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Introduction

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ABSTRACT

This introduction will consider how these four papers mark new boundaries of an expanding anthropological project both in their theoretical aspirations and their empirical reach. While the papers address quite different questions, each is relevant to the contemporary relationship between anthropology, indigenous people and the Australian nation. To highlight that relevance I will draw on elements of anthropology's history using some of Stanner's observations in the 1950s. In the last section I discuss some contemporary conditions and criticisms of anthropology.

Stanner wrote in 1959 that 'old contempt and new solicitude have a common element: a kind of sightlessness towards the central problem of what it is to be a blackfellow in the here-and-now of Australian life' (Stanner 1979:93). Anthropologists had seldom articulated such concerns before that time because the intellectual agenda of the discipline had been clear, that is, documenting what it was to be a blackfella in the classical tradition.¹ Gradually since then the discipline has widened its purview and today virtually all ethnographies address the contemporary conditions of Aboriginal life in some way. Also since then, questions have been insistently raised about the unintended essentialist and primitivist implications of the earlier agenda.² But the recognition of traditional owners, native title holders and heritage rights in the 1980s and 90s has given a boost to work in the classical tradition and to the authority of anthropologists. Many anthropologists have worked to provide authoritative evidence about traditions as well as history in the pursuit of such rights. The intellectual and political difficulties associated with these developments are not confined to Australia (Field 1999). Valuable and challenging as this work is, anthropology has a wider agenda and indeed, many anthropologists view the influence of an instrumental, 'service anthropology' in Australia with alarm. In this collection Bauman shows that their concerns may be well founded.

Stanner again marked a changing trajectory when he urged anthropologists to take part in the serious questioning of 'the morality, appropriateness and application of the modern policy of assimilation' and to consider 'the strata of fact which historians ignore but which nevertheless still surface in aboriginal life' (in Reay 1964:viii). He was referring to ques-

tions of governance and to race relations, hitherto a minor tradition in anthropology. In 1959 he had noted changed attitudes 'among Europeans of all classes' (Stanner 1979:93) and the replacement of contempt for Aborigines with 'interest and solicitude' (ibid.). It was the small but significant body of research conducted in south-east Australia from the 1950s which pioneered the study of Aborigines' relationship with the state and with the surrounding society, as for example, in the edited volume *Aborigines Now* (Reay, 1964) which contained significant work by Barwick, Beckett, Bell, Calley, Fink and Inglis among others. Beckett observed the ethnographic hierarchy which obtained in the 1950s and 60s when those like himself who worked with 'half-castes' were considered apprentices, in training for the real anthropological work among traditional Aborigines (pers. com.). In the 1970s some ethnographers began to examine the influence of colonial history and state institutions on remote indigenous communities (e.g. Tonkinson 1974; Howard 1978) and that tradition has since expanded considerably. While ethnographies now routinely take account of the history and context of Aboriginal life, there are still few which systematically and ethnographically examine relationships between black and white people and fewer still which include whitefellas as ethnographic subjects in their own right.³

And there remain remarkable gaps. One could read the earlier ethnographic literature on Australian Aborigines without discovering that a policeman's hand had ever been laid on an Aboriginal body. Recently a great deal of public attention has been paid to the taking of children, but as yet little ethnographic and analytical work has emerged to chart the social consequences of such experiences, and the systematic effects of intrusive state practices.⁴ Ethnographic attention has seldom focussed on colonial practice as a domain worthy of anthropological analysis. While anthropology always wanted to recognise, legitimise and understand difference, until the 1970s little analytic interest was shown in the asymmetry which accompanied its regulation. This collection is founded on a recognition of this asymmetrical relationship and its particular manifestations in different spaces and times.

THE PAPERS

These papers are a small selection from those delivered at a series of conferences⁵ which had a broad agenda and attracted disparate papers. While retaining anthropology's focus on particular systems of meaning and practice, these four exemplify increasing interest in relationships between different traditions, or cultural spaces, rather than the characteristics of one space which is always Other. Both Diane Austin-Broos and Toni Bauman write from their field-work experience with Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, while Barry Morris and Judy Lattas address questions of race relations more directly, one in relation to policing in western NSW and the other in relation to the Pauline Hanson movement. Morris's field is uncharacteristically⁶ textual, exploring the potentially explosive records of police fantasies and musings, often recorded by police themselves. Lattas' field is also textual, as she takes up One Nation's public pronouncements and explores an ideological domain which forms part of the discursive and cultural background to Morris' police, Bauman's state officials and Austin-Broos' 'force' which the Arrernte struggled to domesticate. Uniting these works is the 'field' of contemporary Australian politics.

The work of these four authors demarcates the contemporary field of anthropology concerned with Aborigines, indicating an expanding agenda which includes the place of Aborigines in various national discourses. In discussing them I will take up the authors' concepts, looking at ideas of tradition, negotiation, fantasy and the politics of the texts. By juxtaposing the papers I hope to extend the significance of each of them, in particular by elaborating the concepts and ethnographic material of one to raise questions in relation to others. I will then put some issues, commonly thought of as ethical or political, into an anthropological/historical perspective, with the aim of situating the questions raised by these papers in a wider context.

Tradition

Austin-Broos' carefully argued piece develops a challenging view of tradition by showing how elements of a Lutheran tradition as well as an Arrernte tradition are displayed at Hermannsburg. Focusing on the interactions played out in a funeral, she details how legitimate Lutheran and Arrernte traditions are expressed in the clothing, spatial relations, language, rituals and kinship of those involved. Arrernte people are able to sing Lutheran hymns written in Arrernte language by Arrernte people, and express in their daily lives different meanings from those prevailing in other small Australian towns. This is not just the recognition of a fashionable hybridity; Arrernte people's consciousness that different forms of sociality are operating in this era of greater movement and dispersal from country, has itself become a significant element of everyday life. The decisions people are forced to make about their place in contrasting traditions are not merely aesthetic or expressive choices, but involve everyday material needs, social relations, spiritual realities and the very survival of Arrernte as a group.

Austin-Broos's major achievement here is to undermine the notion of a singular and stable Aboriginality which is ever reappearing in the literature, by arguing that processes of negotiation and agreement are always taking place between different traditions. This is not a process external to the subjectivities and everyday experience of the self and the world, but is inevitably and organically embedded in ordinary sociality. Austin-Broos is seeking a way around the double bind entrenched in conventional ways of thinking about tradition(s), either as incommensurable with no possibility of negotiation between them, or as constructed, where the recognition of agency carries the implication of spuriousness. As we attempt to reformulate notions of culture and tradition in ways that avoid the crudities of fixity on the one hand and fabrication on the other, we are caught in this double bind which is fed by public perceptions, folk categories and political interests. Such dilemmas are being addressed constantly either directly or by implication, both in everyday life and analytically, as Australians struggle to come to terms with the relationship between indigenous and other citizens.

