



An alternative to existing Australian research and teaching models : the Japanangka teaching and research paradigm ; an Australian Aboriginal model

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**AN ALTERNATIVE TO EXISTING
AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH AND TEACHING
MODELS — THE JAPANANGKA
TEACHING AND RESEARCH PARADIGM –
AN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL MODEL**

A Research Doctoral Thesis written by

Japanangka Errol West

2000

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I thank the many traditional elders who were my mentors through the thirty years of learning to operate my Japanangka, for refining those operations and for teaching me how to teach it to others, so each may know their own Japanangka — Japanangka Rex Granites: to you all my energies and love.

The author struggles with the concept of actually naming those who so rightly deserve to be named individually for two reasons. Some have joined their ancestors and of others, there are just too many to name. To treat honourably in this matter I have decided to separate the two groups, though I know I will omit some.

I first acknowledge the motivation to write, and this came from two sources. The first is the obligation I have to all my beautiful children. There are twelve living and some in the spiritual world and to them I dedicate this thesis with the expectation that their lives overall will be richer than mine.

In the midst of all those who stimulated me to write is the shining light of my adult life — the one whose love requites the never-ending narcissism of the male ego, my wife Karan Rae ‘The Wiradjuri woman who is both wurdartji and medium of good’.

As well as these members of my family there are other family members — my beloved Phil Stewart, ‘My brother whom I love dearly’ and my soul sister, mentor and acumen-honing ‘Tanzania wurdartji’ Leonora Spry, without whom I would probably have decided that the information contained herein is far too precious to ‘chuck as chips to seagulls’. I thank my supervisor Dr Stewart Hase who for a whitefella did OK! Stewart simply let me do it and provided the necessary level of gentle pastoral care, along with lashings of appreciation and encouragement in the perfect operations of his Japanangka.

To all those Aborigines, women and men who inspired me by their complete though

idiosyncratic dedication to ‘change for the people’, who now reside with our spiritual ancestors and along with them protect us for the time of our joining them. To those who at forty years of age dropped dead from heart attacks or suffered broken lives and immense pain because of the oppression of the invader’s torrential social calumny that resulted in the near destruction of any middle-aged cohort in Aboriginal Australia.

To my friend Mr John Parr and his family: I miss you my friend.

To close I also acknowledge the beautiful leaders, some of whom I never met, just benefited from their work — please bestow upon this work your approval.

DECLARATION

I certify that this dissertation contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institute, college or university. And that to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation.

ERROL GEORGE WEST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	9
PROEM	11
Introduction: Some reasons for an alternative approach	12
The Political Dimension	15
A context for an alternative paradigm	18
One Person's story	19
Finding a parallel Western concept to an Aboriginal Teaching & Research Paradigm — a justification?	40
Is it your knowledge or are you it?	41
Indigenous First Knowledge – traditional patterns and operations in the twenty-first century	44
Consideration of the concept of the personification of knowledge In Aboriginal societies	46
Inherited Rights to Knowledge	48
Conferred status of knowing	51
Extending the concept beyond the bush	51
A reflection on the historical European reaction to Aborigines cultural values pertaining to knowledge	53
Aspects of inquiry by non-Indigenous people and the effects of their behaviour	54
A simple example of the translation of Indigenous written and oral history to written history using a basic Western taxonomy	55
Exploring the concepts of Indigenous ownership of knowledge as opposed to Western ownership – in a Western paradigm	58
An alternative conceptualisation of the right to know and to represent	60
Demonstrating the need for a set of benchmark paradigms – facing political ascription through the “anonymity” of public policy	68
Specific issues emerging from the Higher Education Council's <i>Enquiry Diversity and Excellence</i> discussion paper	83
The definitions of ‘other’ via a political shroud of invisibility	86

To Aboriginalise or to de-Aboriginalise – is that a question?	94
Focusing in on the under-classes	96
Politics and integrity – an oxymoron? Or the re-christening of oppression	106
Any conclusions?	107
Describing the Walpri written text of the Japanangka Teaching & Research Paradigm	108
Introducing the Japanangka Teaching & Research Paradigm	110
The Eight core sub-paradigms or dimensions of the Japanangka Teaching & Research Paradigm	112
Cultural Dimension	113
Spiritual Dimension	114
Secular Dimension	115
Intellectual Dimension	115
Political Dimension	116
Practical Dimension	118
Personal Dimension	119
Public Dimension	119
A discussion of a framework in the ‘nature’ of Western methodology within which non-Indigenous researchers may operate	121
A set of operating frameworks for researchers	121
Historical background	123
Research Ethics Proforma	136
Description of Project	137
Consultation with the Communities	138
Community participation	138
Ownership of the Research & Publication of Materials	139
Issues of Indigeneity in developing curriculum paradigms	141
Seeking an appreciation of contemporary Indigeneity	142
The Kari-Oca Declaration & Indigenous People’s Charter	143
- Right of Self Determination	144
- Right of Language	145
-. Right of Education	145

- Self-Determination	146
- Language	148
- Peology	150
Responsibilities of non-Indigenous Peoples	151
Responsibility of non-Indigenous Peoples to the Charter	151
Yet a different appeal to be ‘heard’	152
Fundamental issues	153
Making education useful and safer for Aboriginal people in a human school environment	157
A brief historical overview may assist in making the real issues clear	159
What are the compound effects of these policies in an individual Aborigines life?	160
Evolving sanity in the midst of insanity – of being lost in the diaspora	169
Grieving or coming to grief – which is it?	173
Is there a tunnel at the end of the ‘light’?	175
Education / enculturation / assimilation – synonyms?	176
Saint or Santa – which?	178
What a difference a paradigm makes	179
Observing the political face of Australia from inside	180
Finding the right lenses – competitive or shared views	181
All is well – or is the school hell?	189
A snapshot reflection of some pre-service trainees’ views & behaviours	192
A context for the questions of need – the race to Illusion	195
Does identity play a role in the overall debate?	196
How do we recognise racism? How is it manifest?	200
Stereotypes	200
Prejudice	200
Ethnocentrism	201
Discrimination	201
Where are we at today?	201
A profile discourse on racism that is four-dimensional	202
A discussion on the perpetuation of Australian’s political & social & economic caste system for Australian Aborigines	217

