'd briefly like to reflect now on this more contemporary discourse highlighted by Kramer in her analysis of the intervention or emergency response. In addressing the Other Measures Act, Kramer looks specifically at Howard's speech.[913] Howard uses the phrase "Indigenous violence and child abuse" to justify the intervention 'within the ACC act'. Kramer finds Howard's use of the word violence "[b]egins to script this policy as an incursion into an ungoverned battleground. In this context, 'Indigenous violence' operates as a signifier of *terra nullius*; it forms a colonial motif that represents targeted Aboriginal communities as anarchic, backward and devoid of the rule of law."[914] Here Kramer finds Howard's speech (in 2007) uses signifiers and rhetorical devices that assert white supremacy, "conceptualized as the continuation of signifying strategies that reproduce racial difference".[915]

The final front page story on the Granites is the first report from the Adelaide geologist C. T. Madigan on the field. It signals an end to the prospecting and the "boom".

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[911] da Silva, D. F. *Towards a Global Idea of Race*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
[912] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention".
[913] ibid. p. 134.
[914] ibid. p. 134.
[915] ibid. p. 135.

NO DEVELOPMENT TO WARRANT BOOM"

AFTERNOON IN THE SADDLE

FIRST REPORT BY MADIGAN ON THE GRANITES

TAKES CALM VIEW—FINDS LEASES TAKEN UP ON SPINIFEX PLAINS

WARNING WORDS ABOUT THE FIELD

THE GRANITES, November 1.—The following is a preliminary report made after five days on the field. Its object is to give an account of the position at the present time. It is not a geological report and it makes no attempt to assess the value of the field.

A technical report will follow in about three weeks' time, when the geological investigations are complete and assay returns are available.

I HAVE met with the greatest freedom and most cordial assistance from all on the field—prospectors, miners, and company representatives. I am permitted to go where I choose and sample as I will.

For the past 18 months about a dozen prospectors have been working on The Granites goldfields. A store was opened on the field for them in April of this year.

In that time they had produced about 400 ounces of gold, and almost entirely from half an acre of ground.

Much of this gold came from a dry blowing the alluvial in a gutter up a hillside for about 70 yards, when a small, rich quartz vein was struck and two shafts, each about 30 feet deep and 20 feet apart, were sunk on the lodes.

The men in the shafts were delighted

MR. MADIGAN.

The Government well, three miles north-east of The Granites, has been deepened to 100 feet, and is said to supply 1700 gallons a day.

The water is rather highly charged with sulphates, but miners drinking water for the present population of 150 men.

They consumed none last month, but daily for weeks.

NOT TRUE

Reports that rich gold was found in the well or bores appear to be without foundation.

Traces of gold may be found in many localities within 30 miles of The Granites, but with the exception of the one place, worked by the prospectors the previous, it is after Christmas will it be time.

Thousands of acres have been pegged out without any justification, beyond optimism, many of the leases being on granite plains, and in the majority of cases nothing has been done or there, are a temp done.

To assess the possibilities of this vast region on the meagre evidence available is providing a difficult task.

There is nothing to be seen to raise beyond the realm of probability the chances of The Granites providing an important field.

The available road shafts, outcrops and dumps, have been mapped; the pegs in being finally used on surface prospects, and the general geological work is progressing satisfactorily.

TELLING PARENTS

WEALTH OF BLOOM

THE ROSE SHOW in Centennial Park is now at its best.

TO KIDNAP JOCKEY

BRAZEN ATTEMPT AT RANDWICK

SAVAGE ATTACK

A desperate and brazen attempt was made on Saturday to kidnap young Frank Egli, the apprentice jockey, from his home in William Street, Randwick.

FRUSTRATED in his plan to force Egli into a waiting car, after he had threatened to "do for him," a stranger savagely attacked the lad, almost breaking his arm.

The street was quite between Egli's parents, Rockwell, was left on the barrier in the Kimbrick Handicap at Randwick race on Saturday afternoon.

"I'll teach you to pull a horse!" snarled the man, as he fought with young Egli, and tried to drag him into the car, which was drawn up outside the house where the apprentice boards.

HAD NO CHANCE

Egli, who is only 17 years of age, and weighs 8st nine lbs, had no chance against his opponent, a man of strong build, and weighing nearly 12st.

The jockey was only a few feet away from the car, when Leo O'Sullivan, well-known ex-jockey, rushed to his aid.

O'Sullivan managed to pull Egli free. "Get inside, quick!" he shouted to the lad, as the desperate man turned on him.

O'Sullivan managed to hold the

FRANK EGLI

stranger off until a number of other men arrived.

Then that the stranger tried to turn his wrath into the house.

Eventually he was pulled into the car by a man who had been standing some distance away, and the vehicle drove off at top speed.

NOT HIS FAULT

It was on hold of Egli's that Rockwell, which was backed to 4 to 1, and started second favorite to Thomas, in the Randwick Handicap was not

Election Eve Riots

ON HAND FOR RIOTERS IN ERMAN CITIES

ORDERS QUELLED BY ARMED POLICE

AZI AVENGERS

(SPECIAL BEAM SERVICE)

BERLIN, Sunday.

LAST-MINUTE VOTE DRIVES

ROOSEVELT AND HOOVER'S RUSH IN U.S.A.

(SPECIAL SERVICE)

VANCOUVER, Sunday.

WALL STREET seemed to have little doubt yesterday of the result of the Presidential election next Tuesday. Shares in breweries and other concerns allied with the liquor trade closed at very firm rates.

SAW SISTER DROWN

"ASLEEP UNDER THE WATER," SAID FOUR-YEAR-OLD BOY

TOO young to understand that he was witnessing a tragedy, four-year-old Colin Gallan sat on the shore at Avoca Lake, near Gosford, yesterday afternoon, and saw his little sister, Jeanette, aged seven, wander out of her depth and drown.

Silently she was about at the time. Mr. Christopher Chalmers, who arrived about half an hour later, asked the child where his sister was. The little boy replied:—

"She went out in the water and went down to have a sleep."

For a moment young Chalmers did not realise what the boy meant. Then, "Where did she go?" he cried, and the child pointed to the lake in front of him.

TOO LATE

Chalmers dashed into the water and after searching for some time, very near Avoca, bring on the bottom to about five feet of water, he carried her to the shore and tried to revive her, but she was dead.

Even by this time little Colin could not comprehend that his sister was dead.

He stood to her body while Chalmers ran about half a mile to the house, fetch Mrs. Gallan, and called Bob Mannon, the club caretaker, Gosford, and Arthur Pickard, and the police.

The Sth carried some artificial respiration for a long time, but Dr. Preston, superintendent of the Gosford Hospital, called from Avoca House, where they were staying, pronounced the outlook.

Illustration 11 **"NO DEVELOPMENT TO WARRANT BOOM"**

– FIRST REPORT BY MADIGAN ON THE GRANITES TAKES CALM VIEW – FINDS LEASES TAKEN UP ON SPINIFEX PLAINS

– WARNING WORDS ABOUT THE FIELD

C. T. Madigan, Lecturer in Geology, University of Adelaide, *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 November 1932 [Story 7]

> "The Granites, November 1. The following is a preliminary report made after five days on the field. Its object is to give an account of the position at the present time. It's not a geological report and it makes no attempt to assess the value of the field. A technical report will follow in about three weeks' time when geological investigations are complete and assay returns are available.
>
> I have met with the greatest frankness and most cordial assistance from all on the field."[916]

The story then gives a summary of what Madigan found in a general and non-specific way. According to Madigan, there is no gold and there is no gold rush.

Instead the field is a danger. The wells provide insufficient water for 110 men and the gold finds are superficial. He urges people to keep away. The problems are seen to be environmental but the stories – "pursued by blacks", "spear raid by blacks" and many other similarly racist and inaccurate stories – have already framed the place as dangerous and forbidding territory peopled with "savages" who are not civilised.

"'The lure of gold" is no longer the miracle or mirage that is needed by "all Australians" (read instead, white non-Indigenous), as the newspapers first suggest (before the failure of the gold boom). Gold becomes, a year after the expedition, something the newspaper must defend the public *against*. More importantly, it's the 'savage blacks' and the 'dangers' of the 'evil' that the public must be protected against. This discourse then becomes the means to further dispossess Indigenous people from their land within the paradigm of 'protectionist policies'.[917]

And so begins a conversation about the Indigenous people of the Central Desert in the mainstream Australian media, framed *in deficit*: danger, fear and 'otherness'. The framing of Warlpiri and other Indigenous people as 'truculent'

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[916] Madigan, C. T., "No development to warrant boom", *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 November 1932.
[917] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*. p. vii.

and 'uncivilised', or unable and incapable, becomes a representation of Indigenous people that is to be repeated over and over again.