Austin-Broos' account of contemporary traditions contributes to the thinking of difference outside the limiting concepts of assimilation and incommensurability. The latter term privileges unbridgeable difference and thus discourages any attention to incomes, employment and education as assimilationist. Provocatively, she implies that notions of cultural incommensurability are tantamount to **excuses** which allow the 'encompassing majority' to continue their refusal of 'spaces of disclosure' to the minority. The term 'spaces of disclosure' is Austin-Broos' own contribution to general considerations of how Aboriginal traditions can be recognised and is designed to highlight how Western Arrernte people are denied the opportunity of public practice in developing their sense of themselves as she points out in this volume, as 'people who are seeking power and esteem according to the heterogeneous values that define their own specific tradition.' This refusal of 'spaces of disclosure' is tantamount to the denial of social being. While in this work Austin-Broos does not engage anthropologically with the other side of the negotiation — that is, with the 'non-Aboriginal consociates' who refuse 'spaces of disclosure' — importantly, the unsatisfactoriness of such spaces as the land courts is identified. Research questions which this work opens up include details of the specific needs and the peculiar economy of remote communities that underlie the requirement that Arrernte negotiate with whitefellas and the state in relation to the need of cash, both for subsistence and for such hugely expensive items as 4WD motor vehicles.

I want to add here that the attempt to dislodge 'the traditional', if it refers to notions of a more or less localised set of social relations with a characteristic logic, style and form of sociality, may be a vain one. The notion of 'strategic essentialism' has been used to recognise that many people want and need a stable and specifiable social identity,⁷ even though that identity may never match a particular tradition and may be falsely, even if at the same time productively, conceived as static (cf. Lattas 1993). While Austin-Broos shows that

every person at Hermannsburg experiences and internalises characteristic practices of what were once two distinct traditions, one local and one created elsewhere, there is a whole body of official discourse and practice developed within the state structures in the last two decades, with the express purpose of recognising a singular local tradition in the name of progressive humanism. Toni Bauman's paper examines these 'spaces of disclosure' in all their contradictory and sometimes destructive confusion.

Bauman uses the reflexive mode adeptly to give an account of her own intimate and long term involvement with Aborigines of the Northern Territory in a series of changing roles which matched changing demands of the state. While exploring our role as anthropologists and the habitual assumption of virtue in 'helping' Aborigines, Bauman provides a series of dramatic illustrations of the moulds into which the state presses Aborigines today, and the way anthropologists provide assistance in helping them fit.⁸ She documents the mass of legislative and statutory demands on Aboriginal organisations and individuals, which are not stable or predictable but are based on a bureaucratic logic which is never complete because it cannot fulfil its own desire to recognise another tradition while protecting the coherence of its own.

By her own ascription, Bauman was a friend of the Aboriginal people of Katherine before she became their anthropologist. Her wonderfully rich and honest account of the shifting roles and fields of both these friends and herself since she arrived in Katherine in 1979 identifies 'a politics of indigenous culture' in which formal and informal processes are woven together, engaging individuals in conscious and explicit negotiations which also entail personal and ethical dilemmas in everyday circumstances. She has been personally involved as local notions of 'community' and relationships to land and 'rights' and 'hierarchy' have been transformed to fit the logic of the state system and as 'Aboriginal culture' has become 'essentialised, codified and reified into consciousness as a key marker of difference.' Later, under a new guise as a Ph.D. student, she experienced strangeness and embarrassment which marked the difference between conducting 'pure research' and her previous role of responding directly to requests and organisational needs as articulated and developed within Aboriginal communities. Bauman has not abandoned the notion of 'helping', let alone her friendships, but bravely exposes her own sense of helplessness as she is caught up in projects and the exercise of rights of which the outcomes are ambiguous and the process itself often difficult and destructive. She makes the rare and ominous admission that those advising Aborigines may not understand the implications of their advice because of the complexities of legislative requirements.

Anthropologists are sometimes tempted into the position of running along behind state officials, lawyers, or indeed the public, trying to correct their conceptual apparatus or empirical repertoire in relation to otherness. But cultures will always be essentialised, misinterpreted and fantasised by those whom it suits to simplify their own or others' social worlds. No academic can tidy up the complex and contradictory meanings which emerge, not only out of political opportunism, but also from the potentially positive propensity to imagine other ways of being. What research such as that of Bauman and Austin-Broos can reveal is the complexity involved in the minutiae of everyday struggles within competing and contradictory traditions which can never be encompassed in a fixed set of general principles. Terms such as 'tradition' and 'culture' will continue to be used in complex and contradictory ways in both analytic and popular work because they operate in a world of complex and contradictory forces and one where the state's proclaimed good intentions provides a stage for the nation to act out its progressive and redemptive self-image (Povinelli 1998).

Negotiation

Austin-Broos coins the notion of 'negotiations between traditions' to theorise more general aspects of race relations. She emphasises that negotiations and agreements are not confined

to land claims but have been going on for many decades where indigenous and settler traditions coexist in informal and everyday circumstances. Informal agreements were worked out between two traditions, lived out in Hermannsburg and played out in the lives of individuals. While recognising that agreements between Aboriginal people and 'their non-indigenous consociates' were seldom sustained, and that they were often 'crafted from subordinated, desperate and unjust positions', Austin-Broos nonetheless shows that such negotiation and agreement 'have been integral to shaping Aboriginal traditions'.

While emphasis on the significance of negotiations and agreements between ordinary Aboriginal and white people is refreshing, it is in danger of endorsing a *modus vivendi* as an agreement. Frequently interracial situations contain elements of coercion and existential constraint as a source of chronic discontent and conflict, as illustrated in Bauman's article. Indeed, in the conditions described by Morris, where people have become habituated to fear and suspicion, it would not be appropriate to speak of 'negotiation' or 'agreement', although there are many elements of one tradition which have been accepted as part of the other. This is not merely a matter of semantics, but of recognising that there are degrees and levels of agreement, and that habituation, adaptation and acceptance of social conditions are never stable. Discontent and conflict may be held in abeyance until conditions change, 'agreements' break down, or one 'tradition' strengthens and accrues the power to demand more of the other.

The work of Morris also gives further weight to Austin-Broos' point about the significance of local conditions for any understanding of the relationship between traditions. Local histories and particular interracial conditions may require concepts which are inappropriate elsewhere. This is not the place to specify the differences between Hermannsburg and Brewarrina,⁸ but one significant contrast should be pointed out. The repeal of discriminatory legislation in the 1960s allowed for the subsequent emergence of a vocal and demanding Aboriginal voice, mainly in the southern states, as well as special compensatory programs which together led to fear and resentment among whitefellas. At Hermannsburg, and in the Northern Territory generally, the 'black power' discourse was not so apparent, while legislation (specifically the Land Rights [NT] Act 1976) which established Land Councils, allowed land claims and recognised 'Aboriginal culture', raised hopes among Aborigines and expectations of substantial agreements, and of 'spaces of disclosure'. Thus while I would argue that there are elements of racial fear and paranoia among Northern Territory whitefellas, there has not developed the tension, violence and explicit conflict which characterises race relations in the far west of NSW.

Despite this, there are references in the two articles set in the Northern Territory to forms of oppressive governance, the topic of Morris' enquiry. Bauman comments that the new sites of governmental interventions form 'the bases of ongoing categorisation, and monitoring and surveillance'. Austin-Broos mentions the gaol or 'big house' near Alice Springs 'that people visit at weekends' in a context where we know from statistical evidence from all over Australia that gaols are the usual living quarters for significant numbers of (mostly male) Aboriginal people. Austin Broos' terminology of negotiation and agreement is thus not intended to paint a rosy picture. She recognises the conflict and constraint in much negotiation and criticises the denial of social being which entails a destructiveness which 'is often called racism.'