Attitudes in the schooling system	225
Difference in home socialisation	228
Autonomy in the classroom	230
Affiliation in the classroom	237
Communication difficulties	240
Micro-political processes in the classroom	241
Conclusions	245
PART TWO – Speaking towards an Aboriginal Philosophy	251
PART THREE – What is the journey story?	259
PART FOUR – Establishing a network of participating Universities	278
PART FIVE – Proposal to establish an Australian Indigenous University College of Northern Australia	295
Reconciliation – from what to what & why?	304
The JAPANANGKA Model	313

AN ALTERNATIVE AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AND TEACHING PROTOTYPE: THE JAPANANGKA TEACHING AND RESEARCH PARADIGM

ABSTRACT

I decided to write this thesis many years ago and in the process of ‘becoming’ a Palawa¹ man I finally understood the global agenda between black and white Australians and the direct actions required to attain a traditional form of Aboriginal democracy. I share in this understanding in this thesis. Mind you I share with trepidation because the options are very existential to the prevailing discourse. However a doctoral thesis will add to the body of knowledge not simply to confirm existing theoretical discourse or to leave this discourse un-challenged. Therefore this thesis is about the critical mass of cultural variables pertaining to teaching of Australian Indigenous peoples and the conduct of meaningful research. Its primary intent is to offer an alternative to the inappropriate methodologies that currently apply in the generic areas of pedagogy and research (in their broadest sense). In my opinion at present both these areas are pathologically dominated by Western thought. The idea of change and alternative paradigms is addressed in the introduction and this thesis is not intended to achieve anything more than a hearing of these options. This is why the discourse of this knowledge terrain in this thesis is so diverse and so demanding of the reader. The core notion of this discourse is the *Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm*.

The Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm has as its core the articulation of eight dimensions or sub-paradigms. These are the quality of life dimensions: Cultural, Spiritual, Secular, and the other five: Intellectual, Political, Practical, Personal and

¹ Palawa is the generic term Tasmanian Aborigines use for self-identification much the same as Koori is used in NSW or Victoria

Public dimensions. These eight constitute the sum of human experience relevant to the daily lives of Aborigines and as such are key categories to the unravelling of the seemingly imponderable mystery of “learning journey paths” so critical to the success of our students in formal Western education activities.

Proem

A beginning word to the reader; this thesis is not presented in any of the usual conventional, dominant formats. To retain the integrity of the knowledge that is offered, including the evidentiary contexts, this thesis is constructed in an Indigenous convention: that of a narrative approach, as is pointed out below. I am, in essence, conducting a conversation with you, the reader, and will, therefore, explore a number of apparently tangential concepts and ideas. To pre-empt a statement on this matter in the thesis, the core hypothesis; the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm is the methodology in use in the presentation of some Australian Aboriginal knowledge and perceptions. After all, how else could such conceptual frameworks, histories and the sum of my life experience (to date) be expounded in a Western convention such as a written thesis?

A word on the story that essentially begins the journey. The story is oral history, presented in a very clumsy written genre and, by definition, loses much in the telling. The story concludes the thesis at its beginning and it is important that it must, for it is the Japanangka in operation.

The approach taken in the presentation of this body of knowledge is, from an Aboriginal perspective at least, confined to a narrative style and like all Indigenous Law requires deep reflection on the part of the hearer (reader).

Introduction — Some reasons for an alternative approach

The following work is explained from the point of view of a number of operating paradigms rather fully in the first set of ‘signposts’ offered, including this one. To facilitate the transferring of concepts across cultural terrain that is so often invisible to the eye of non-Indigenous peoples, scholars in particular, I begin this opening dialogue with reference to Edward De Bono²:

In order to see a new idea there is a need to create it first in the brain as a possibility, a speculation, a hypothesis or a construct.

In all creative thinking ‘concepts’ play a key role. There is a need to design concepts; there is a need to generate alternative concepts. There are those who believe that the analysis of data will produce new ideas. This is extremely unlikely, since the brain can only see what it is prepared to see. The existing brain patterns (and their catchment area) will ensure that the data are seen from the terms of existing ideas. In order to see a new idea there is a need to create it first in the brain as a possibility, a speculation, a hypothesis or a construct. This needs creativity, design and imagination.

Having established a basis for the progression from ‘new idea’, De Bono then connects the initial with a systematic pathway ‘new idea’ from speculation to a ‘construct’ requiring the advent of creativity and design. Concluding in this extract with the concept of “imagination” then continues under a separate though immutably related theme of:

You may discover the truth but you need to design value

... we forget how powerful perception can be. ... people are upset because they are vague and intangible. How do you know you have the right concept? Then there are several levels of concepts: from very broad to the more specific to the specific — what level should you be at?

Once you have identified the concept you can modify it, improve it or change it. If you only have a vague idea of the concept you cannot do anything with the 'vague idea'. So it helps to verbalise or spell out the concept.³

De Bono then links the need to create a concept and the selling of its possibility or probability, in the absence of any concrete opposition, and moves quickly to, for me, the most salient points of designing value and articulating benefits.

This process may seem a strange manner in which to begin a thesis, particularly in the area of 'education sociology'. In my view however, it is essential that the following discourse and the seemingly intangible nature of the philosophic offerings within this thesis discusses the purpose and nature of the history that begat this work. To this end, some 'landscapes' need to be considered. The most pertinent is that this entire work is constructed in a re-fashioned, though corresponding, set of multicultural Indigenous paradigms, as new or different 'landscapes', that best demonstrate the essence of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm.