These stereotypes arriving with Captain Cook and Arthur Phillip will appear and reappear relentlessly in the 20th century Australian media. In this way, we can see the discourse about Aboriginal people, already formed and well developed, continue unabated throughout the 20th and the 21st centuries.

6.21 Analysis of *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*

While Baume's newspaper stories were rushed to print, the longer form essays based on this newspaper-led expedition were published a year later in *Tragedy Track*.[918] This book gives far more detail and exposition to the expedition, with the author's perspective highlighted, than the stories in the newspaper (although they are reprinted in part in the text). It includes also what appears to be diary-style entries, as well as other stories related to goldmining in the Central Desert and Tanami region. Critical discourse theory allows an examination of the lexico-grammatical writing of the author, and the context in which to understand the discourse of goldmining, the Indigenous inhabitants and the Tanami road.

The introduction and preface give us a good taste of the author's style (journalistic), the context (he was writing from a white male colonial perspective), and of the discourses of the time around race, gender and colonial conquest.

In my radio documentary *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* I used several excerpts from Baume's book and I include several here for a brief analysis.

> "There have been many perish on the tragic track since white men began to go to the territory, and nothing that the skill of road makers can do will ever bring an easy track across these sand hills, who laugh

[918] ibid.

> in their redness at the traveller who dares to cross them. How they must hate the train which does not care if particles of their bodies crowd across the iron track which nature, by flood or sands, finds hard to block."[919]

Here Baume makes the distinction between white man and non-white man. He is making it clear that this story is about white prospectors and explorers and they are different from the non-white. It is an impossible place for "white men".

> "Travelling out from the overland telegraph line is no joke. True, it is not the ghastly business some vivid literature would have you believe. But it is a strain from beginning to end; strain when you think of your engine or of your water supply, your tyres, your camping positions. For once you leave Coniston Station, owned by that fine old bushman, Randal Stafford, you are in lonely country, with suspicious Myall blacks watching you from Mulga and from stunted desert trees, fearing and hating you as another invader who will take their precious water from drying creek, stinking 'soak' or soupy rockhole … Today of course there is more traffic on the road than when the first camel prospectors swung out over the desert before Michael Terry had blazed the present track with his trucks not so many years ago. But all the traffic does not make the track one whit less lonely nor the vast distances one inch the less.
>
> The track from Alice Springs to the Granites is a tragedy of desolation – 380 miles of heat and flies, dust and spinifex. From Alice Springs the Madigan party followed the overland telegraph line for eighty miles to Ryan's well. On this stage the track wound over the McDonnell ranges, with their granite formations and shimmering white quartzite."[920]

Baume describes in vivid language the journey to the Centre and beyond. It is a "strain", he writes. He does have glowing words for "that fine old bushman Randall Stafford", the owner of Coniston Station who led the massacre against

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[919] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.
[920] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

the Warlpiri following the murder of his friend, the prospector Brookes. Baume himself writes about the Coniston massacre in lighthearted but frank detail further in the book. He never once questions the accounts of Randal Stafford, or the conflicting reports of the massacre. As a journalist, Baume cannot even give two sides of the story: in his eyes there is only one, and it belongs to the "white man". The rest of this excerpt covers Baume's representation of the surrounding countryside which is bleak, lonely and unpeopled, except for the suspicious "Myall blacks" who hide behind trees. To Baume it is a "tragedy of desolation". Baume finds leaving Coniston that, "you are in lonely country with suspicious Myall blacks watching you from Mulga".[921]

> "Once out from Coniston the trail cuts through blacks' country. We were stuck in the sand about fifteen miles from Cockatoo Creek, just on the border of spinifex country, when a boy of about 16, carrying a boomerang only, stepped out of some mulga scrub and stood boomerang in hand, looking at the strangers … three or four blacks, unclothed men, stood off in the scrub. They did not bother about spears. But nothing happened, and the boy turned slowly and went back into the bush.
>
> That night even the stolid Simon Rieff was perturbed. Just before midnight the dingoes began to howl. Simon however, was convinced that they were nigger dogs and that a blacks' camp was not far off. However, he was wrong." [922]

Here the "suspicious Myall blacks" come to investigate the prospectors. However, they merely look and then leave. This does not calm the frightened prospectors, who think the howling dogs at night are "nigger" dogs and that a "blacks' camp" is nearby. The word "nigger" is used here to no doubt amplify the sense of Aboriginal 'otherness' and 'blackness' and to create a further resonance with white Americans phobias and fears of recently 'freed slaves', and the resulting racial divisions which were a continuing and marked characteristic of the US at

[921] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.
[922] ibid. p. 31.

this time. It is interesting to note this term has been borrowed from America here, and although in use since the 17th century, was only regarded as a derogatory term from the early 20th century. As we know it was a popular term used by many white Americans against African Americans in the 20th century. Despite the prospectors' fear of this "blacks" camp then, and the fear generated by these inflammatory images from Baume, in the end, the white men are not disturbed.[923]

Baume and even Simon Rieff are afraid, in fact we could say, terrified, of the Indigenous and what they might do; this fear is not warranted and certainly appears to be more connected to their fear of dying of thirst and other extreme environmental conditions.[924] Despite Baume's own stories for the newspaper documenting the number of people dying from lack of water and other environmental conditions in the desert, he has chosen to use these loaded terms, and images; indeed they have the effect of heightening the *drama* of his own story: a human enemy is far more compelling than an environmental one perhaps? Thus the needs of narrativity also win out here over the truth: his story is at the expense of the realities, and equally ignores ethical considerations or any sense of balance he might have applied to his journalism.

Discourses of race, race war and *terra nullius* mark these passages and most of the book where it is concerned with the expedition and the Granites. When the journalist wanders from these discourses it is merely to reinforce another one: the myth of the Aussie white battler who will endure all hardship to discover the gold that he is entitled to claim and take.

> "The trip to the Granites is a hardship even to well-equipped parties. How much more terrible must I have been for the old prospectors, who drove their camels til they perished them, summer or winter, to what is actually the loneliest gold mine in the world? Every ounce of gold earned out here is earned in sweat and flies and sickness. Let the rigours of the journey alone warn inexperienced men from

[923] ibid.
[924] ibid.

> attempting the desert crossing, out far out, from the overland telegraph line and civilization …"[925]

At the Granites October 30, 1932

> "Thousands of acres have been pegged out without any justification beyond optimism, many of the leases being on spinifex plains, and in the majority of cases nothing has been done on them, nor is being done … . There is nothing to be seen to raise beyond the realms of possibility the chances of the Granites providing an important field … it is dangerous for men to attempt to come up here unless they have a definite engagement."[926]

Once the boom is found to be non-existent, we can see that the stories of 'danger', blacks' and 'emptiness' increase substantially. At the end of the book, the field is described as simply too dangerous.

From a critical reading of the newspaper stories and the book then, we encounter the dominant discourse of 'gold', the 'heroism' of the explorers and settlers and miners, the 'threatening, menacing and provocative indigenous interlopers'. These words and concepts and images are presented to the metropolitan newsreader (and the readers of the essays contained in the books) as fact. They are presented as information when they are clearly subjective concepts unified around a colonial ideology and also perhaps driven by recourse to simplistic and romantic storytelling tropes. The stories are inaccurate, misleading and draw on obvious colonial and racist stereotypes. The Indigenous people Baume encounters are inferior in every way; they are relentlessly 'othered' and stigmatised with the idea of 'lesser', 'primitive' and 'uncivilised'. These negative characteristics mirrored onto the Warlpiri created the political and ideological discourse which enabled policymakers to remove people from their homelands, enact legislation to take away children and force people onto

[925] ibid. p. 31.
[926] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*; Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

missions. These stories create the deficit discourse that continues to pervade discussion of Indigenous issues in newspapers today.

Chapter 7

Audio ethnography and the cultural study of sound: two case studies

This chapter begins with a brief look at the history of audio ethnography in Australia and in another English colonial outpost that also attempted to erase their Indigenous population during the long process of colonisation, America. Since my radio documentary *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* is concerned with audio storytelling in a colonial/postcolonial context, I examine two documentaries that operate in this genre.[927]

The first case study is based on the work of historian and documentary maker, Martin Thomas; in particular, his documentaries *Return to Arnhem Land* and *This is Jimmy Barker*.[928] This case study explores the work behind the radio broadcast stories and in the academic papers that Thomas has constructed from archival and research material from the 2000s onwards. This analysis is contextualised within the frame of audio archival material, the history of sound recording and audio ethnography.