The idea of 'negotiations between traditions' highlights the cultural landscape within which intra- and inter-community relations develop. But the figures that underpin Austin-Broos's argument, as well as Bauman's critique of more specific negotiations, are those of rational people — albeit encompassed by differing traditions and logics — attempting to negotiate agreements. Negotiation implies the presence of two parties, each consisting of that legal lynchpin, the 'reasonable man'. The ideal of rationality is a weighty and valuable cornerstone of attempts to achieve a more just arrangement between the state and indigenous peoples and is necessary to our political and legal system itself. None-the-less, reason-

able persons are not the only figures present at the site of negotiations, especially those between culturally disparate groups. For both Morris and Lattas, the reasonable persons give way to passionate, imaginative creatures constructing grotesque social fantasies with a robust irrationality. Both authors draw on the psychoanalytic tradition in social science, where the irrational and the emotional are given significance in the analysis of social dynamics, to examine the peculiar logics of paranoia and racism which are evident among police and within Hansonism.

Fantasy

Morris's article also features a funeral, that of a man who died in police custody in Brewarrina and whose funeral was followed by a riot. He is exploring the engagement with alterity from the white side in an attempt to make sense of police actions and discourse about Aborigines. This analysis sheds light on the well-attested but puzzling phenomenon of intensely conflictual relations between Aborigines and police in the towns of western NSW (Beckett 1958; Cowlishaw 1994; Cunneen & Robb 1987). Morris describes the 'equivocation and anxiety that underpins the exercise of power' where the police have responded to the Aboriginal presence with a form of 'racial paranoia.' The extraordinary fears and fantasies expressed by police in their dealings with Aborigines are described in all their peculiar specificity, drawing on notions of the uncanny and on the significance of imaginings of the pre-existing political and social order.

Morris's paper, by implication, takes issue with the notion of negotiation between traditions. He does not appeal to 'incommensurability' but rather displaces the reasonable individual to reveal an angry, frightened one, whose motivation is self-preservation in a world constructed as hostile and dangerous. Morris is also exposing an institutional site where irrationality is rife, and he is documenting something of the historical awareness that pervades and energises the dire interracial conditions in western NSW.

Brewarrina is a world of contestation between disparate cultures where 'meaning is "haunted" by other meanings', there are multiple interpretations of social interaction, and there is clashing and grappling in 'asymmetrical relations of power'. Brewarrina is a marginal place and Aborigines inhabit marginal spaces in the Australian nation, yet they are a major and intensely contentious presence in the national imagination and self-perception. Morris explores the performative dynamics of race in the local arena, where the black population becomes the focus of rumour and gossip, fantasy and violence. Morris shows how 'the raw edges of these symbolic repertoires [of the socially peripheral] are played out'. The state's surveillance and intrusion 'render legible the spectres of the other ... to explain and to manage them'. In Brewarrina, Morris argues, Aborigines adhere 'to a muted, uncertain and inscrutable other way of life'. Their subordination itself seems to evoke in the police 'the anxiety of the impossibility of achieving previous forms of closure.'

Judy Lattas, who also takes up the desire to achieve previous forms of closure, occupies a fourth corner of this anthropological¹⁰ field. This element of national politics is a part of the context of Indigenous life which Aboriginal anthropology cannot afford to ignore. Hansonism is a movement centered on reasserting the legitimacy of a nostalgic tradition believed to be under threat. Its emergence shocked cosmopolitan whitefellas by making explicit phenomena which were familiar and everyday reality for rural and urban blackfellas, but were discretely censored from national discourse.¹¹ Rather than negotiate, this political practice would render other traditions illegitimate within Australia's borders. As the 'red-headed bushfire', Pauline Hanson is 'credited with the rekindling of life or life's spirit in the bush' which has been doused by 'a class of raceless, placeless cosmopolitan elites'. Lattas emphasises the cultural nature of Hanson's appeal where she is 'clearly marked as a woman, as a single mother, and as working class' and 'insists upon having her whiteness recognized and engaged with'. Thus Lattas spells out how it is that Hanson used the specific

markers of her own identity to affirm the values of a world which devalues women, mothers and the working class.

There is an ambiguity in Hanson's message, because, while asserting a totalitarian style of a unitary national identity, the 'sameness, in the name of equality, and of traditional values', she is objecting to a scenario which itself shows characteristics of the totalitarian state, a 'bureaucratized society administered invisibly but ubiquitously by raceless, placeless and faceless elites'.¹² Hanson's identity is asserted against this anonymous figure of authority. Lattas points out that, in her very person, Hanson appears to call difference back into play in the scene of public affairs; she is engaged in 'a bid to get race, place and face once more into the constitution of political life'. The difference promoted by Hanson is that which can be contained in the symbolic repertoire of an older Australian tradition. Elements identified by Lattas in the philosophy of One Nation are visible in Morris's account of police understanding of the threat posed by Aboriginal identity. He identifies a space where policing becomes essential to keep the boundary intact and difference in its place as other, and the boundary is replaced at certain moments 'by a bid to purge oneself of differences now seen to be parasitical upon a complete, organic and self-contained identity'. The refusal to recognise other traditions makes Hansonites non- or perhaps anti-negotiators.

The living fantasy of wholeness and completion of social being, which denotes any residue of otherness as a waste product rather than a necessary element of human existence, and which precludes any notion of negotiation or agreement between traditions, is not only present in members of the One Nation party, but also exists in Alice Springs, Katherine and Brewarrina, and within the law and the bureaucracy. But other fantasies and impulses are also ever-present, such as the pleasure and excitement in meeting radical alterity, as evinced by the young Toni Bauman, and as present in the foundations of anthropology, among travellers and readers of many kinds. While rarely able to assert their desires, such persons are also present on either side of the racial and cultural borderlands.

The politics of the texts

I am not concerned here with the politics of the authors or with the politics they critique, but with the place of these texts in anthropology's traditions, extending my earlier observation that ethnographic work for many years avoided the racial frontier as the site of field-work. Site here refers less to geographical position than to the siting of the work in a social geography.

Bauman deals with the white world but from a position firmly on the border, a self-conscious self-styled go-between or helper, experiencing the rift between traditions in her very person at the same time as she is a witness to the changing traditions of anthropology and the black and white worlds which yet hold the racial hierarchy firmly in place. Her attempt to think her way through this is most successful in its failure to resolve the problem, for there is no position outside the messy ambiguity that she describes. To me the desire for a 'solution' to these political dilemmas partakes of fantasy on grounds supplied by Bauman herself, who shows that any engagement in the processes of land claims is fraught with murky practices. There is, I would argue, no neutral objective position, though, by seeming to cut oneself off from any engagement with the motives and desires of other people and traditions and institutions which are always partly alien, a bogus autonomy can be mimed.

Austin-Broos critiques particular concepts which she sees as retrograde and critiques governments which refuse 'spaces of disclosure' to minority cultures, yet she also writes, from a position as anthropological analyst, that 'ethical judgments, like the rationalities that inform them, only make sense within a tradition'. We have illustrations here of traditions in the bureaucracy, in a political movement and in the police, each of which may fail to make sense outside their own domains. Morris shows the tradition of policing in western New South Wales to be based in a paranoid logic where it makes perfect sense to believe that

Aborigines observed on a remote road are engaged in stashing guns received from Colonel Gadaffi for a bicentennial uprising. For the Aborigines involved, the logic was one of assisting with a flat tyre whilst on a fishing trip.