This paradigm is 'new' because it has not been articulated into a Western written text before. While the Japanangka is comprehensive, in context, in this thesis the initial concept of the Japanangka is not 'the Aboriginal' definitive process. What the Japanangka does for many Australian Indigenous peoples, is provide a sociological, cultural and philosophical scaffold. And this scaffold thereby allows for the translation of the sum of our human experiences, scribed in texts written, though not contained, in the verbal literature or within the traditional written chronicles, often wrongly referred to as 'Aboriginal Art'. *An individual person's 'Japanangka' is inculcated into each of us from conception. ?*

This thesis is an adventure, a conversation and an alternative option to the existing teaching and research paradigms. During the 'journey' through this document, I expect picturesque points of conjunction regarding the most minimalist strata of Aboriginal education to emerge, and enlighten the reader towards their own

² De Bono, Edward. *New Thinking for the New Millennium* Penguin Books, Ltd, London 2000, p. 76

³ *Ibid*, chap 8.

‘Japanangka’ and enlightenment regarding the traditional owners of this continent.

This thesis is, in fact, simply one chapter dotted with signposts presented as sub-headings in bold type, and as such it is a story that weaves in and out of Western logic, in terms of formularisation of a presentation of a doctoral dissertation. For too many decades, Australian Aborigines have sought the opportunity to present it our way and this is my version of our way. I trust the reader will ‘hear’ and ‘see’ the importance of this unconventional approach, for that is what the Japanangka Paradigm is. Overall, this journey is best summarised as an exercise in cognitive heuristics, allowing for the inclusion of some Western paradigm operations.

The Japanangka Paradigm demonstrates the logistics and rationale of written conversation; it shifts in orientation, as a speaker would when offering a dialogue that encompasses an Aboriginal story. Some sections require the reader to make a quantum leap from one issue to another and then to another. These leaps are not separated by any unrelated or dissonant contexts; they are in fact deeply related in the sense of the sum of our human experiences. This thesis is in fact almost ‘a day in the life of’ many Aborigines, given the complex agendas and narrow pathways we tread to have our voices heard.

Accept what follows as a precarious exposé of my journey to self and to contemporary traditional culture. Precarious, because for many Indigenous Australian people our cultural laws dictate that knowledge should only be shared with the most worthy individuals. This knowledge, however, is being offered in the dangerous space of the Western public estate, in which Australian academia is the arbiter, and its professorial aristocracy, including those who constitute the committees, supervisors and examiners, are the judges.

Initially there was a strong reluctance to put pen to paper on matters that had been left largely ignored by non-Indigenous ‘scholars’, regarding the deep psychology of Australian Aborigines. This reluctance stems from many years of observing the nature of the profound ignorance, hostility and resentment of white Australia towards Australian Aboriginal cultural paradigms, ultimately culminating in what is best

described as ‘crass stupidity’. This stupidity manifests itself in innumerable ways and in many forums, where each manifestation vies for the position of being the best advocate of an amusing, though inhuman, phenomenon. The phenomenon is choosing a partition in the unnatural dissembling of Australia's first, last and only direct human product, Aborigines: the absurd dichotomous presentation of us, as a group, by you, as a group.

The most amazing aspect of this scenario is best placed directly in the foreground of this thesis. For this thesis is not the ordinary qualitative versus quantitative, statistical, standard methodology, that deals with matters in a neat scientific set of processes, which most often produces mere regurgitations of previous ‘well-grounded theory’ (is this an oxymoron?). This thesis is a new approach to research, using a distinctive Aboriginal paradigm, where spirituality, secularism, real and surreal cultural, public, personal, intellectual and perhaps the most enduring and least endearing of the eight dimensions, in the context of the many forums mentioned above.

The political dimension.

Authorities, black and white alike, abound in what I consider plague proportions when it comes to the ‘intellectual peacock display’ of knowledge about us as ‘the’ less than eminent ‘other’. Have we not, on many occasions, seen ourselves made eminent in the glory of this or that academic's most recent publication? Have we not seen the eminent words of ‘the international expert’ on native title, health, or other legal and educational issues, to name a few venues of brokerage of our knowledge, by tenants and trespassers who refuse to pay the rent to silence our voice?

A simple example of confrontations mentioned above

During the process of coming to grips with the best process I could divine to present the following data, I had many choices and many offers of supervisors, critical readers and even some offers to act as examiners. All these I refused, making my own choices.

I would like to discuss these matters now, and then peacefully settle into sharing what follows. For some forty years, I have pondered my 'place' in my cultural complexities, in a maze of real, and often surreal, political experiences. I have shared the winning and the losing with a great many eminent Aboriginal people, who will remain largely unknown to the majority. These people, who have not sold out, are still safe in the 'Vegemite valleys' dotted around this beautiful continent, which we call Mother. I observe a cold and continuing resentment, towards the 'coconuts' and the 'do-gooders' alike. Their dissembling gait makes them well-known to those who can see.

I have, though, departed from the existing 'best practice methodology' process. One of Southern Cross University's Postgraduate Program Supervisors strongly urged me to investigate what the Maori and the Canadian Aborigines had done, 'just to get me focused'. In addition, I was urged to read widely the works of non-Indigenous scholars, who are 'experts in the field'. Finally, I was told that this was 'good advice' because one such 'expert' had supervised this individual's doctoral thesis. A lower recommendation I could not have been given! However, I do not wish to acknowledge any authority regarding the direct assault on the assumed 'mass dissonance' that Aboriginal people are supposedly locked into, that seemingly make 'us' completely non-productive members of the 'others' society'.

"What I do wish to acknowledge, is the life-giving nature of The Mother Earth and our Grandparents, the luminaries that light the day and night. Those beautiful Orbs that have cast warmth and light upon us since the Essence. I also acknowledge those Aboriginal men and women who maintain the Law that tests us against the Question."

The above statement is derived from the operation of my Indigenous Japanangka – my true self, my secret self that nurtures my culture and protects me. The above statement is indeed *'an article of faith.'*

What follows is a peek at the reality that must finally emerge over the next decade or two, as others either build on this work, or refute this work and offer more viable

paradigms. Whatever the outcomes, the following is a beginning that must never become a treatise that is left to stagnate. Those Aborigines who follow are charged with the following: do not deny the articulation of the cultural truths we know and the processes we require to succeed.

Remember, just as no two blades of grass are identical in the growing, neither are we, nor should we be, all the same. We must only remain true to our question, our truths and our Law. To assist us to begin building our intuitive response to this discourse I refer to a respected non-Indigenous author, Hugh Mackay, who wrote:

We are in danger of evolving into a culture of Information: a culture where information is treated as if it's a valuable commodity of itself, whether it is relevant to us or not, and whether or not we have the time or the inclination — or the need — to interpret it.