The second case study in audio documentary is *The Writers Train*, recorded and produced by Carmel Young and Tony Collins in 2007. The documentary uses literary techniques such as interpolation and 'writing back to the canon' to challenge dominant colonial concepts. Their on-the-road frame allows stories from the past to unfold in a travelling ethnographic account.[929]

7.1 The history of audio ethnography and the cultural study of sound

Jonathon Sterne contextualises the trend of Western countries rushing to record Indigenous languages as a possible "marbling or bronzing". This was the case in the Americas of the late 19th century he argues, where ethnographers could be accused of "freezing a dynamic culture at a single moment in time for future

[927] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[928] M. Thomas, *Return to Arnhem Land*, ABC *Radio Eye*. Podcast audio. ABC, 2007, http://www.abc.net.au/rn/radioeye/stories/2007/1928445.htm; M. Thomas, *This Is Jimmy Barker*, ed. *Radio Eye* (ABC 2000, 2001, 2003).
[929] Collins, T. & Carmel Young, *The Writers Train* (ABC *Radio Eye*: ABC, 2007).

study".[930] Once the voice is recorded it is no longer coming from a body: recorded voices are "a resonant tomb, offering the exteriority of the voice with none of its interior self-awareness".[931] This may not be in the case in Australia where, as we will see, recordings have been returned or repatriated to the communities and used to reinvigorate the still strong cultural voice of Australia's first peoples. From the beginning, sound reproduction had great possibilities as an archival medium. Sterne suggests the voices of the dead were everywhere in writings about sound recording in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[932] Recording voices – songs and speech – was a way of preserving the dead and simultaneously freeing the voice from the body. Death explains and shapes the cultural power of sound recording: "the practical and imagined possibilities of recordings permanence existed as part of a longer history a larger culture of preservation".[933]

The preservation of the dead can be seen as an extension of the emerging culture of preservation.[934] "As with sound technology, preservation technology did not have an autonomous cultural life." Canned food, Sterne maintains, was an early artefact of an emerging consumer culture.[935] Recording, too was the product of a culture that had learned to can and to embalm, to preserve the bodies of the dead so they could continue to perform a social function after life.[936] This sensibility, Sterne says, was built into the 'recording' technology and the medium itself. Death, then, laid the "foundation for the trope of the voices of the dead".[937]

American and Australian anthropologists/ethnographers justified the use of early sound recording technologies as a means of preserving dying cultures. This ethos of preservation was also inherent in the work of anthropologist turned

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[930] J. Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003). p. 319.
[931] ibid.
[932] ibid. p. 289.
[933] ibid.
[934] ibid. p. 292.
[935] ibid.
[936] ibid. p. 290.
[937] ibid.

ethnographer, Norman B. Tindale.[938] These 'voices of the dead' also had a significant impact on the provision of the audio archive both in Australia, Europe and the Americas. Sterne finds that a "triple temporality" of sound recording is theorised in ethnomusicologist Erich von Hornbostel's work as the logical steps in a colonial argument:

> "We must preserve the voices of dying cultures so that we have them (linear-historical time); we must then preserve the recordings themselves so that we can keep them (geologic time) so that we may break them down and study them at our leisure (fragmented time)."[939]

Examining the research of American anthropologists and ethnographers in the 19th and 20th centuries, including von Hornbostel, Sterne identifies how these researchers placed the Native American cultures they found into a different temporal zone. This, in itself, became a measure of cultural difference.[940] Sterne found that anthropologists' conceptions of modernity also followed two trains of thought: firstly, that cultures outside anthropologists own were representative of a collective past, and secondly, that *time* represented a temporal slope for all cultures faced with the "immutable force of modernity".[941]

"This denial of coeval existence – that is, coexistence at the same historical moment – results in a relentless 'othering' where anthropologists construct themselves as living in a society that is more developed or advanced than the societies that they study; it is a form of primitivism."[942]

What happened in North and South America and Canada – and, in fact, most Indigenous first nations throughout the world – paralleled the categorisation of Australia's Indigenous population, who from the date of colonial settlement were

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[938] M. Thomas, "The Rush to Record: Transmitting the Sound of Aboriginal Culture," *Journal of Australian Studies (issue titled Dawn Bennett (ed.), Who Am I?: Perspectives on Australian Cultural Identity* 90, June 2007.

[939] The work of ethnomusicologist, Erich von Hornbostel is included in *Sterne, The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction.* p. 330. von Hornbostel studied the music and psychology of the Pawnee people of America.

[940] ibid.

[941] ibid. p. 311.

[942] ibid.

forcibly removed to settlements. The emphasis in the late 19th and early 20th century in the Americas and in Australia was on the policies of assimilation – this required the Indigenous to abandon their lands, religion and cultural values.

While more sympathetic anthropological values allowed for the acceptance of native American and Australian Indigenous cultures, and as the concept of 'culture' evolved, anthropologists were still very influenced by Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, and what was regarded as the immutable forces of modernity.[943] Thus the early ethnographic recording of Indigenous Australians and native Americans could come to mark a sense of "impending loss and the imperative of preservation as well as a hope for their future use".[944] This too reinforces the dominant ideology of the time in Australia, of 'smoothing the dying pillow' and in terms of preserving recorded material, preserving voices of a 'doomed culture'.

7.2 Entering the world of the dead and leaving their bones intact

> "There's a lot of history in this country. Information technology, recording technology … brings a new form of archaeology – we can enter the world of the dead and leave their bones in peace …"[945]

The ethnographic and indeed colonial race to record post World War II brought sounds of Aboriginal Australia to White Australia. Martin Thomas documents this history extensively in *The rush to record: transmitting the sound of Aboriginal Australia*. Thomas documents how Norman B. Tindal, instrumental in forming the South Australian Museum, played recordings of Fanny Cochran Smith (collected by the Royal Society of Tasmania in 1899) on the ABC when appearing as a guest in 1949. These are considered the oldest recordings of an Indigenous voice in Australia.[946]

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[943] ibid. p. 315.
[944] ibid. p. 215.
[945] Thomas, *This Is Jimmy Barker*.
[946] Thomas, "The Rush to Record: Transmitting the Sound of Aboriginal Culture". p. 210.

Like Fewkes in North America, Tindale in Australia followed closely not just the culturally dominant attitudes to race but also attitudes to recording: "all mimetic technologies, those 19th century inventions that purport to reproduce 'the real' are haunted by intimations of loss and disappearance".[947]

Colin Simpson's recordings for the ABC in Arnhem Land in 1948, and his later biographical writings, signified an attitudinal shift. Simpson was critical of the process of recording 'racial death' according to Thomas: "Simpson's writings and recordings … provide a counterpoint to Tindale's broadcast, which sits snugly within established constructions of racial demise … We can't situate these recordings", he continues, in "either a straight forward narrative of colonial plunder and exhibition".[948] Thomas discovers, in his listening to and critique of Simpson's recordings and documentary soundscapes, "a push to encourage Australians to experience their land and heritage more authentically".[949]

7.3 Case study 1: Martin Thomas's *Return to Arnhem Land*

Return to Arnhem Land, broadcast on ABC Radio National's *Radio Eye* in 2007, is a significant and culturally important radio documentary. It charts the return of ancient song cycles, recorded in 1948 by ABC producer/broadcaster Colin Simpson with PMG technician Ray Giles, and repatriated to the Oenpelli (Gunbalanya) community in West Arnhem Land by Thomas in 2006. It tells, through the eyes and voice of historian, broadcaster and narrator Martin Thomas, how these recordings came to be, as he returns them to the community, and what the community makes of them as cultural records or artefacts of cultural heritage.[950]

The documentary is stirring and evocative, a hybrid of historical account and personal narrative with shifts in time and place, all effectively woven together to

[947] ibid.
[948] "Taking Them Back: Archival Media in Arnhem Land Today," *Cultural Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (2007).
[949] "The Rush to Record: Transmitting the Sound of Aboriginal Culture".
[950] *Radio Eye: Return to Arnhem Land*.

create a seamless non-linear radio feature. As audience we become witness to an audio event where the past and present seem to collide: ancient songs recorded on wire tape in 1948 are played back to the original descendants and we're privy to this mediated exchange. The return of the sacred/secret songs is declared an act of "cultural repatriation" and is described by the narrator/author as a step towards the Australian "postcolonial project".[951]

This documentary raises questions about the construction of audio documentaries concerned with Indigenous cultural material, not least the role of the radio broadcaster and the anthropologist in capturing and reproducing what would one day be the voices of the dead. One might ask how the role of the historian, broadcaster and ultimately the narrator is played out, when questions of authenticity and the significance of 'cultural repatriation' within the radio documentary form are raised. What are the underlying tensions, and why do they exist? What is the role of the author/narrator in this radio form? Does the narrator, in his role of returning sound from the past, replicate the role of the anthropologist from a century ago? These questions go to the very heart of audio ethnographic histories and sound reproduction technologies. Following Peters, we might wonder what are the 'drivers' behind the need to capture and entomb the voices of the dead? Can these voices ever speak through the veil of cultural silence, genocide and colonial intervention? And what are the implications if they do? May these voices set free, or even reanimate, the past?