The division of Australian society into indigenous and non-indigenous citizens is seldom named as a form of racial segmentation, hierarchy and violence. Social scientists avoid such stark racial terms because they seem to preclude proper consideration of the complex political, moral and sociological meanings associated with racial categories. There is a preference for notions of transformation and 'nuanced' readings of the past (cf. Thomas 1994) which can illuminate complex creative responses on the racial and cultural frontier, but which can also obscure the continuing violence which takes place there. As Stanner said of ethnographic work in 1964 'the writing is more judicial and less contentious than the facts warrant' (Reay 1964:vii). It may be that unmasking the 'public secret' of racial hierarchy in Australian society cannot take place without some form of 'reenchantment' (Taussig 1999). Such reenchantments may take the guise of recognising the mythic and emotional place of racial identity in the public imagination (Hage 1998) and perhaps replacing it with fantasies of identification with indigeneity (Hamilton 1990), or with promises of intimacy with the spiritual forces of the land (Lattas 1997; Marcus 1997) or perhaps with dreams of an Australia famed for its social justice and equality (Keating 2000).

The problem of representation in writing has preoccupied anthropologists for some time. All representations, being presentations crafted by an author for a purpose, including the crafting of the author's own presentation of self, are also and necessarily sites of exclusion and concealment (Taussig 1999:64–77). What is not shown is hidden; exposing one concealed thing may conceal another and secrets flourish behind the revealing prose. This is not so much a critique of anthropology, whose fundamental strength stems from the practice of close-grained examination of the complexities of interaction as they are experienced in particular circumstances. Rather, it is an exploration of the conditions of exposure, the pitfalls of truth telling in a sea of fabrication. Which bit, after all, represents the truth? One might ask, for instance, about the intention and the effect of Morris's revelations about the paranoia in the police force, the lies told by police and the truth about police fantasies, in a world where the dominant rhetoric about the bush is one of sympathy in an era of economic stringency. Is the value of this work in the exposure of events hitherto hidden in police intelligence reports and revealed in Royal Commission reports, or is it rather in forcing us to think beyond the demonising of police, and rational answers to racism? Exposure of this world of destructive violence inhabited and lived by both police and Aborigines in NSW is unlikely to lead to further research and analytic scrutiny, for reasons quite outside its intrinsic significance.

If representation must at once conceal in order to reveal, how is anthropology to proceed in the public domain? Perhaps we need to be less concerned with the misuse of concepts and rather ask what enchantment and myth-making we perform. What is the power and wonder of the world we attend and witness? The old romanticism of the noble savage and exotic mystery became embroiled in the colonial ideology, and its antidote was a rationalist explanation of indigenous social structure and belief in terms of some overarching western theoretical framework. The framing of most academic work today is pragmatic and prosaic. Perhaps, like Lattas and Morris, we need to show the power of mythic forms, as nightmare, as conflagration or as myth and fantasy which pervades the social domain, without expectation that our revelations will re-order what we witness.

ETHNOGRAPHIC TRADITIONS

Given the presence of reactionary forces yapping angrily at the heels of historians who are working in Australian archives to disclose and interpret previously muted aspects of our history (e.g. *Quadrant* Sept, Oct. Nov. 2000), it seems important that we remain aware of certain continuities and discontinuities with anthropology's intellectual history. We need to

recognise the orthodoxies and fashions which influence our scholarship, and also that our forebears are still, in some sense, with us. Thus it seems useful to consider how the concerns of the authors in this collection relate to anthropology's tradition, which is, after all, the site from which our authority stems. Our attempts to do justice to the monstrous steam-roller of modernity must include those who seemed to be driving the roller, those who were apparently rolled and also those who tried to remain on the sidelines and record what was happening. At the same time we must avoid taking part in the flattening of this history into a smooth surface of predictable pathos. The co-existence of desire and dispossession, negotiation and negation, exploitation and excitement, are still present, and in this sense the past is not different from the present. It seems to me that anthropology's sense of unique privilege and moral authority in relation to the knowledge of indigeneity is a condition which has presented pitfalls to the discipline since its inception.

I will explore three aspects of anthropology's Australian history, and identify the genesis of some aspects of anthropological practice. First, ethnographic work in Australia has always taken place in a climate dominated by hostility to Aboriginal interests, which ethnographers, as a minority with intimate access to Aboriginal people, tried to subvert. That condition is apparent in the limited penetration of ethnographic studies into the nation's consciousness and the public hostility directed towards anthropologists at specific historical moments. Second, the relationship between the intellectual project of anthropology and the governance of Aborigines has changed considerably in the last two decades and this relationship is arguably having more effect on Australian anthropology's practice today than ever before. Third there is a paradox in the shifting orthodoxy which has rejected notions of stable, discrete and bounded traditions in favour of emphasising how cultures are formed or constructed, just at a time when older traditions are being celebrated as a valuable resource and are being used, allegedly and apparently, to benefit Aborigines. These concerns relate to the papers in the collection in complex ways, but I will avoid interrupting the following discussion by pointing out the connections.

The ethnographic environment

Ethnographic texts on Australian Aborigines occupy a unique position within the domain of Australian cultural constructs. The first ethnographies contributed to an international intellectual arena where the history of humanity was being constructed. Even when the structural-functionalist paradigm emerged with Radcliffe-Brown's account of 'The Social Organisation of Australian Tribes' (Radcliffe-Brown 1930–1), the audience for systematic accounts of Aboriginal society was not primarily Australian. Material was collected in the service of general theories about variation in humanity's social systems. A tiny but passionate minority lobbied governments for Aboriginal human rights in the face of public indifference and/or hostility to the Aboriginal presence. Ethnographers saw themselves as having privileged access to a domain to which others were blind or antagonistic. The recording and explanation of the unique social forms of Aborigines — virtually universally relegated to the human past — were largely divorced from consideration of the interaction between white and black domains. Other disciplines largely ignored Aborigines until the 1970s.¹³

There was always considerable ambivalence about the public's ability to understand anthropology's account of indigenous peoples. The stereotypes that already inhabited the public imagination, as well as the shallowness of amateur interest in primitivity, created difficulties for ethnographic writing in the public sphere. The personal or amateur knowledge of Aborigines which had had a place in the early decades of the century, eventually lost legitimacy within the discipline. Given that white Australians' curiosity about Aborigines has always been loaded with complex emotions and ambivalence, it is not surprising that laying Aboriginal society open to the gaze of all who wish to know was recognised as dangerous.¹⁴ Hiatt's observation that 'It is becoming increasingly difficult to write or speak

honestly about Aboriginal issues in public' (quoted by Rosemary Neill *The Weekend Australian* 24–25/4/99) refers to a more pervasive and serious condition which has a long history and deserves serious attention. In some cases anthropologists' self-censorship, ostensibly for fear of the hostile gaze, may reflect their own fear or disapproval of what they cannot bear to speak of except with anxious excuses. Such motives might well be difficult to differentiate from protective, or political intentions.

The shallow penetration of ethnographic knowledge concerning Aboriginal society's classic traditions into the public consciousness of Australians, has become evident in recent years as distinguished members of Australia's educated elite reveal their unashamed ignorance of the most elementary facts about indigenous traditions, and unabashedly adopt outmoded evolutionary and primitivist theories (cf. Cowlshaw 1995; Markus 1997). Cultural practices have been misrepresented or ignored in favour of scandals about cannibalism, accusations of ancestral fabrications and crude depictions of religious beliefs. This combination of nescience and distortion raises questions about the nature of knowledge as a public resource and the limited value of correcting the errors of popular representations and stereotypes.