The longer we sit in front of that TV set or that computer monitor, the more we find ourselves justifying our behaviour; information must be good for us, so the more, the wiser we will inevitably become. The American media commentator George Gilder raised some doubts about that cosy line of thinking when he echoed and embellished the famous lines of T S Eliot:

“Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information? Where is the information we have lost in data?”

Some recent writers about information technology have tried to turn all this around and suggest that there is an inexorable progress from data to information, from information to knowledge, and from knowledge to wisdom. Perhaps there is, but there's another possibility. Under the influence of the information revolution, we are being so overloaded with information that our journey towards wisdom and maturity may actually be slowed by our dalliances with data.

A Context for an Alternative Paradigm

The importance of opening this discourse differently from the usual sterile, Western,

literary paradigm, by shifting to a form of Aboriginal, culturally sound dialogue between the author and the reader, is to challenge the existing ‘universal paradigms of conceptual and literary order’ that prevail. This work, as already stated, is both a ‘story’ and a ‘real life’ experience of an Aboriginal person, who is able to reasonably articulate his own Japanangka. It is offered to assist the reader to understand the implications of the Japanangka Research and Teaching Paradigm's eight dimensions, and because of a strong sense of Australian Indigenous oral history.

There is no fantasy or fiction contained within the following oral history case study. To further assist the reader, the details of the case study subjects are as follows. The primary storyteller is a late middle-aged male, who spent his formative years living on a government mission, on Cape Barren Island. He went to segregated primary schools and never formally completed education above grade six in the government schooling system, and was never enrolled into secondary schooling, either systemic or non-systemic. Since those days, he has successfully completed a Diploma in Primary Teaching, converted a Bachelor of Education to a Master's degree (by research) and is currently a doctoral candidate, which is how I finally met him. He is on his journey to a satisfactory conclusion on specific instructions from his Elders, to attain an education equal to the best a white man can achieve and to earn it; to take no gifts along the way. That is important to this individual, no honorary, below-standard titles, awards or gifts, for the sake of his peoples.

Introductions are not required between the reader and the personalities involved in the following oral history case study, simply because there are only two ‘roles’ that play out the main characters. All are one person, though many. To properly understand the other character requires the reader to develop a serious conceptual grasp of the Japanangka. However, do not read the Japanangka first. Read this man's story and perhaps, because of the very unscientific, analytical process required, the reader may identify the critical elements of the Japanangka *INTUITIVELY*. For if you don't, you will be unable to intuitively register the other character, as a unique Indigenous-based thesis, focusing on sociological issues in education, research and life. Then this thesis may prove to be of little use to future and present pedagogues. The following oral history is the experience of one person only and while many may share similar

experiences, the following is unique and must not be considered a generic example.

One person's story

The older woman, during her testimony, stated that 'life is like the h'ocean, an' we are like little boats on the h'ocean an' the h'ocean is filled with rocks an' we, as little boats, 'it those rocks from time to time and these rocks make 'oles on the bottom of h'our boats'. She then said 'But I thank the lord that the 'oles in me as a boat, that allowed sin to seep into me, that 'e plugged my 'ole 'n' saved my soul'. At this point, there was a tumultuous uproar of applause from the congregation, in celebration of the old lady's soul. Everyone committed to 'the lord Jesus' in the room, continued their joyous reaction with clapping and 'alleluia-in'. All in the room, except Uncle Georgie, for he had 'eard it all afore and knew the tricks and dangers of this 'new tribalism'.

In his day a young man or woman experienced a series of intellectual, spiritual, political and Mother-Earth shifts, before they could 'proclaim' anything about themselves at all, let alone speak with such gusto about a foreign god, or gods, that bore no relationship to the incremental shifts from childhood to maturity. After all, in those days there was no sin, there was therefore no forgiveness; there was only Law. Georgie thought, 'Ah, only Law, what a time that was; none of this iconistic rubbish, bowing to people or statues or having edifices where you can only offer praise to the "all powerful". It was "all powerful" was the place where I stood,' thought Georgie, 'not because I stood there, but because the Mother, the parent of us all, allowed us to stand there, and that is — or was — the truth,' shaking his head, 'and now the truth is an abstract and the abstract a truth and tangible, making it everything, yet nothing for me,' Georgie pondered.

Old Unc, as Georgie was generally called, scratched his chin and with both palms wiped his eyes and cheeks, not because of the heat — it was after all only 38°C outside and a damned sight hotter in the cavern of alternative grace. The coagulation of thousands of years of knowledge began to stir within Georgie. He could hear the songs, the voices and the discourse of culture and growth, of the nurturing of each of

his contemporaries, massaging them to adulthood, maturity and responsibility. ‘None of these superficial, nerve-stretching confessions and begging for forgiveness for being,’ thought Georgie. ‘Not under Law.’

An ominous air of complete despair drooled over Unc’s spirit. It seeped into his bones and he shuddered, as several times before, he was again found in memory and lost in place. When he finally shifted his position, feet apart, elbows on knees and hands clasped in a most unreligious pose, and lifted his head, he realised that the sanctuary was empty. Shrugging casually, Unc thought, ‘Even when everyone was here it was still empty,’ and shuffled outside into the night.

The body odour of his ancestors was strong to the nose tonight. ‘You should be able to smell it also,’ he said out loud. The high temperature made Georgie’s primary Mother ooze that delightful body odour. A mixture of smells: the eucalypts, the soil, the water, the breeze; as tepid as if it had wrapped itself around Unc’s intuition — his deeply personal self. ‘The breath of life,’ said Georgie out loud, and he began the silent dirge of grief that the new tribalism had had a significant hand in creating. ‘Praise the lord and pass the pension cheque,’ said Georgie to himself and again wiped his face and eyes with the palms of his hands. As he drifted towards the house of the Testimonial Aunt, he thought, ‘I wonder if it’s worthwhile? But I do need to find out who she thinks she is now and what she thought she was before.’