7.4 The role of the narrator

> "Here was a new, technologically mediated partiality that injected a different, and I would say a more emotionally charged sense of affect into the ongoing project of representing Australia. Part of this shift involved a greater degree of first-person narrative in the reporting."[952]

[951] ibid.
[952] "Taking Them Back: Archival Media in Arnhem Land Today".

Thomas finds Simpson, the narrator of the original broadcast in 1948, situated firmly in his recordings as narrator using a journalistic, first-person technique. He draws the audience into the place by announcing where he is – in the suspended, mediated moment – and what he is witnessing. His presence, in the field, tells the audience he is an authentic and credible witness. He is there and it is happening, *now*. Simpson, however, doesn't deconstruct the moment for us as Thomas can and does. Simpson can only interpolate the moment within the context of colonialism and modernism. He may be situated slightly outside this frame and he may come to challenge it later in his book *Adam in Ochre*, [953] but for now, his is very much at the mercy of his subjectivity: his limited understanding of this point in history.[954] The way one culture tries to imitate another, Thomas concluded, is another form of power dynamic which inevitably favours the colonial over the Indigenous; the modern over the ancient.[955] First-person narration in this context lends us an insight: one constrained by the contingencies and drivers of the time.

A far more significant and autonomous contribution to Indigenous ethnography comes from Murrawarri man, Jimmy Barker. His extraordinary recordings of himself, his experiences, and that of his people, are documented by Thomas in two award-winning feature radio documentaries.[956] These first-person recordings produced by Thomas are from the tapes of the self-taught ethnographer, Jimmy Barker, who recorded himself over many years firstly with his own wax cylinders, and later with the tapes that the ethnographer Janet Mathews gave him in exchange (for the tapes).[957]

Barker records Murrawarri language, Indigenous culture and his life and times growing up first on the banks of a river in northern NSW with a Murrawarri tribe and later on farms and in nearby townships.[958] In *This is Jimmy Barker*, and *I love you Jimmy*, the narrator is Jimmy Barker himself *and* Martin Thomas. Thomas tells the story of how he found the tapes and his journey with the Barker family

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[953] C. Simpson, *Adam in Ochre: Inside Aboriginal Australia* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1951).
[954] Thomas, "Taking Them Back: Archival Media in Arnhem Land Today".
[955] ibid.
[956] Thomas, *This Is Jimmy Barker*.
[957] ibid.
[958] ibid.

to Jimmy's birthplace, childhood home and life as a young man. The recorded voice of Barker is aware, knowledgeable, dynamic and insistent. This is his voice, these are his thoughts; this is his project.

Here, the other narrator, the producer, Thomas is present but only just; instead the story is left to Jimmy but reanimated through Thomas's help as the editor/producer. A third story unfolds through the narration giving voice to a younger generation: Jimmy's grandchildren. It is now they who return to the land of their grandfather to explore the legacy of these recordings.[959]

In *Return to Arnhem Land*, there is no doubt of the significance and importance of the stories around the 1948 American-Australian Scientific Expedition and the recorded songs found in the ABC archives and the role of Colin Simpson in bringing these to the broadcaster and ultimately to the Australian public. The archival material, the recordings, the diaries, all acknowledge the cultural past and can be said to have now had an even more profound impact on the epistemological present. They can now give many descendants of these earlier recorded voices a sense of continuity and connection otherwise lost with their own traditional ancestry. Sterne also recognised how Native Americans' ethnographic recordings made in the field and in studio recordings (like those of Simpsons) were able to be greeted with similar excitement and reverence. As with the Native Americans' rediscoveries, Sterne understands these may be a way to "reanimate forgotten tribal knowledge and spur the reinvigoration of living traditions".[960] When Thomas 'repatriated' the archival sound on the request of Bardayal 'Lofty' Nadjamerrek [961] the recordings were encountered in a similar way. They were perceived as living cultural artefacts, ones that could become part of the community:

> "The Arnhem Landers discerned clear possibilities for deploying this material within their own knowledge systems …" Senior Bininj.

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[959] ibid.

[960] Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. p. 331.

[961] Bardayal 'Lofty' Nadjamerrek is a Kunwinjku Aboriginal artist of the Mok clan currently referred to by his skin and clan as "Wamud Namok", following the Kunwinjku custom of avoiding use of the name of deceased persons.

> Thomson Yulidjiri: 'And this Wubarr ceremony. We want to show it to the young men, to introduce it to them (through the film). It belongs to us. And here. It should come and 'sit down' here … You tell them this.'"[962]

Another, Jacob Nayinggul, tells Thomas:

> "I would love it very much (to have a copy of an edited version). I would like to hold on to it. Myself and the other senior men here we would share it together and watch it together … If we don't see this film again we won't be able to remember. Maybe all we would have is a name. The film, and those old people … The Wubarr ceremony has come alive again in those images they made …" [963]

7.5 Case study 2: *The Writers Train*

As we have seen, in Chapter 6, colonial discourse analysis of journalism serves to deconstruct both notions of truth and truth in representation, and also provides a lens through which to analyse the production of meaning around these events. Within the praxis of journalism that addresses issues of identity and race, colonial discourse studies along with post-structuralism offers tools to analyse the predominate discourse, examine the semiotic and linguistic arrangements and explore the narrative functions of the texts. In an analysis of *The Writers Train*[964] I'll look at identity construction under the rubric of postcolonial theory, notions of 'colonisation of the mind' and how this serves to propagate or, allow for, the existence of early colonial stereotypes. I'll also look at how the producers readdress these stereotypes by using a multiplicity of narratives suggestive of dynamic evolving cultures, all within the context of the colonial 'journey' trope as a means to 'write back' to the canon.[965]

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[962] Thomas, *Return to Arnhem Land*.
[963] ibid.
[964] Collins & Young, *The Writers Train*.
[965] Collins & Young, *The Writers Train*.

The mainstream media almost exclusively represents Indigenous people in Australia as one identity, one Indigenous, one desert, one mob. As we hear in *The Writers Train* feature, this notion is a long way from the truth. The train becomes a trope to explore the country, and the voices that emerge from the train during the journey, telling the story of parts of the NT – its past, present, fragments – offer up discontinued narratives which all form part of the re-reading of country. Stories include explorations of growing up Indigenous, and discovering one's Aboriginality, or learning about remote communities. Past stories of massacres are fused – text and intertext – to create a different sense of time and place. The borders, margins, the spaces of habitation, the geographical spaces are all recreated in a sonic soundscape. Here we discover another voice, one that is distinctly about place.[966]

7.6 Writing back: reinserting history

> "Interpolation is not so much 're-writing' … inserting the marginal histories that have been excluded … but 'writing back'. The model for this is 'counter discourse' which is not a separate oppositional discourse but a tactic which operates from the fractures and contradictions of discourse itself."[967]

The phrase 'writing back' (to the canon) was popularised in the early 80s after Salman Rushdie's play on the name of the Star Wars sequel *The Empire Strikes Back* in a newspaper article on racism entitled, 'The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance'.[968]

'Writing back', and the term 'counter discourse', are intended to challenge dominant discourses on race, class gender and nation. One of the ways of doing this was to interpolate contesting narratives into history or a literature text, in effect creating an 'intertext'. The producers of *The Writers Train* begin the

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[966] ibid.
[967] Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformations.*
[968] P. Ratcliffe and Turcotte, G. (eds). *Compr(om)ising Post/Colonialism(s): Challenging Narratives and Practices.* (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 2001).

documentary with a voice-over from Gunn's *We of the Never Never*. As the NT writers embark on *their* train journey so too Aeneas Gunn's protagonist, 'The little Missus', finds herself on her way to the 'Never Never'. Traveling with her husband, 'the Maluka', 150 miles from Darwin to a pastoral station, she recounts, 'making merry' by pelting Aboriginals with watermelon:

> "From sun-up to sundown on Tuesday the train glided quietly forward on its way to the Never Never, and from sun up to sundown the Maluka and I experienced the kindly consideration that it always shows to strangers. It boiled a billy for us at its furnace, it loitered through the pleasant valleys; smiled indulgently and slackened speed whenever we made merry with the blacks by pelting them with chunks of watermelon, and generally waited on us hand and foot. The man in charge pointing out the beauty spots and places of interest and making tea for us at frequent intervals."[969]

As the writers traverse the desert from Darwin to Barrow Creek, from Ali Curang to Alice Springs, we also hear extracts from Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia*. As the journey approaches Coniston, a dramatised voice-over recounts a version of the Coniston massacre:

> "Two employees, Jane Stapleton and John Franks were killed in an attack by the Kadesch men on the Barrow Creek telegraph station on the 23rd of February 1874. Another man, Ebenezer Flint, was seriously wounded. *The Adelaide Advertiser* accurately predicted that a, 'punishment would doubtless be given to the blood thirsty rascals which will be remembered for years to come.' Constables Samuel Gassen from Barrow Creek and ten volunteers were away for six weeks but took no prisoners. While an undisclosed number of Kadesch were shot so too were a great many of their innocent

[969] Collins & Young, *The Writers Train* and Margaret Berry Gunn, *We of the Never Never* (London: Hutchinson, 1954).

neighbours the Amatjera, including at least one entire camp, as well as Warramungu, Alluwarra and Warlpiri people."[970]

The interpolation of text serves to situate the listener at the colonial juncture in the past and inscribe this with the present. In the telling of the Coniston massacre we have the story told in the colonial voice, referred to by the narrator of the documentary, and finally retold by playwright John Romeril's story of an Aboriginal massacre – told through the eyes of a young woman. This is an attempt to write back, and interpolate a dominant discourse: to give a voice to the Indigenous at the scene of the massacre.