The point I am making is that there has always been a barrier between the practice of ethnography and the broader Australian society, both as audience and as object of study. What Stanner identified as a 'contempt among Europeans of all classes for all things Aboriginal' (Stanner 1979:93) did not arouse the ethnographic imagination until recently (Cowlshaw 1988, 1999), and seldom does so today. Despite the discipline's cultural relativism, the cultural domain of pioneers and pastoralists has not been conceptualised within the same framework as that applied to Aborigines. Until the 1970s, anthropology, in its institutional and professional guise, did not examine or mount any general critique, either of the exploitation of Aboriginal labour or of the state's intrusion into Aboriginal lives.¹⁵ Anthropologists who did protest about Aboriginal conditions could experience severe obstructions to their careers (Cowlshaw 1990; Gray 1994; Marcus 1989; Wise 1985). Stanner's contemplation of his own earlier passivity in the face of Aborigines' distress is revealing. He wondered how it was that in 1932 he and others did not question the hideous conditions under which Aborigines lived. He said: 'Apparently what lay before my eyes seemed to me a natural and inevitable part of the Australian scene one that could possibly be palliated, but not ever changed in any fundamental way' (1969:14). Perhaps it is only ever possible to recognise today's myopia tomorrow.

The methods and epistemology of the discipline meant that the actual relationships between whitefellas and blackfellas that were part of Australian culture, were left in limbo.¹⁶ Anthropology could not attend to many of the matters which lay before the eyes of field-workers, such as those spoken of by Bernard Smith when he said: 'at the heart of the Australian experience lay a sexual tragedy of enormous historical dimension in which love, mockery and hatred battled for the mastery' (1980:31). Only a few novelists such as Katherine Susannah Pritchard, Xavier Herbert and Randolph Stow tried to depict these events in terms of tragic drama. The fact that novelists can accommodate what is unrepresented in scholarship is a significant issue, one which was addressed by anthropologists in the 1980s with the influential volume, *Writing Cultures* (Clifford & Marcus 1986). More common ground is developing today between social science and other literature in the writing of the social dynamics of culture.¹⁷

The boundaries of the ethnographic enterprise and its distance from 'the public' were revealed in recent years in the hostility widely and vociferously expressed towards anthropology during the Coronation Hill and Hindmarsh Bridge controversies. Initially generated by the legal recognition of Aborigines' claims to land and the protection of sacred sites, the hostility generalised to anthropologists who supported the claims and thus showed themselves to be disloyal subjects to a unified national identity. Recognising Aboriginal dispossession and supporting some form of recompense is sufficient to arouse unease and antago-

nism in many Australians. There is another segment of the population which supports Aborigines' newly recognised rights and applauds the revelations of our shameful past. Anthropologists are thus caught between a public which is intent on not knowing Aborigines, and a public hungry for the kinds of knowledge which can feed either its prejudices or its righteous sense of the injustices of the past. In the public debates about indigenous issues, conducted largely by newspaper columnists, there are few who attempt to practise thorough, neutral, disinterested scholarship, whatever status such ideals have among academics.

It is not the first time that anthropologists have been perceived as dupes of cunning Aborigines, and as opposed to the national interest represented by rural enterprise. Ronald and Catherine Berndt recorded one kind of hostility towards anthropology in their book *End of an Era*, and the forty year delay in publication further exemplified it (Berndt & Berndt 1987:xvi). Their research into the Aboriginal labour supply in the mid 1940s for the Australian Investment Agency, commonly known as Vesteys, was implacably opposed by the company's local managers. Anthropologists were lumped with urban critics as one of the perennial problems the pastoralists saw themselves faced with. The local managers stated that what they wanted from anthropologists was instruction about how to inveigle more 'myalls' to 'come in' and work on the stations.

The response of the Berndts, and Elkin who had organised the research, evince a sense of their own unity with the nation and their own authority as critical participants within the state structures. They believed that 'the interests of pastoral firms and Aborigines should ideally coincide' (Berndt & Berndt 1987:15). The violent and inhumane treatment of blacks on the stations was not only immoral but also irrational. Vestey's own interest in having a 'lively, healthy and continuing labour force' would be best served by 'growth from within', and the company would eventually see this themselves (*ibid.*:32). While outraged by certain forms of coercion, they accepted others. The Berndts were swept up in new logics of benign discipline which were part of the shift from notions of direct control to a managerial ethos which aimed to align self-interest with organisational interest. Physical health had to be preserved, but it was in Aborigines' own interests to conform to the pastoralists' needs. The labour regime of hostile pastoralists violated the paternalistic endeavour. It was no longer acceptable to reduce the native to a tool or instrument of production, unadorned by any concern for uplifting their conditions. Naked exploitation was using up the workers and not mediating their entry into a proletarian future. Taussig identified the standard liberal humanist's response to the violent exploitation of native labour in Roger Casement's argument that the Indians of Columbia would work if paid properly.

There is in this confident assumption, that curious and fundamental optimism of liberal decency that, when confronted by the brutality of labour exploitation in the tropics, proposes higher wages as a substitute for coercion (Taussig 1987:54).

Like Casement, Elkin and the Berndts proposed better conditions of work as a substitute for cruelty. They aimed to help the station owners 'build up a contented aboriginal community' (Elkin quoted in R. & C. Berndt, 1987:32) which, it was implied, would accept the discipline of regular work, obedience to a boss and other specific conditions of station work. They were assumed to already know that they no longer owned the land and to accept that subordination was a logical extension of dispossession. Today Aboriginal self-awareness of their dispossession is more widely assumed and perhaps accepted, though their 'torment of powerlessness' (Stanner 1979:93) is increasingly recognised.

The Berndts' damning research report about conditions on the Vesteys' pastoral stations was intended to reveal in order to correct practices taken to be fundamentally unacceptable. Elkin appears to have been conscious of the dangers of revealing this particular public secret, for he initially distributed the report privately, believing it would have more influence on the pastoral company and 'government opinion' in this way.¹⁸

The tension in the space between the races is indicated in asides and comments in a number of important ethnographies in recent years (e.g. Jackson 1995).¹⁹ An example is Myers' observation that 'Pintupi political theory encounters limitations in comprehending white-Aboriginal relations', an implicit recognition of the fact that the realities of 'white-Aboriginal relations' (1986:284) are defined and determined by white actions and understandings. Pintupi and Arrernte ethnocentric judgements reverberate in distorted form back into the white world. In Alice Springs' pubs as well as in many government offices there exist very different explanations of Aborigines' ideas. The 'grudging willingness' (Myers 1986:46) of governments towards Aboriginal desires and requests seems a natural feature of this inter-racial cultural domain, other features of which are recorded in Bruce Chatwin's experiences of central Australian pubs. The most pervasive form of angry racist resentment throughout Australia is captured in the assertion that 'They Get Heaps' (Edmunds 1990), a discourse exposed and capitalised on by Pauline Hanson and her One Nation Party.²⁰ This aspect of Australian culture impinges everywhere on Aboriginal lives as Stanner observed: 'Every Aboriginal ... pricks himself every day on the thorny hedge of constraints, of law or practice, which we have built around his life' (in Reay 1964:ix), and in my view this thorny hedge warrants more serious ethnographic attention.