His joints were normally seized up, but the heat of the night seemed to ease his gait and he walked as a youth in his memory. He used to be able to walk without leaving a footprint. He could sit at the hearth and travel to important meetings, where his presence was vital, simply by ingesting a combination of herbs his loving Mother provided so easily, without request for forgiveness, or a solitary place that was hand-made, unless you consider the entire landscape ‘hand-made’ now, because of the intrusions. ‘Yes,’ thought Unc. ‘The intrusions. I wonder why these intrusions are intrusions. Surely, my mob and me have trespassed. That is why the intrusions exist. The bloody things have captured me. It’s not “plug my 'ole 'n' save my soul” at all. It’s the fact that I no longer walk without footprints, because I have surrendered the ability to be me, and why?’ Considering this matter, Uncle Georgie continued his trek

to the Testimonial Aunt's house.

Some sixty paces from the Testimonial Aunt's house Unc stopped and pondered to himself, something he did all too frequently these days. 'Is it possible that this old woman has forgotten and has not trespassed, but surrendered to the new tribalism? What if she has? I need to think through this new tribalism,' thought Georgie. So he detoured to a safe place, where he knew that his thoughts would remain unclouded.

'Mid afternoon,' thought Manalargenna. 'Those odd creatures in the funny skins should appear soon,' he said out loud. As the Leader of the entire family, he carried a heavy load. What should he do? Should he encourage his family to trust this Robinson person, or not? There was something wrong with this strange cognitively dissonant individual. 'Perhaps,' thought Manalargenna, 'he is sick. After all his diet is extremely unhealthy and his very pale skin signifies death.' So the Leader continued to ponder until he felt the presence of Unc standing there right next to him. 'This person I seem to know,' thought the Leader. 'There is a resonance between us and it stems from generations to come. Perhaps a part of my present consternation is tied to this relative of mine, for that is surely what he is. I'm going to my hearth and I will invite this... this... ah... grandson of mine to break damper with me. I'm sure that Robinson creature left some more of that plain powder that thickens with water, when he last came to my hearth, and I have some muttonfish. I'm sure my grandson will enjoy the fruits of semi-trespass,' Manalargenna said to himself, and with a simple hand motion he signed Unc to follow.

With natural ease, Unc signed in agreement and they walked together to Manalargenna's hearth. Through the scrub or over the sand dunes Unc looked back several times and saw no footprints, even though he could twist a sprig of heather, or tea tree and drink in the natural odour of his parent. Even more strangely, Unc felt at peace in a way that he had longed for back home in the mission. 'Ah, the mission! What a place that is, right in the middle of urban white trespass. Is it where I am meant to be — forever? No, here is where I am, this is where I am meant to be, this is where I am,' Georgie said to himself.

‘Welcome home,’ said the Grandfather. ‘I have been waiting for you long time now. Sit with me and look down to the Mother and understand what your life is about, forever.’ Unc seated himself near the fire and the food, with a strong sense of comfort and he did indeed look down, first at himself then at the Mother. Once the meal was concluded both men talked of their days, the sum of their human experience. What struck Unc the most was the cosmic nature of that sharing and he reflected to his inner child: ‘It’s like holding a mirror to a mirror. What incredible depth the reflections give each other!’ Georgie began to address the Leader. ‘Grandfather, may I share something with you?’ he asked, and the Leader signed him to continue. Unc began to express his exasperation over the new tribalism. However, on the utterance of his sixtieth word, Manalargenna signed him to silence and stood. Carefully gathering the embers of the now dying fire into a cone to retain them for the next meal, and once satisfied that all was well with the embers, the Leader spoke. ‘We have shared many stories this moment my son,’ he said, ‘and I tell you, what you describe is also a new tribalism for me and I see this new tribalism as...’ Unc spun around at the sound of the public display of violence and realised that he was now merely fifty-nine paces from the Testimonial Aunt’s abode and that the new tribalism had shape-shifted: violence spewed forth with the tell-tale odour of rum.

The children were screaming, while the parents, aunts, fathers and mothers were consumed in a cyclone of pure new tribalism. Anger and violence erupted from each individual’s pores, eyes, breath, heart, spleen and liver and in the midst of this revolting display of Georgie’s family, an aura pervaded. Each emotion declared as a different colour, shimmering and merging into each other. Rubbing his chin, he thought out loud: ‘What is that dull core in this marvellous cascade of tribalism’s “human aura”? It sits like a death spot, much the same way as blight dulls the natural sheen of a plant that is nourished at the breast of the Mother.’

Continuing to amble towards the unfolding, unnatural scenario — for to him at least, it was unnatural — some things became evident. For example, the most obvious was the death site that appeared as a vacancy of every individual’s site of intuition and insight. ‘This new tribalism has become a canker on the arse, nar, in the guts of my people,’ Unc said out loud. At the sound of his tone all should have stopped dead in

their tracks as they usually did.

But his voice was not well enough connected to the new tribal force and he reflected into Law, feeling the icy salt water lapping at the calves of his bony legs and hearing the cry of the gulls, the whisking of the sand as its surface layer, the lightest part of the mass, yet no heavier than the eons of subterranean dry single grains the top hid from view, massaged his face, his spirit and his dreams.

‘It is the absence of Law and the disconnection from the first tribal Law-makers, that allows the death site to prosper,’ Georgie announced to the Mother, “and what are we to do about it?” In the ensuing silence, in that moment of time that we use to embrace cosmic travel — you know, the time when time is no more, when I could visit my carers to reassure them, through my simple presence, that the Law was safe, that the Mother was well, that their children's children still adored the filial relationships that pertain to their very existence, ‘You know,’ said Unc, ‘in the time, that very fragile time, that glimpse of the moment when we were able to translocate to the ontological space, where our hearts, minds and spirits became immutably cognitive and therefore forever safe and ready for regeneration.’

Pausing for a moment, he turned to the Leader and asked the question that had long plagued his spirit, his mind and his body. ‘How am I able to tell our grandchildren, Grandfather that they have missed the time when they could have allowed their intuition to fill the void made by the new “sorry” business? The tribalism you recognised as new and destructive and that to which I bore witness, the destruction itself? How can we tell them they missed the time to shift from “hands-on” Law and ceremony to “minds-on” Law, safe from any canker, safe from any pollutant save themselves?’