7.7 The journey: reading place through colonial and counter discourse

The colonial 'journey' trope – in this case, the traveling out and to, the mythical 'Never Never' – is refashioned and configured outside of the linear narrative, to arrive in a sound mash-up of past and present. Radio, known as the theatre of the mind,[971] allows for the reconceptualisation of not only the space being described and defined but also the space the listener discovers. As the writers re-trace Gunn's colonial footprints they re-read the desert space and reinvest it with a multitude of stories and histories. Fredric Jameson acknowledges this physical movement through space and place allows for a deeper understanding and exploration. The possibility of a counter discourse to develop is there: "[cognitive] mapping of spaces allows oppositional cultures to emerge".[972] It's this multiple inscription that opens up alternative views of the desert; and people make their own history beyond the dominant discourse and

[970] Collins & Young, *The Writers Train*.

[971] Radio /sound/drama/ documentary as often been called 'theatre of the mind' this can be traced to many theorists but is also to attributed Frank Beaman, a radio announcer at WBBM News radio in Chicago in the 1950s.

[972] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Duke University Press, 1991). p. 87.

historiography. This also "allows people to become aware of their own position in the world and the resources to resist and make their own history".[973]

The narrators of *The Writers Train* radio feature take us to a cultural event in Ali Curang not that far from the massacre at Coniston and here we have a moment of surreal collision between race, culture, place, and for the non-Indigenous listener, a collision and rupture of stereotypes and expectations. Hemmings and Rigny refer to Edward Soja's point that space (and place) is a dialectic, integral to politics and ideology not merely a backdrop:[974] "Continuing making and remaking of knowledge connected to space … allows us to move beyond the notion of legacy and into the practice of possibility as sites are reconceptualised."[975]

> "Watching *Strictly Ballroom* on the oval at Ali Curang with the descendants of those who survived the early intrusions of white settlers and their police, was a surreal moment, something like setting up a cinema screen on a vacant lot in an urban ghetto and inviting the residents out for a barbeque and a comedy film. The broken houses and abandoned cars seemed clichéd and the black population who struggle with English seem foreign until you realise that you are an intruder and yes this is Australia. But we all laughed together and ate sausage sandwiches and had a good time."

The layering of the text creates an aural dissonance, the past and the present collide and the audience both listening and present at the scene, find themselves in the unromantic, lively, vibrant present.[976]

Broadcast during the early weeks of the Australian federal government's intervention into this region, when images of one Indigenous, one mob, were pixilated and scatter-gunned through the media, a multiple narrative challenged the dominant discourse and acknowledged that there is no 'one way' of

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[973] S. Hemmings and D. M. Rigney, "Adelaide Oval: A Postcolonial Site'?," (2003) http://hdl.handle.net/2328/14705
[974] ibid.
[975] Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory.* p. 63.
[976] Collins & Young, *The Writers Train*.

examining this issue; there is no 'one truth' just as there is no one people and no one cultural group representing Indigenous voices. The construct, of one group, freezes Indigenous identity in mainstream discourse and this in turn allows for justification of policies without broad and extensive consultation. While 'who speaks for whom', particularly in the multilingual and bicultural Indigenous communities in the Central Desert, is still a very pertinent and political question, portraying an array of Indigenous perspectives on place and culture breaks up perceptions of the other, the essentialised Indigenous. [977]

7.8 Applying colonial discourse and counter discourse to *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*

The stories of the gold rush to the Central Desert in 1932 and the media driven expedition were the starting point for me to explore the early colonial history of this region. I attempted to retell the stories of time and place interweaving historical, social and spatial geography into my radio story re-tracing the early expedition. I relied on colonial discourse / counter discourse techniques that I had examined in *The Writers Train* and in *Return to Arnhem Land*.[978] Not only did I attempt to include the newspaper stories as inter-text, I also invoked the voice of the original expeditioners, and in particular, Baume. This story ran parallel to the contemporary road trip, with myself, a photographer and my Warlpiri co-narrator, Valerie Napaljarri Martin.[979]

As with *The Writers Train* I focused largely on the inter-text and telling through stories through time and place in an attempt to recontextualise the discourse. Stories from past and present were edited together so the past and present worked as a dialogue.[980] My attempt to look at the early media representation of the Indigenous peoples of the Central Australian (NT) desert was told through the eyes of the early colonists and told through the eyes of the contemporary

[977] Hinkson, *Coercive Reconciliation: Stabilise, Normalise, Exit Aboriginal Australia*.
[978] "Commonwealth Government Records About the Northern Territory"; Collins & Young, *The Writers Train*; Thomas, *Return to Arnhem Land*.
[979] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[980] Collins & Young, *The Writers Train*.

expeditioners. The aim is to re-represent the desert and the desert people, the first Australians, in a new way. This then encompassed telling the colonists' story and the Indigenous story together on the main track, and all the other stories from all the other people on the 'back tracks' – and for these stories to collide and to take the listener to a new understanding of the history of this place.

> "This problem of representation – how to articulate the relationship of the author – to the subject to the audience – is the fundamental challenge which faces every story-teller. It is critical that filmmakers and film viewers be rid of the fantasy that the documentary film is a pure and non-problematic representation of reality, and that its 'truth' can be conveniently dispensed and received – like a pill to cure a headache."[981]

7.9 Multiple narrators in a documentary

When researching for a radio documentary feature based on the re-tracing of an expedition in the Australian outback in 1933 it became more and more apparent that the story of an Anglo-European search for gold and the removal of Indigenous people from their homelands was a complex story of colonial conquest with many side-tracks and discourses: these encompassed mining history during the Great Depression, the loss of lives along the road due to inhospitable conditions, the forced removal of people from their traditional lands and many other stories of this place in other times.

Just as history requires more than one empirical voice or source, the documentary *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* required more than one narrator in my view.[982] Re-tracing the 1933 "gold rush" to the Tanami desert along the Tanami Track with a senior Warlpiri woman, Valerie Napaljarri Martin, allowed us to traverse our own 'on the road' story. This became part of a 'living narrative'

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[981] Dennis O'Rourke, "On the Making of "Cannibal Tours", http://web.mnstate.edu/robertsb/390/On%20the%20Making%20of%20Cannibal%20Tours.pdf p. 6.

[982] T. O'Regan, "TV as Cultural Technology: The Work of Eric Michaels," in *Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media and Culture*, ed. Tom O'Regan, *Communication and Tradition: Essays after Eric Michaels* (1990).

bringing time and history and place into different juxtapositions. In contemporary anthropology and critiques of anthropology – responses to the anti-colonial upheaval – "[we] see the emergence of the informant as a complex historical subject: neither a cultural type nor a unique individual".[983] According to James Clifford, in the past, the native speaks, and the anthropologist writes. Frequently this act of writing and inscribing has meant Indigenous collaborators are so often erased. However, Valerie's voice had to be heard. It was to be her exploration as much as mine.[984]

Clifford aims to "loosen at least somewhat the monological control of the executive writer/anthropologist and to open for discussion ethnography's hierarchy and negotiation of discourses in power-charged, unequal situations", as he puts it so succinctly.[985] Not only does Clifford challenge the role of the so-called informant with that of the writer-inscriber-ethnographer but he also brings into the argument the idea that the 'informant' is a traveller also. The "native informants" in anthropology have their own 'ethnographic proclivities'.[986] Clifford: "[insiders], outsiders, good translators and explicators, they've been around. The people studied by anthropologists have seldom been homebodies. Some of them, at least, have been travellers, workers, pilgrims, religious converts or other traditional 'long distance' specialists."[987] To Clifford the very nature of the informant/subject/other is questionable: "In the history of twentieth century anthropology 'informants' first appear as natives: they emerge as travellers. In fact, as I will suggest, they are a specific mixture of the two."[988]

Valerie and my relationship became, over time, a privileged site of interaction and depth; and for me an initiation into Warlpiri culture. Valerie is an insider but she is also a traveller, having lived and been educated in Darwin as a young woman where she became fluent in English and with urban society. She has lived in many places in the NT and has travelled extensively throughout the country as well as overseas. Valerie's role as media organiser at the media centre in

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983 Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*.
984 ibid. p. 23.
985 ibid.
986 ibid. p. 88.
987 ibid.
988 ibid. p. 19.