Research and governance

Anthropologists have had a long history of association with governments in the perceived interests of Aborigines. This is no simple moral or political tale of shameful complicity, heroic resistance or noble cooperation with the state's policies. As Field said recently 'anthropologists were and are implicated rather than complicit in the state's power' (Field, 1999:202). More interesting than the collusion, subversion or bad faith of some individuals is 'the manner in which particular concepts in anthropology and national discourse work together' (ibid.:196). This complex dialectical relationship has not been the subject of analysis in Australia (cf. Asad, 1973), and here I will merely suggest the contemporary significance of certain traditions and conditions.

At the risk of obscuring what continues to be shared between state and anthropological knowledges, we can ask the modest question, what value does anthropological knowledge have for the state? It is useful to separate three kinds of value: instrumental, conceptual and symbolic. These are, of course, interlinked and overlapping, as is clear from the work of Bauman and Austin-Broos. The instrumental aspect of the relationship during the period when anthropology was being established in this country is seldom acknowledged since the oppressive role of colonial governments has been recognised and vociferously condemned. Even mentioning the fact that anthropologists, as 'experts', played an active part in governing Aborigines in an earlier era is taken to be an act of cruel criticism. Such sensitivity means that it is difficult to explore the intellectual, social and political 'common sense' which gave such work its value and significance. We can glimpse that common sense in the advice offered by anthropologists to governments which can appear bizarre today.²¹ Ministers and Directors of Native Affairs were advised on such matters as Aborigines' susceptibility or otherwise to education, the reliability of native evidence in court and whether wives were really wives (Cowlshaw 1990). It is also relevant to the way the discipline developed in Australia to acknowledge that Baldwin Spencer and T.G.H. Strehlow were employed as Protectors of Aborigines and that in a later era, Elkin and Cleland offered expert advice to those they relied on for permission and assistance in conducting their expeditions to study Aborigines. Stanner worked as a member of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs (CAA) which was formed in 1967 and Hiatt advised on how the system of consultation between Aboriginal representatives and the Federal Government which had first been established in 1973, could be improved (Weaver 1983). Given that today there is acceptance and indeed approval of the employment of anthropologists, directly or indirectly, by the

state, it seems inconsistent to disapprove of our forebears on these grounds. On the other hand, there are those who admire the older traditions in anthropology yet disapprove of contemporary employment by the state because it sets an agenda 'totally external to the concerns of the discipline, even antagonistic to them' (Kapferer 2000:195).

The ancestry which the discipline prefers to acknowledge is that branch of specialised anthropology which held itself aloof from direct engagement with governments (e.g. Langham 1981). But the unacknowledged anthropological ancestors are readily visible in the journals, *The Science of Man*, *Mankind* and *Oceania*, where social anthropologists, along with physical anthropologists, prehistorians and psychologists, debated the nature, the future and the governance of Aborigines, positioning themselves routinely as advisers and instructors of government officials and often as critics of government policy (Cowlshaw 1990). The prestige and institutional support of anthropology in the early decades of the century, both in Papua New Guinea²² and Australia, stemmed from its perceived relevance to colonial rule, complemented by its scholarly concerns. With the revulsion against racism which emerged after the Second World War, there was, in Australia as elsewhere, a gradual drawing back from routine engagement with the state and an increasing privileging of specialised anthropological research. But anthropology's usefulness continued in the training of Northern Territory field officers at Sydney University in the 1950s and at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) (Long 1992). Significantly, these courses were intended for those who dealt directly with Aborigines who lived in the Northern Territory. Presumably senior bureaucrats were deemed not to require knowledge of Aborigines' religious beliefs, languages or social organisation in order to formulate policy and no specialised knowledge was offered to administrators in the regions that had been settled earlier.

However, they needed ideas and concepts. The ideas about human races and human history on which the policies of colonial governments rested were generated in the academy among anthropologists and other social scientists. They were apparent in evolutionary theories, in the way culture was conceived and in notions of gradualism. In the 1960s the new conceptions of governance through self determination and self management reflected new ideas which had come to prevail in the academy, ideas of cultural relativism, cultural autonomy and racial equality. Perhaps it is easier to see in hindsight 'the manner in which particular concepts in anthropology and national discourse work together' (Field 1999:196).

At the heart of the relationship between the discipline and the state is the symbolic value of anthropology. While anthropology's role in authorising the state's power over the bodies and the land of Aborigines can be seen in direct advice to governments, the moral claims for the discipline rested on its role in achieving and promoting the understanding of the cultural domain of Aborigines. But the very activity of the research implied that the knowledge of those being studied was of a lesser order than that of the scientists who studied them. Ethnographies represented the modernity of the colonial state and the power of the white knower in relation to those who are known. The nation was secured through 'our' experts studying 'our' Aborigines in 'our' interests. Perhaps current attacks on anthropologists and other scholars are due to a perception that their support for native title and heritage recognition puts them in breach of their duty of loyalty to the nation.

Silences are also significant. Anthropologists were never asked to advise on everyday meanings and practices which formed barriers to ordinary communication between white and black people. Nor were they expected to deal with everyday conflicts or the pain being generated by intrusive policies.²³ Anthropologists' interest in initiation ceremonies, marriage rules and relationship with land did not extend to analysing how Aborigines were responding to having male babies circumcised in hospitals, daughters put in dormitories, 'promise' marriages forbidden and access to country refused. On the other hand, the work of many anthropologists implicitly challenged the conventional view that dialogue with indigenous people would only be possible when individuals emerged from their primitive social condition. The state and the public were deaf and blind to such suggestions, and only

in the 1970s did there emerge a consideration of what place Aboriginal belief and practice might have in a modern society.

Everyday Aboriginal lives are constantly engaged with questions stemming from their positioning in a world of otherness, negotiating their traditions from (usually) lowly positions in the racial hierarchy. The host of bureaucrats and service providers, including police, who devise and administer the statutes and practices of the state, are also preoccupied with how to best manage their work of doing good among Aborigines. They may not articulate their cogitations in scholarly form, but they nonetheless deal with everyday problems in terms of concepts, categories and principles which scholars also grapple with. This arena would merit more analytic and ethnographic attention.

Paradigmatic paradoxes

There is a disturbing irony in the post-modern orthodoxy now entrenched in the social sciences which rejects past practices of objectivist recording of reified cultural forms. Having developed arguments that cultures are not static, that observations and representations are always positioned and subjective (produced by subjects) and that the legitimacy of identity and tradition does not depend on anchors in an autochthonous past, we find that anthropology is being valued for those very anchors and for materially or textually based certainties. The things we have rejected are coming back to bite us.

Anthropologists are said to be caught in what has been perceived as a double bind between on the one hand recording and interpreting what Aborigines said and meant, and, on the other, interpreting them to the world, especially in land claims. The latter is seen as advocacy and the ideology of science counterposes 'objectivity' against 'advocacy', as indeed does the legal system. Some senior anthropologists fear that their colleagues are ceding their scientific authority to their role as advocates. Maddock and Hiatt have each written valuable analytic accounts of the difficulties anthropologists are placed in as expert witnesses in land claims, both because of the complexity of what is being decided by the court and because anthropologists are in an ambiguous position which potentially threatens their intellectual integrity (Hiatt 1989; Hiatt 1996:186; Hiatt 1998; Maddock 1989:166). Maddock asks whether anthropology as a science will be advanced by the land claim process and, following Morphy and Morphy, he doubts it because 'the information is not being gathered in a neutral context' and emerging models are significantly influenced by 'ideological and pragmatic objectives' (Morphy and Morphy 1984, quoted in Maddock 1989:175).²⁴ Further, Maddock believes that 'distortion in the models is an outcome of the sympathy anthropologists have for Aborigines' (ibid.).²⁵ Hiatt has expressed concerns about a crisis in anthropology which he links to a postmodernist betrayal of science (Hiatt 1999). Hiatt and Maddock are articulating problems which need to be seriously addressed but here I will consider them only insofar as they are relevant to this collection, that is, to the changing purview of anthropology.