The Leader turned to Unc and looked longingly at him. ‘Where are you, my son?’ Manalargenna thought, and Georgie, as though he could read the Leader’s mind, replied, ‘Nowhere, yet everywhere, though you know what I expect.’ Instantly the Leader moved to embrace him, in an embrace that closed all distance and difference of time, space and insight immediately.

While unfolding himself from the entanglement of the embrace, Unc noted the broken bottle one of the family held in his hand. The fight outside the Testimonial Aunt's house had re-erupted. His senses reeled at the thought of the damage such a lethal instrument might cause. Unc raised his voice and everyone froze, 'What the hell's going on here?' roared Georgie. 'Have we come to this? Fight'n' and murd'rin' each other?' Unc asked in a whisper now, 'What about the Law, what about the love and what about each other?' All looked around and shuffled their feet in the sand, no one willing to answer, though they all knew the answers to this question.

'Many answers to a single question — a simple process if you know how,' thought the Leader to himself. 'In our ways there are many answers to the single question and I will tell you not the answers, but the question, in time, when you are ready, my son,' he said, adding more fuel to the ebbing flame of the fire he had built from the carefully nurtured embers from the morning fire at another place. For the chill of the wind, of time and motion, was increasing in intensity. 'Come, my Grandfather, come and sit closer, that I may shelter you from this chilling breath of the Mother,' said Unc. The Leader thoughtfully looked at his grandson and said, 'It is you who need the shelter, my son.' Then opening out his possum-skin cloak wide, he beckoned 'us' to join him. In the womb-like warmth of the Leader's skin cloak, Georgie was imbued with a calm that had never before entered his physical, or ontological psyche. Unc snuggled up, not down, to the Grandfather, residing in a sense of peace and at peace with his pieces, within the enclosure of the cloak.

Waking early the next day, Unc felt oddly rejuvenated and hungry, not for food, but for more of whatever it was that the close proximity to the Leader gave him. 'There is much to consider in these feelings,' thought Georgie, as he increased his pace towards the group of his now shamed family. 'The one good thing,' thought Unc. As he strode towards them, he noticed that he left no footprint in the sand, no sand between his toes, as there would usually be, as he laboured across the sand dunes that so often these days dragged heavily on his feet. The group began to disband slowly, for none wanted the 'honeyed castigation' Georgie was famous for delivering. That is why his words seemed important, to him at least, for he knew that Law and love permeated his intentions, his actions and his words.

‘Do you not smell the fresh fish cooking and the children playing?’ asked the Leader. ‘The fish cooking I smell, but not the children playing,’ replied Unc. ‘How can you “smell the children playing”, Grandfather?’ Unc asked. With a look of consternation, the Leader scanned Unc carefully and replied quite softly, ‘Is it only smell that the breath of the Mother carries to you my son? Does she not also carry the odour of sound?’ This question somewhat confused Georgie. ‘The odour of sound. I wonder what that means. I’ve never thought of sound having an odour.’ As he considered the seemingly existential concept, the Leader quietly shared with him examples, to allow Georgie to engage his spiritual and secular paradigms, much the same way Unc’s old cat eased itself against his legs, as the animal needed the ‘choice contact’ of the moment.

Suddenly the Leader began to sing and as he gave increased volume to the song, Unc recognised the words. They were words of Law and of the people, and finally the cycle of the Mother, as she offered well-roasted possum, crayfish, muttonfish and mutton-bird. Unc ‘recognised the luxury feast by the smell,’ he thought, the odour that was tucked away in his memory that now evoked the taste buds into action. ‘Grandfather, you are right. Sound does have taste. I think I now know what you meant.’ And the Leader smiled gently and knowingly at Georgie, as he broke off the tail of a crayfish and, placing the tail on a sheaf of paperbark, handed it across to Unc who, as his taste warmed to the hot fish, noticed that the Testimonial Aunt was standing on her porch, silhouetted by the dim light shining from her kitchen, down the passage. ‘Georgie! Is that you out there now?’ she called, ‘I bin tole ya to leave them kids to work out they own problems with the lord Jesus.’

In reply Unc merely shook his head, saying, more to himself than to the Aunt, ‘This tribalism holds no answers, only our ancestral Law holds answers, or perhaps,’ he suddenly thought to himself, ‘perhaps the question. Now why would I think that, I wonder, and why did I cease to call it new?’ There stirred in his core, the seat of his intuition, a desire to reflect on this matter, ‘Did the Law give us the answers, or was it merely a question?’ Making the last thirty paces to the Testimonial Aunt’s house, he lifted his head and drank in the odour of sounds that sent him a clear message that his

family was bedding down for the night. Here and there a child wailed in the silence, seeking the comfort of its parent and Unc wondered, 'Is that baby wailing for its biological mother or its real Mother? Ah, it doesn't know yet.'

Lapsing into conscious silence, he took the first step up to the porch, as he handed back the bark sheaf to the Leader. For Georgie knew he could not help himself, as he had played no part in acquiring the items laid out before him at this traditional feast. The Testimonial Aunt offered him some damper 'n' golden syrup, with a pannikin of hot sweet black tea. As Unc settled himself down on one of the ragged armchairs that the Aunt always offered to visitors, he nodded his appreciation of the generosity of both feasts and settled down into the silence again. 'Aunt is steeped in the tribalism,' he thought to himself, 'and I hope she doesn't start to "praise the lord" to me tonight. I don't think I could handle it, not tonight.' There seemed to be a cloud of despondent joy enveloping him at the moment. It was, he thought, 'weariness' and he wondered why he should be so weary. 'I've done nothing today yet I am completely worn out,' Unc thought to himself, out loud. At that point, Manalargenna spoke to him across distance, the distance of the essence. 'One must work at becoming whole, my son. It takes time. Simply wait.' Unc half closed his eyes and relaxed into a space he had never before occupied.