Yuendumu meant she was the negotiator for all outside media. When I first met Valerie, she was the intermediary for most of the Warlpiri workforce in the media centre (see Chapter 1). When Valerie was having trouble with one of her sons she moved into the media centre house with myself, and my daughters. Valerie's daughters and other relatives stayed most nights in the house. We all cooked, ate and travelled together, including hunting trips with the older women. My informant subject then is my collaborator and it's her voice that simply had to be heard if this documentary was to work on any level.

Chapter 8

Telling stories with the shapes of time

> "Image making, dance, story-telling are interwoven modes of expression through which relations between places and persons are reproduced and revitalised. In drawing a segment of a dreaming track the maker enacts the journey; naming the places traversed, imagining the experience of taking the route, the pauses for rest or sustenance, the other beings encountered; the changes in the environment and the signs of life noticed along the way."[989]

On the road, in the making of *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*, Valerie Napaljarri Martin, Nina Khorea and I met up with ANU anthropologist and ethnographer Melinda Hinkson, by chance, in Yuendumu. Hinkson was working on the project that would become *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*.[990] Hinkson's project was focused on the repatriation of images from Mervyn Meggitt's anthropological work with the Warlpiri in the 1950s.[991] Under the guidance and instruction of community elders, Hinkson brought back images the Warlpiri community members had drawn for Meggitt (and which had been archived for many years). These crayon drawings were shown to descendants of artists and family members reflected on the stories these drawings told.

On this journey of cultural repatriation, later documented in her book, Hinkson explored how ancient knowledge and contemporary Warlpiri history is uniquely reflected in the drawings the Warlpiri drew for Meggitt. Some of the images are totemic and relate to ceremony, others are stories about significant events. Some say a great deal and some are simply quotidian reflections. As she brings the images home, stories unfold and forgotten histories re-emerge. The drawings resonate strongly with many of the elders still alive in Yuendumu, who have much to say about what the pictures represent.

Through Hinkson we learn that Meggitt isn't the first anthropologist in this region to use drawing as a means of storytelling. From Olive Pink to Norman

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[989] Hinkson, *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*. p. 35.
[990] ibid. Photographs of this meeting, Valerie Napaljarri Martin and Melinda Hinkson are included in the appendix and in the short multimedia.
[991] Meggitt, *Desert People: A Study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia*.

Tindale, Charles Mountford and the Berndts,[992] these anthropologists and explorers all gave the Warlpiri they lived with, and encountered on their journeys, drawing implements – crayon and paper – to explain and document rituals, stories and past and present events.

According to Hinkson the requests to tell their stories using the medium of watercolour and crayons, and under the gaze of people like Meggitt and Pink, "moved the Aboriginal production onto explicitly intercultural terrain".[993] When shown the work their relatives did with Meggitt, the Warlpiri family members in Yuendumu respond in a number of ways. Some yapa (Warlpiri) say the drawings were done to simply please Meggitt, but others see the significance of their forebears work.

> "Part of the story told in this book is about ways such concerns resonate at the level of cross-cultural image making and interpretation. Japangardi's suggestion that some of the 1950s drawings may be made only for the making white people happy is one indication of this complex politics of representation."[994]

Hinkson, in this detailed work poses the question, "[Could] these drawings be made to engage the bodily senses of kardiya (white non Indigenous) to make us feel and thus engender a sympathetic response?"[995]

8.1 Ways of telling cultural stories interculturally

Eric Michaels, the Canadian anthropologist,[996] invited budding Warlpiri filmmakers in the 1980s to engage fully with new media technologies and take ownership of their image making and storytelling as satellite television loomed

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[992] I don't mention the Berndts in this thesis but they had influence in anthropology and studied with the Ngalia Warlpiri at Haasts Bluff mid last century.
[993] Hinkson, *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*. p. 31.
[994] ibid. p. 38.
[995] ibid. p. 38.
[996] See chapters 1 and 7.

on the media landscape for remote Indigenous communities in Australia.[997] This kind of engagement between non-Indigenous anthropologists and the Warlpiri they worked with paved the way for filmmakers like Francis Jupurrurla Kelly, the current chairman of PAW/Warlpiri Media.[998]

Since Eric Michael's involvement with the Warlpiri at Yuendumu and specifically with Francis Jupurrurla Kelly there have been many collaborative projects between Indigenous and non-Indigenous media producers in Yuendumu that traverse and challenge political, social and cultural boundaries as well as create new paths in the intercultural terrain. The award-winning filmmaker, writer/director David Batty has been crucial in the ongoing work of filmmaker Francis Jupurrurla Kelly. Their friendship and collaborative engagement has allowed crucial stories related to Warlpiri history to be made and distributed nationally. *Coniston*, a documentary film about the Coniston massacre made in 2014 – and a collaborative project between Francis Kelly and David Batty – retold the horrific story of the 1929 massacre.[999] David Batty also co-wrote and directed a Warlpiri story and cast in the award-winning *Bush Mechanics*, a humorous and groundbreaking TV series about the history of cars and mechanics in the desert.[1000] In this project he worked closely with his Warlpiri colleagues to create script, dialogue and scene that tells their story of the community's relationship with cars and travel.

If you've ever seen *Manu Wana*, one of Batty's first major projects with Kelly, you won't have forgotten. In this project – a TV series for children – Batty and Kelly let loose their wild imaginings to recreate the first Aboriginal *Sesame Street* told in Warlpiri and English.[1001] The cultural repatriation of lost art objects, sound, film and performance is also part of this collaborative process and intercultural exchange, as we have seen with Hinkson's documentation of the return of the Meggitt-inspired drawings. Here, as with other collaborations described in

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997 Michaels, *The Aboriginal Invention of Television*.

998 Read Francis Jupurrurla Kelly's story in Chapter 5.

999 Dooley, K. "Talking about dark times: Coniston". *Metro Magazine: Media & Education Magazine* 175 (2013): 88.

1000 Hinkson, "New Media Projects at Yuendumu: Towards a History and Analysis of Intercultural Engagement". pp. 201–220.

1001 A Warlpiri Australian Aboriginal children's show made in Yuendumu (NT) for the bilingual program of Yuendumu School and other Warlpiri schools (Nyirripi, Willowra and Lajamanu).

Chapter 7, Hinkson documents the community's reaction to the return of the images and reflects on what this light on the past sheds.

While not related to the Warlpiri in Yuendumu, historian Martin Thomas's work brought this contemporary intercultural collaboration to radio with his award winning broadcasts, *This is Jimmy Barker* and *I love you Jimmy* (see Chapter 7).[1002] Thomas collaborated with early audio ethnographer Jimmy Barker to allow Jimmy's crackling wax and tape audio recordings to come alive – to bring back a period in time and history (and place) that had been forgotten. Likewise, the repatriation of recorded stories and voices – and bringing these stories home to the attention of the community – has also been the focus for Martin Thomas who, as we have seen in Chapter 7, brought home the recorded stories and songs of American-Australian expedition to the descendants of the Gunbalanya people of north-east Arnhem Land.

In my *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track* radio documentary I took these collaborations into account when working with my colleague, Valerie Napaljarri Martin. The explicit aim, to re-trace Baume's 1932 trip and retell this story, would not have been meaningful nor possible without Valerie's contribution. Valerie guided me along the tracks, took me down important back tracks and informed the story from her Warlpiri perspective.