Firstly, these arguments are mounted in the context of questioning contemporary theoretical orthodoxies which, it is asserted, no longer sufficiently respect truth or truthfulness. I would argue that the newer certainties about uncertainty and the pleasures of ambiguity contain as many, but not more, intellectual pitfalls as did the authority of unambiguous knowledge asserted by the earlier positivist orthodoxy. Whether we resist or embrace new ideas, we all have to recognise and deal with the influences on social science of changing language, fashionable concepts and popular priorities.

Second, the concern that some claimants are misrepresenting matters of fact and that anthropologists are assisting them in their deception because of a higher duty to assist Aborigines, seems to oversimplify the issues of probity. There is a continuum between deliberate lies at one extreme and an unintentional colouring of evidence which might result from good intentions towards a claimant. There may indeed be liars among anthropologists, and

there is probably also misperception and misrepresentation, partisanship and personal interest, moral courage and cowardice, but the courts are accustomed to dealing with such matters. While expert witnesses are ideally neutral to the issue at hand, the court implicitly recognises that all knowledge is pervaded by interest. On the one hand it demands of witnesses that they do their best to put aside matters which might influence their judgement. On the other hand it tests their evidence. Lawyers subject witnesses to cross-examination, enhancing or undermining the force of the evidence in their client's interest. The adversary system of the courts faces up to, and even exaggerates contentious matters, not in order to find a truth acceptable to the parties, but rather to adjudicate between conflicting interests. They are in the habit of dealing with unreliable, inconsistent and biased witnesses, and we must accept that anthropologists may be any or all of these. However, no one would suggest that because an anthropologist like Ken Maddock gives evidence against a land claim his sympathy for those who call him as witness will triumph over his scientific principles. Further, the discipline has implicitly recognised major problems in representing indigenous people, nervously producing ethical guidelines and defences of its scholarly principles of accuracy and objectivity which need not be in conflict with representing or interpreting Aboriginal knowledge to the courts. The wider, national context in which these matters are being played out is also relevant here. Anthropologists have been reluctant to join a public debate on the issue because their statements can be used to feed a largely hostile public discourse as discussed above. The media avidly reported an alleged fabrication in relation to Hindmarsh, but cases where the court substantially rejected anthropological evidence produced to frustrate the Aboriginal claimants has not, to my knowledge, been reported.

Third, the concerns about probity, while real and worthy of attention, are, I would argue, dwarfed by a matter closer to our professional interests, that is, the problem of translation between vastly different cultural domains in an adversarial process which can be destructive of naively honest impulses. The perception that anthropological integrity is being compromised by an endemic conflict between a duty to Aborigines and to being an objective expert witness, summarised as a conflict between sympathy and science (Maddock 1989), does not address anthropologists' experiences of the shaping of evidence for the courts that is a normal, indeed a necessary, part of the land claims process as Bauman shows (e.g. Jacobs 1988; Merlan 1995; Povinelli 1998),²⁶ or with the fact that the courts are pervaded by concepts which are alien if not antithetical to Aboriginal society. The court hearings distort and even destroy some of what they intend to recognise and preserve (e.g. Povinelli 1993; Merlan 1998). Advising anthropologists to act 'without fear or favour' as Hiatt (1998) recommends does not assist those who are faced with the difficulties of portraying complex practices, let alone conveying the cultural incommensurability of beliefs and concepts. The question 'who is to be master' looms larger than 'what is the truth' in this era when lawyers, land courts and judges scrutinise, criticise and adjudicate Aborigines' claims. Also relevant is the mass of carefully reasoned research demonstrating the relationship between knowledge and the power to have it accepted as truth (e.g. Foucault 1980).

But the dilemmas and difficulties anthropologists face are part of more profound problems the nation state experiences when it tries to recognise indigenous rights and heritage. All anthropologists working in Aboriginal communities are in some way caught up in this process which has meant profound changes in the conditions under which such anthropology is practised. If we recognise that representing (in the sense of depicting and interpreting) alterity is always problematic, not only in the land claims processes, then the role of the legal system in being required to determine such matters merits further analysis. An effective way of understanding the increasingly important influences of the court processes on native title, on Aboriginal traditions, and indeed on anthropology, would be to expand on Bauman's work and conduct an anthropological analysis of the way the courts deal with indigenous knowledge. We may find that systematic practices and habits within the whole legal apparatus militate against a grasp of the truths of indigenous culture.

One difficulty in dealing with attacks on anthropologists' integrity may also be at the root of the concerns articulated by Maddock and Hiatt. There is indeed a pervasive and fundamental desire within the discipline to assist Aboriginal people to be understood in their own terms. The support for Aboriginal rights against the depredations of the colonisers and the clumsy and disruptive assimilative programs of the state is a political position so obvious and unexplored as to share certain attributes of the 'public secret' (Taussig 1999). It remains unexamined, for it depends first on anthropologists' special authority over knowledge of Aborigines and second on maintaining a critical distance from the state and other interested parties. Current conditions have given a boost to the former but undermined the latter. Many anthropologists are now prepared to assist the state in its stated objectives of recognising cultural heritage and native title and achieving racial equality, and to assist industries to deal properly and favourably with Aboriginal communities.²⁷ Their manifold difficulties are brilliantly depicted in Bauman's essay and are exemplified where anthropologists become involved in such questions as the competing rights of 'immigrant stock' and 'those with ancient ancestral affiliations' (Sutton 1999:33).

Finally, we might all agree that accuracy is a desirable attainment which anthropologists are duty bound to present to the public. But we constantly meet representations which, as anthropologists, we see as wildly inaccurate, but which are deployed with the power of truth, as Morris and Lattas show in this volume. Such discourses, sometimes founded on a candid hostility to Aboriginal interests and sometimes on goodwill or naivete, construct a dichotomous social universe of us/other. What might be the point of presenting the Han-sonites, the Brewarrina police or indeed the courts with rational arguments concerning their falsely reified notion of culture, or a critique of their notions of fixity and fabrication? Further, the world does not stand still while we decide and agree how to best or most accurately represent Aboriginality. While each of us may attempt to promote the 'truth' of one depiction of the world against those we believe to be untrue, inaccurate, hostile or partial, these papers show that there is a living relationship between intellectual analysis and popular or public knowledge which circulates as truth and is the basis of action in the public, political domain. Perhaps the most valuable agreement among anthropologists concerns the virtue of robust and ongoing disagreement and argumentation about the nature of the world and how it is best interpreted in particular conditions.