'It's your chasing after the ghosts of the past,' the Leader murmured to Georgie. 'When will you realise that the time of all events is the same? Remember, every minute of every day or night, there is the Father and nurturer of the Mother's children, providing light somewhere. Ask yourself, is there such a thing as day or night? And consider this immutable fact, time is not *of* the essence...it *is* the essence and as such, cannot be divided or scheduled or cleft into parts.' With those words echoing in his consciousness, Unc relaxed. As he relaxed, he realised, without any discomfort that his journey to himself had begun.

This realisation caused Unc no distress. 'Ah, at last I am on my way to "me". The incomplete "me" may indeed be questioning what is happening, but I must learn to hear, not "me" but "ME".' Thus Georgie stretched his legs out on the porch in full view of the Aunt and those at the feast. It was with great comfort that he entered slumber, safe in the arms of all of them and himself. What a remarkable experience,

not being caught in the time warp of the 'tribalism' that had ensnared the Aunt! Unc dreamed and his dreams were as surreal as any other engagement, or experience, had brought him to. 'I must consider the aspect of embracing myself,' Unc pondered, in his cosmic dream state.

The Leader took a flint and gently taking his arm, made an incision about six inches long, down the outside of his arm, from the point of the elbow. 'Cutting me at this time, in front of all these men, women and children: surely that is breaking one of the ceremonial Laws?' thought Georgie to himself. The Leader took his other arm as gently and performed the same incision. As Unc looked into the eyes of the Leader, Manalargenna signed him to survey the site. Only two people were present. He and the Leader however, were seated under a rock ledge, the back of which was about fifty-nine paces from where they sat, in the edge of the full moon's basking glory. 'You see,' said the Leader, 'time is the essence and we have ample light to see each other and discuss the question that plagues you. Only this time we have company.' And the Leader signed Unc to look back into the cavern, beyond the overhanging shelter. Georgie stared in amazement, for the entire back wall of the cavern was a mass of faces, some youngish, some very aged and all of them men.

Unc was not at all afraid, for he recognised himself in every face. Turning to the Leader, Unc said, 'Is this what you mean by time is the essence, Grandfather?' At which the Leader rose to his feet and beckoned Georgie to do the same. Taking his grandson's already healing arm, Manalargenna led him to a cluster of rocks that were beginning to be covered by the incoming tide and sat his grandson on one particular rock and instructed him to 'help the water wash away some of the sand with your hands'. In calm bewilderment Georgie did as he was asked and within seconds, there appeared a series of concentric circles, joined by irregular line etchings, all deep in the rock face. As Unc gazed bewildered at the 'find', the Grandfather said quietly to him, 'For many lifetimes, these words have not seen the light of the moon, or of the sun, for they awaited your presence. They are your birthright. You now see, do you not, that the Law is a question of time, not of regulation and that time is the essence of our spirits.' Singing a song in 'language' the Leader represented his grandson, and all of the faces in the cavern found voice and provided the 'background chant' of

reinforcement and the plea for closure of 'business'.

One of his 'sons' lurched drunkenly towards the porch, seemingly aggressive and extremely intoxicated. As he neared the porch, the Aunt rose from her seat and began to harangue the 'child'. 'Oh! the lord Jesus forgive you your being pissed,' she stormed. 'Get home and away from us! Can't you see we Elders are talking?'

At that point Unc recognised the face of this 'child' from the cavern and rising from the precious rock that was his heritage, he sought the Leader's permission to enter deeper into the cavern. With a sign, the Leader indicated approval. 'Where does he get their permission to let me enter their space?' Georgie thought to himself. And with a hoarse whisper the Leader said to Unc, 'Because we are all one and the same, yet individual, my grandson, this is part of your journey. You know the seeking of self. How can you know self, if you do not know your component parts my son? That is the message of the storybook you just revealed: but it is in the true language, a language you have yet to learn.' And all the faces smiled and spoke many languages and, oddly, Georgie understood every word. Unc thought to himself, "I must ask why I am able to understand the oratory, though not the text." At that moment the intoxicated 'child' turned around completely and walked away, seemingly satisfied with whatever he had thought he had seen or heard.

'There, ya seen it didn't ya? The name of the Lord just turned 'im away,' said the Aunt, standing on the edge of the top step, feet apart and hands on hips nodding to herself, simply because Unc never bothered to reply. Finishing his damper and mug of tea he stood and signed the Aunt good-bye. In response she said in a voice laced with agitation, 'You know the lord don't like us using the old ways in talk, or in any way.'

At that moment Manalargenna strode over to the young woman and facing her down, as only he could, and stated for the entire group to hear, 'These are our ways. The intruder may indeed say these ways are the old ways and no good for us, but I tell you this, on my word on Law, any of you that cease to use our own ways will be exiled to the place "between" and you all know that that is where you die without spirit, without language, without the Mother and in a state of pale.' Shifting his voice to the usual intonation, a whisper, he finally said, 'This I wish for none of you, my children.'

The Leader's eyes rested on Georgie, making Unc shift uncomfortably on the sand seat he had made himself for the feast, and he felt his appetite ebb away as he filled with another hunger. As a wave merely caresses the sand and the deeply embedded rocks on the edge of the foreshore, Unc felt this hunger sweep down and up his body. It was an unusual experience. This 'wave' seemed to originate from the middle or the gut area of his body, rippled up, then rippled down his entire body. He thought there was more; he would have to talk to the Leader, once he had thought it through.

Early the next morning Unc found it difficult to get mobile. For ten years he had argued and cajoled and pleaded with the other 'new tribalism'. He thought to himself, 'I doubt if the Grandfather would reject this tribalism as new, for it focuses on the "roll over or be rolled over" doctrines of the pales' recently emerged new tribalism. Well it is relatively "new" and they do worship to a woman that lived many steps away from them. They called this new tribalism "politics" and so help me,' Unc thought to himself, 'it is as insidious and as dangerous as the other tribalism. It requires icons, ministers and many Testimonial Aunts, in a genderless sense.'