8.2 There is no end to this road

> "Just as none of us are beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings."[1003]

The Tanami Track, the mostly untarred and rocky road traversing hundreds of kilometres through the flat and rugged terrain of the Tanami Desert, became a

[1002] Thomas, *This Is Jimmy Barker*.
[1003] E. W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage, 1993).

site of power and control with the forcible excising of land for pastoral use and later for mining in the early 20th century.[1004] The NT patrol officers, travelling on the Tanami Track, while attempting to quell the worst of the exploitation that involved non-payment for Indigenous labour, ended up becoming overly licentious and the harbingers of the stolen children period.[1005]

The police too, and some travelling out on the track from Alice Springs, are remembered as men involved in acts of cruelty and violence.[1006]

The track, in its snake-like twist through Mount Doreen and onto the Granites and further to Lajamanu (Hooker Creek) became a road used to transport Warlpiri from Yuendumu to Lajamanu. Senior elders such as Harry Jakamarra Nelson remembers clearly, as a child, the men building the road as they went. [1007] Men taken from Yuendumu and the goldmine at the Granites were made to build the road as they went.[1008] This Tanami Track was also the road the men walked – hundreds of long and dusty miles – back to Yuendumu.[1009] The missions or ration depots as they are known, established just off the road, became another controlling agent of Warlpiri. [1010]

Yuendumu senior elder Harry Jakamarra Nelson tells this story in Chapter 5 and in the Warlpiri story of the Tanami road and the history of that time. The movement to the Granites and the work at Mount Doreen and at other stations is told in detail by Bessie Sims, Thomas Jangala Rice and Valerie Napaljarri Martin.[1011]

[1004] Elias, "Golden Dreams: People, Place and Mining in the Tanami Desert". See also chapters 3, 4 and 5.
[1005] Strehlow, "1935–1960 Field Notes Held on File at the Strehlow Research Centre".
[1006] Coughlan, "Aboriginal Town Camps and Tangentyere Council the Battle for Self-Determination in Alice Springs".
[1007] See Chapter 5 for the oral history account from Harry Jakamarra Nelson.
[1008] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.
[1009] Frank Baarda and Harry Nelson interviewed in ibid.
[1010] Rowse, "Enlisting the Warlpiri"; *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*.
[1011] Angel, *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*.

8.3 Retelling stories to illuminate the past

> "History would have to take in not only the genesis of these spaces but also, and especially their interconnections, distortions, displacements, mutual interactions and their links with the spatial practice of the particular society or mode of production under consideration."[1012]

Baume's story, and the retelling of it (in *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*) in a radio broadcast, became more than just re-tracing this journey; it became a chance to re-imagine the past and retell the past through different Indigenous perspectives and contrast these with the colonial attitudes of 1932. What was really going on at this time in Australian history for the Warlpiri? And what was the gold story really about? Why did the newspaper represent the Warlpiri and other Indigenous groups in the ways it did? Where did these identity formations come from? Asking these questions created a conversation between narrator, Valerie, and myself and we had this conversation while driving along the dusty track from Yuendumu to Coniston Station to Mount Doreen and on to the Granites.

The aim was for us to record stories and moments on the road and tell the stories from Warlpiri perspectives, and also to allow the road to tell its stories: to create a new map that redefined the colonial cartography and challenged definitions of time and place. We wanted to let the experience shape the storytelling and conversely for the storytelling to map a place.

Tracing the history of one road in the NT did take us on this bloody, harrowing journey of colonisation in Australia in the 1920s and 1930s. What was meant to be a re-enactment of a 1930s journey along the road became a very disturbing and painful story of the removal of Aboriginal people from their homelands, often at the point of a gun, segregation of people from their lands, the introduction of fatal disease and the enforcement of firstly segregation, and later

[1012] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 142. p. 16.

'assimilation'; and it led me to begin to see the underpinning ideologies that propped up and sustained these practices.

The story was also one of resistance, of people maintaining language and cultural traditions even during periods of dire environmental degradation following the introduction of cattle and mining, and the diaspora associated with the Coniston massacre. For a people constantly moving and telling their stories of place and time along songlines and in constant reference to place, the Warlpiri/Warlbri Anmatyerre and various language groups in the region were rounded up and put on a mission reserve. Many groups of different languages and totems were forced into a frequently uneasy geographical relationship.

The type of discourse in Baume's *Tragedy Track* was popular during early contact between white colonists and Indigenous first Australians and had catastrophic implications for Indigenous people for the 20th century and up to the present day where these very same discourses circulate and recirculate until they appear to be a kind of 'truth'. The stereotypes we find in the newspapers then and now become discourses as Kramer describes, legitimising fictions to uphold 'white sovereignty' and to aid and abet the removal of Indigenous people from their land.[1013]

As we have seen in Chapter 6, the discourse in newspapers in the 1930s about the desert people aided and abetted policy decisions regarding Aboriginal people. They were 'cruel' and 'treacherous'. Or they 'must' be segregated in order to be 'saved'. Colonial government both state and federal offered then 'to smooth the dying pillow'. The only hope for Indigenous survival, according to government and anthropology from the 1930s on, was to become civilised: that is, to assimilate to white ways. These discourses were underpinned by the economic imperatives of colonisation. In fact, we could say that the pastoral industry, the mining industry and the desire to open up the country for economic expansion was the real driver and the discourse around this became the justification for enslavement, dispossession and extreme forms of physical and psychological violence. Here the work of Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Irene

[1013] Kramer, "Racial Warfare and the Northern Territory Intervention".

Watson becomes crucial to map what Pugliese and Kramer called the "event trauma of *terra nullius*".[1014]

8.4 Unpicking the threads of discourse: analysis off the road

Re-tracing Baume's story was one aspect to this story; the much more complicated task lay in the complex web of colonial theoretical suppositions, anthropological expeditions and excursions, ideological and political positions, conferences, newspaper stories and reams of text, that needed to be sifted through, in order to contextualise both the documentary and this thesis.

In telling Baume's story in a new way and to understand the specific political, economic history of the NT in the time leading up to and just after the late 1920s to 1930s, I needed to understand the complex history of global colonisation and the political and ideological frames that existed to legitimise the taking of ancestral land from Aboriginal people.[1015]

The newspaper stories of the day written by Baume and republished in excerpts in *Tragedy Track* were of great interest as 'legitimisers' written only three years after the Coniston massacre; they reinforced the colonial discourse of 'danger', 'murder' and the 'the blacks'. Despite it being the 1930s, Baume describes the Indigenous people he meets on his journey as potential threats and hazards. Like Cecil Cook, Baume views the Aboriginal people he encounters as primitive and licentious, a threat to white morality. Baume agrees with the colonial opinion of the day: the Indigenous are a threat to themselves. He agrees with pastoralists and miners; they are a threat to the economic development of the region. Baume

[1014] ibid.; Moreton-Robinson, "Writing Off Indigeous Sovereignty: The Discourse of Security and Patriarchal White Sovereignty"; Moreton-Robinson, "Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of Patriarcha White Sovereignty"; Moreton-Robinson, "Virtual Racial States: The Possessive Logic of Patriarchal White Sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"; Pugliese, "Race as Category Crisis: Whiteness and the Topical Assignation of Race"; Watson, "In the Northern Territory Intervention What Is Saved or Rescued and at What Cost?"; *Aboriginal Peoples, Colonialism and International Law: Raw Law*.

[1015] Chapters 2 and 6.

takes only one side in this journalistic foray: he listens to the white folk along the track and it's only their story he hears and only their story he tells.[1016]

The central figures in anthropology, research funding and government funding as we have seen in Chapter 2 also didn't stray far from this way of thinking.[1017]

Language and power, as we have seen throughout, played a fundamental and pivotal role in what happened to people during this time in history. The mimicry and mimesis Hinkson reveals in Baume's descriptions are constantly engaged with in accounts of colonial Australia by non-Indigenous whitefellas. As Hinkson reminds us, there is no shared social space in these encounters; rather, constant referencing of forms of separation or complete absorption. Fear of this otherness that Baume reiterates "would come to shape policymaking for decades to come."[1018]

8.5 Radio: real and imagined spaces

> "[there] is a growing awareness of the simultaneity and interwoven complexity of the social, the historical, and the spatial, their inseparability and interdependence … leading to major revisions in how we study history and society."[1019]

Contemporary storytelling on the road, the 'road trip chronotope' as described by Bakhtin,[1020] and mapping place through storytelling in 'third space' are different cultural studies concepts which I use to examine the documentary *Re-tracing the Tragedy Track*. How do these ideas work in postcolonial critique?

[1016] Baume, *Tragedy Track: The Story of the Granites*.

[1017] Gillian Cowlishaw, "Colour, Culture and the Aboriginalists," *Man* 221–237 (1987); "Aborigines and Anthropologists," *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1, no. 2 (1986); "Studying Aborigines: Changing Canons in Anthropology and History"; "Erasing Culture and Race: Practising 'Self-determination'," *Oceania* (1998); "Helping Anthropologists: Cultural Continuity in the Constructions of Aboriginalists".

[1018] Hinkson, *Remembering the Future: Warlpiri Life through the Prism of Drawing*. p. 51.

[1019] Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Places*. p. 3.

[1020] Pühringer, "Bakhtin's Chronotope on the Road: Space, Time, and Place in Road Movies since the 1970s".

For Soja, a postmodernist and Marxist, the understanding of space, the representation of space, is often missing in the exploration of time and history. He views "space and inevitably, place and geography" as being dismissed from philosophical critiques of the late 19th century by "historians stranglehold of the historical imagination".[1021]

The history of a place is at the crux of this thesis. The Indigenous of the Central Desert have complex rituals and totems associated with this place. This place is as alive as the people who tell the creation stories (Jukurrpa). The desert region, for the Tanami tribes, is an ancestral and spiritual home. To understand the intricacy of this Indigenous history and the impact of colonial contact we begin to understand a history of this place. The past then, is searched through as a potential means of empowering the present.