NOTES

1. Stanner's ironic reflection twenty years after his first field-work that 'I had to see the unspotted savage' (1979:80) reminds us how little and how much has changed — anthropologists today would not admit to such a desire and would eschew a language which itself seems immoral.
2. This agenda is evident in what is sometimes called 'traditionalism', a perspective which privileges the classical Aboriginal tradition anchored in a pre-colonial past, as the authentic form of Aboriginality and which assumes that this domain is anthropology's true concern. Such traditionalism re-emerges in many partial, albeit abject and excused, forms. The more general concept of essentialism has been used to attack and demonise any use of specific cultural traits to identify an ethnic or racial identity. For a detailed critique of such arguments see Lattas (1993).
3. In an address to the annual conference of the Australian Anthropological Society in 2000, Peter Sutton questioned the adequacy of anthropologist's notions of culture in the face of the distress evident in many Aboriginal societies today. I believe that the revival and expansion of this analytic tradition within Australian anthropology would address his concerns.
4. The work of Jeremy Beckett and a few others in the late 1950s (Barwick, Bell, Calley, Reay) was an exception to the main concerns of the discipline, both because it was conducted in south-eastern Australia and because it was concerned directly with the significance of state intrusion in the consciousness and structures of Aboriginal communities. It is puzzling that this did not generate a continuing body of ethnographic research in south east Australia, besides that of Morris (1989). The intellectual forces at work during my student years in the 1970s were not conducive to pursuing such research, and I initially headed for the north like so many others.
5. These were the Double Edged trilogy of conferences held in late 1999 at the Universities of Newcastle, Sydney and the University of Technology, Sydney. Many of the papers from those conferences were already promised or will appear elsewhere. Austin-Broos's paper was specifically written for the Sydney chapter of

- the Double Edged conference which called for papers on 'Ethics of incorporation: Imagining the Australian Cultural Contract'
6. Morris is an anthropologist committed to close-grained ethnographic work, and it was through a close engagement with a certain court case in Bathurst that he became interested in policing in the far west.
 7. In discussing the structural determinants of the way these issues are conceived, Friedman points out that 'Culture is supremely negotiable for professional culture experts, but for those whose identity depends upon a particular configuration this is not the case. Identity is not negotiable. Otherwise it has no existence' (1994:140).
 8. In comparable conditions in California an anthropologist trying to represent 'unacknowledged tribes' sees the acknowledgement process as 'unforgiving and Byzantine', and 'based on some of the most egregious and rigid essentialist discourse anthropology has ever produced' (Field 1999:195).
 9. In both Brewarrina and Hermannsburg, Aborigines were confined on missions under an alien management. In Brewarrina this was a government run 'mission' until the 1970s with untrained managers appointed by a repressive and unpredictable Welfare Board. Hermannsburg was also a mission, but is better known to anthropologists because the dedicated Lutherans who ran it included Carl Strehlow whose son was T. G. H. Strehlow.
 10. Lattas is a philosopher, but I am recruiting her article to the service of Aboriginal anthropology to which her deeply cultural analysis is relevant.
 11. I say censored as the discourse was not unknown or completely absent from newspaper accounts, but references to it attributed it to an embarrassing and unrepresentative minority — a case of bad-apple analysis preserving the sanctity of multicultural Australia.
 12. Lattas asks whether Hanson represents a form of totalitarianism, not in order to demonise the movement but to extend our thinking about society, politics, feminism, everything. She seeks the 'cultural logic of totalitarianism' in order to see where it comes from in the 'cultural shifts and dilemmas in modernity' which see the emergence of associated forms of fascism and racism.
 13. This began to be reversed during the 1960s by, for instance Fay Gale in Adelaide and the Academy of the Social Sciences which instigated Rowley's studies (Gale 1972; Rowley 1970; 1972a; 1972b).
 14. This awareness has been expressed differently over the years. Anthropology texts once included passages in Latin, apparently to deter the public's avid interest in sexual practices and cannibalism. In the 1970s protests arose about the inclusion of material from Meggitt's ethnography in a school syllabus. Today we need to be wary of the reactionary forces which attack scholars who support Aboriginal rights. Perhaps the dull nature of scientised ethnographies has, among other things, served to dissuade the public from reading what they might malevolently misunderstand.
 15. It seems to have been assumed that, rather than exemplifying a significant aspect of Australian culture, pastoralists who failed in the civilising mission were an anomaly, in error, an unfortunate ignorant or immoral minority within the realm of civilisation.
 16. While ethnographers since 1970 have taken an interest in Aboriginal responses to the white presence it was previously common practice for ethnographers to avoid documenting any 'contamination' of the classic tradition and references to 'European' artifacts and practices seem to have been commonly expunged. I recall that a senior anthropologist spoke of Ronald Berndt's interest in card games in Arnhem Land with amused contempt in the 1970s.
 17. Examples of literary works with considerable analytic insights are Mudrooroo's *Dr. Worredy's recipe for enduring the end of the world* and Kim Scott's *Benang*. Both novels explore conceptual arenas of concern to contemporary anthropologists with intellectual sophistication and creativity. Lukeshenko's *Hard Yards* is a more popular insightful novel.
 18. It appears the Berndts were not quite convinced of this; they offered a rewritten version in 1977 but, encouraged by Elkin, they withdrew it from publication once more (Berndt & Berndt 1987:xvi). Elkin's ghost may have been active in the anthropology department of Sydney University in 1974. I came across a copy of the Berndts' report, but after I spoke of it, wondering why it had not been made public, the report disappeared from the shelf.
 19. Indeed Jackson attempts in his book to 'get across to such people [those who express old stereotypes about Aborigines] the understanding which Walpiri people had imparted to him', but the nature and source of white mis/understanding is not analysed (Jackson 1995:116).
 20. A member of that party recently likened Hanson's exposure of the political correctness surrounding Aboriginal issues to the lancing of the boil of resentment which had enabled healing to take place and reconciliation to proceed (25.5.00 on SBS Insight program with Vivian Schenker).
 21. Some early advice from Elkin recommended helping Aborigines grasp the fundamental facts about sexual life in order to put an end to what he called 'wife lending' (Elkin 1934:7), and proposed that education was necessary to show Aborigines that particular areas of land are **not** crucial to their well-being (ibid.). Cleland, a physical anthropologist who was Chairman of the Board for Anthropological Research, offered copious advice on the dangers associated with 'contact' such as 'a ten mile barrier and the creation of a reserve into which only prospectors who were 'men of repute who would undertake not to associate with native women' would be allowed (F1 42/435 6th Dec. 1943).
 22. The relationship between anthropology and native administration was less systematic in the Northern Territory than it was in Papua New Guinea (Lattas 1996), although it is also the case that many PNG administrators who'd been trained alongside anthropologists later became civil servants in the NT.

23. Curiously, Maddock (Quadrant November 2000) takes the lack of attention to the removal of children as evidence that it seldom occurred, and not as an indication of anthropological research priorities. He focusses on the inappropriateness of the term genocide to describe government policies since the 1950s but does not address the question of the interests, priorities and limitations of earlier anthropology.
24. I would argue that Maddock's article is itself a contribution to anthropological theorising, as is the body of work reflecting on the law as social practice which is beginning to emerge out of the recognition of native title, land claims and indigenous heritage.
25. The complexity and flexibility of these 'models' is well attested, as is the interpretive role of anthropologists and indeed of the Aboriginal claimants. Given also that indigenous authority is constantly negotiated, could 'the' correct model ever be agreed to?
26. Hiatt's argument appears at times to assume a necessary contradiction between 'the truth' and 'partisan objectives'. Is putting the assertions of one's informants in a form that will convince the court an example of being 'partisan', if one believes one's informants to be sincere?
27. The new economic climate in which mining companies and Aborigines engage in joint ventures are in accord with Noel Pearson's demands that Aborigines be allowed entry into the real economy (Pearson 2000). No longer are mining companies the natural enemy of indigenous interests, and some anthropologists have taken up work with mining companies.

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