> "[Choosing] a past helps us construct a future … By recovering and preserving the history of places and spaces we can recover and preserve our collective selves much better than if we forget the past and repeat our mistakes and injustices. Here history defines the power of place."[1022]

Heavily influenced by the theories of Henri Lefebvre on the production of space,[1023] the politics of space, and on a third way of understanding time/place and history as social, dynamic and non-linear, Soja talks about the necessity of understanding the real and imagined power of lived spaces through storytelling.

Radio features and documentaries can also structure the telling of a story in contemporary, non-linear, multi-narrative styles – in other words, multi-linear and *layered* – and in doing so they can capture this notion of 'third space': of historical, social cultural and geographic dimensions in the post/colonial world. There is depth thus introduced. Audio stories are layered; interpolated; write back to the canon.[1024]

[1021] Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Places*. p. 197.
[1022] ibid. p. 192
[1023] Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Vol. 142, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991. p. 142.
[1024] See Chapter 7.

> "Sound Effect (SFX): The sound of a needle being placed into the groove of an old and worn 78 rpm disc. A low-level rumble, and the hiss and scratch of surface noise, and then the sound of birds – exotic whistles and cluckings, a cacophony of magpie geese and plovers and a dozen species besides."[1025]

The sounds recorded by Colin Simpson during the American-Australian Scientific Expedition in 1948 were the first on location or 'wild sounds' recorded with a portable recorder for the ABC. Tony McGregor begins his paper on the work of Simpson with the sounds Simpson captures. It is with this 'other' language we can retell place.[1026]

'Wild sound' in this instance – the sound Colin Simpson captures with his wire recorder – virtually walks us, as listeners, through this place at a different point in historical time. In recording the language of voices and sound we tell these places and stories in an entirely new way. McGregor finds the recordings place us in a specific time:

> "[an] informed audition of this all-but-forgotten 'text' allows us to hear something of the way in which the Expedition was culturally located in postwar Australia."[1027]

Sound tells stories in ways other mediums can't. Sound has a language of its own. Sound can take our minds to these real and imagined spaces. A bird call, the rustle of wind over water, the dusty voices of people travelling, the sounds of sadness catching in a throat, the sounds of joy peeling from a cry. The ancient language of sound has a rhythm and meaning completely beyond conversational linguistics.

Audio recordings invite a *sensory* storytelling. As listeners we are there; emotionally caught in the meaning of the distant roar of traffic or the rowdy song

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[1025] Tony McGregor, "Birds on the Wire: Colin Simpson and the Emergence of the Radio Documentary Form," in *Barks, Birds and Billabongs* symposium (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2009) p. 87–111.

[1026] ibid.

[1027] ibid.

of birds. When we record while walking through a place, as journalists, observers, academics, we tell a story of the place in a way that spoken language on its own simply can't do. We add the dimension of place.

It's not just the sound of these documentaries that illuminates 'third space' theory, walking through place and retelling the stories of place (and space) with sound, it is the voices *we choose* to record.

When Martin Thomas returns the audio Colin Simpson recorded back to the community we hear the community reaction: they tell us what these recordings mean to them. These ancient tribal songs recorded in the 1940s have ceremonial meanings and the reactions to them are palpable: we experience the joy the elders have in hearing these songs return.[1028]

"Who speaks? Under what conditions? On behalf of whom?" Henry Giroux poses this question of fundamental importance in colonial discourse analysis.[1029] The issues of gender, race, power, exist in these spaces that people inhabit: the cities, the desert, the borders and the margins. The voices of people tell these stories: a gravelly voice, an accent; tribal men singing the country; women speaking in language, telling stories, conducting ceremony.

The Writers Train re-imagined the stories of the past and the present on a train ride from one end of the NT to the other.[1030] The stories unfold on the journey: the histories of the place, the wars, the massacres; the stolen children. The past and present are woven together in story that contests and shapes our perceptions in new ways. When we record our stories – through the audio process, interviewing people in their place and also walking through places and reading the geographic and historical stories – using the 'wild' sounds of the place and peoples' voices, we are engaging with spatial theory in developing new forms of urban and regional ethnography, and in so doing, in investigating the

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[1028] Thomas, *Return to Arnhem Land.* Podcast audio. ABC, 2007. http://www.abc.net.au/rn/radioeye/stories/2007/1928445.htm

[1029] Henry A. Giroux, "Living Dangerously: Identity Politics and the New Cultural Racism: Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Representation," *Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1.

[1030] Collins & Young. *The Writers Train*.

space as well as the past, we illuminate the present and consequently we enrich our collective knowledge.

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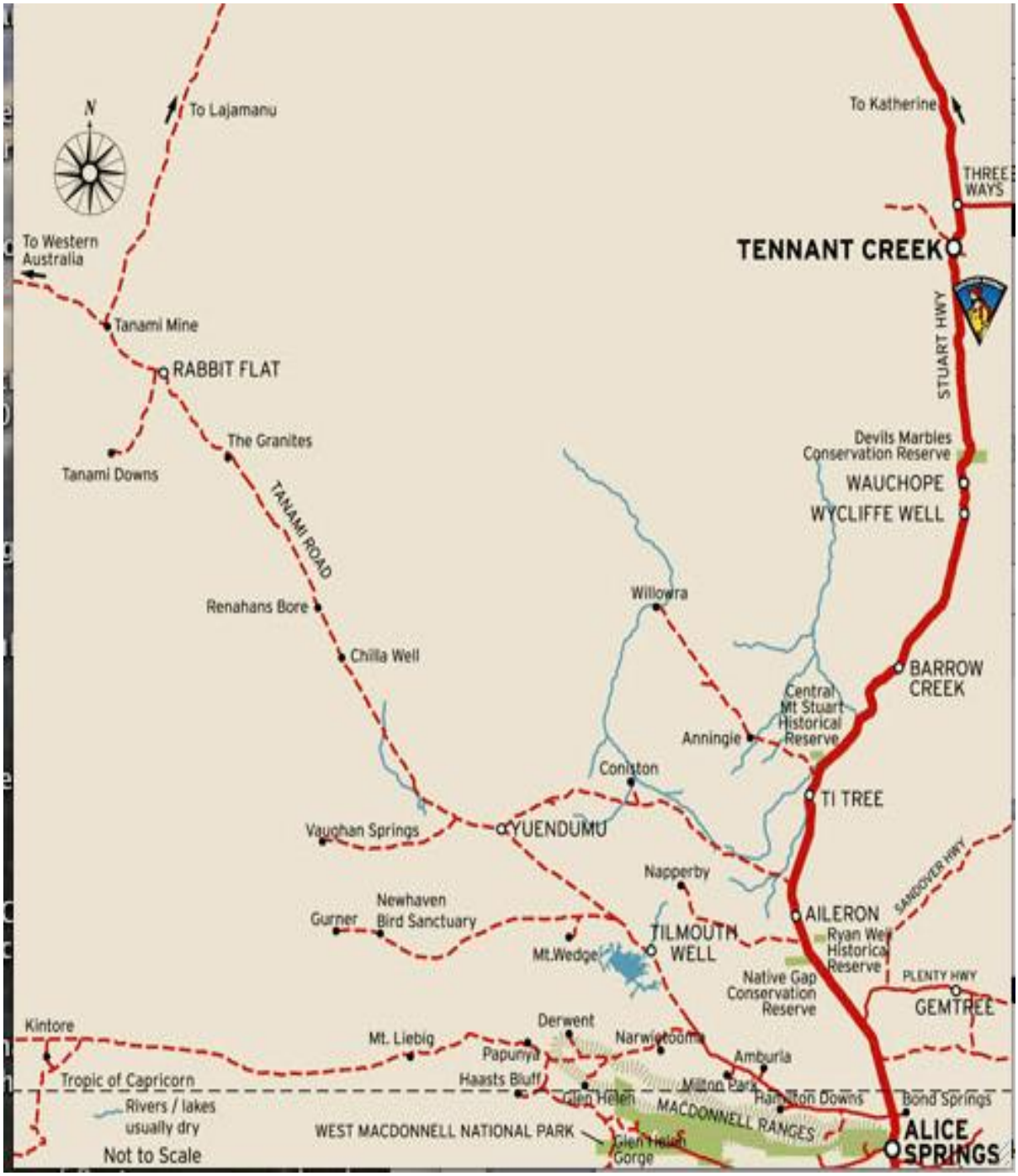
Appendix 1



The Tanami track (red dotted line west of the Stuart Highway) Yuendumu is located approximately half way along this stretch of the road. The Tanami gold mine is located at the road juncture and turn-off to Lajamanu.