'I cannot continue,' he thought, as he stepped up the stairs of the ultimate Chief of the Pales' aeroplane and seated himself opposite their Leader. That Chief seemed somewhat jubilant and congratulated Unc on the outcome of the meeting of chiefs where Unc had, with persuasive argument, convinced the under chiefs, to get their senior chiefs to agree to what, at the time, seemed a really important matter...for the people. He knew it was conceptually important to 'the people' because he had asked them, spending many weeks ...

The Day Father beat down on George's back, neck and head. In fact his entire body was under assault when El... spoke to him quietly. 'This one here is the goanna yuminga; and that all out there, as far as you can see in the Yipirinya yuminga, that's my yuminga.' The very old man had reinforced his right to be the teacher, the Leader, by these words. 'Is it true the Granite's mob call you Japanangka?' El... asked Unc. And Georgie nodded. 'That's all right then, we can also call you so if you wish, though I have a special name for you if you want it.' Unc turned and looked at Manalargenna, who Unc thought was in his vision, and signed agreement. Unc said,

‘If it is your wish to name me, it is my privilege to take that name.’ El... nodded and said, ‘From now on my mob will call you Nja... and by your whitefella name in mixed groups.’ Unc again nodded.

Then turning to the other Leader, El... spoke in ‘language’ saying, ‘Ah, old man, it has been many paces of the essence since we last spoke and my eyes are pleased to see you. Tell me, is Nja... your son?’ And the Leader rose from the shade in which he sat and seemed to drift across the sandy desert. ‘This place of your yuminga is as beautiful as ever El... Yes my old friend. Nja... is my son and I think that he has joined us to begin his journey to himself, to us, to him.’ El... signed in agreement. Unc wondered if this might be the point at which he would learn the laws properly. ‘No,’ he thought. ‘The question about laws seems, right now, to be secondary to the question the Leader told me earlier. The laws are the answers, the LAW is the question we must all answer.’

Feeling suddenly in awe of those two who stood before him, he smiled inside. Then without warning, all the faces from the cavern were also standing with the two Leaders. And off a little way, was the Testimonial Aunt. She was beckoning him to her side. He thought, ‘I’ll go and tell her what is going on.’ But, before he could open his mouth, she was harassing him about the lord Jesus, as she had the other lad, moments ago.

As Unc began to reply, the Supreme Chief of the Pales offered Georgie a full, fat king prawn, some cheese and some champagne. Declining with a shake of his head, Unc told the waiter to bring him some water. ‘What! Off the piss?’ said the Pales’ Chief, slapping Unc’s knee with the flat of his hand. ‘No,’ Georgie replied, ‘I just need water.’ The water tasted good but there was a smell of sadness in the air. ‘Must be the air conditioning,’ thought Unc, and he settled back in the comfortable armchair. ‘These are a bit different from the Testimonial Aunt’s armchairs on her porch,’ he mulled over in his mind.

Sinking deeply into his consciousness, a place anyone hardly ever visits, Unc thought, ‘Considering the state of the world of human kind, I’m not surprised.’ As the

aeroplane touched down and preparations to disembark were completed, Unc heard the Pales' Chief say, 'Well this should keep those black bastards happy for a while-I did what they wanted.' And Unc merely looked at him. The Chief must have read the utter contempt on Georgie's face. His hand-signs certainly described the Chief as 'rubbish'. The Chief's aide offered Unc a ride back to his office in the Chief's motor car and Unc accepted. It was cheaper than a Commonwealth car anyway.

Alighting in front of the building Unc took the fifty-nine steps to his own house. He seemed a bit bewildered at the cast of events he had experienced today, 'Was it all today?' Unc asked himself, as he slumped down on the top step. 'Time is not *of* the essence,' he recalled. 'It *is* the essence, and Law is the question, not the answers.' 'Oh gawd,' said Georgie out loud, 'these thoughts seem so complicated, yet I...yes I think I know — that I think I know what they may mean. Now what will I do?' That soft, hoarse voice of El... said quietly in his mind in response to Unc's question, 'Whatever you must and whatever we think and whatever the Mother wants, right from the Yuminga. And whatever the Day Father wills, this, my son, is what you will do.' Unc felt the salty taste of the ocean in his mouth and nostrils. 'Yes, smell does carry sound, and I know the Leader said that "sound carries smell", but it works both ways.' The Leader, speaking in a strong firm voice said, 'My son, you have begun your journey to your essence, to yourself and to us — your final journey. Though it will not be a short and easy journey, there is much ground that will not touch your hand or feel the tread of your feet, without footprints. You will eventually finish your final journey.'

Unc spent at least the next fifty-nine steps mulling over all that the individuals had said and what he had seen. The amazing and effortless occasion of star-drifting had left such an important impression on Unc, that he could barely remember much at all of that moment, at the moment. And all he could recall was the sense of being deeply embedded in an embrace with his biological Mother, the country of his birth. At this point, Georgie realised that he is, was and has yet to be. 'It's the old ways,' thought Unc. 'Yes my brother.' El... and the Leader chorused. 'You are now seeing the essence of time, the beginning time, before time was spatulated into the curve of a line, or a straight line, or even a set of meaningless numbers. You are now seeing the

essence of time. Real time is an essence, not a hypothetical, invisible power that mysteriously regulates your behaviour.'

Unc stared up at the Mother Earth and transfigured her, with her permission, into an exact replication of the seen and unseen universe. 'You see!' She said in a voice that combined the sounds of nature, even its silence, to a rush of kinetic energy directly into Unc's intuitive space and continued: 'You my son, are the last of your generation, but the genesis of the next. For before you join us, there is much work to be done by you.' 'Mother,' replied Georgie, 'how much time do I have then, to do as you all ask?' Unc's mind and his spirit lifted itself, as the hoarse whisper of El... engaged his consciousness. 'That's what we have been telling you Nja... Time is you and it is us. Is that too difficult for you to understand?'

Georgie wiped his face, much the same as he had in the testimony place, though this time it wasn't from frustration but from joy. This joy became evident in his physical self, as he replied to El... 'No, my Elder, it is not too hard to understand.' Unc then went on to say, 'What I care and am concerned with, is that I do understand.'

At that moment of reply, the Leader threw down the wallaby and began to remove the intestine and follow the *rites de passage* required for the continuance of this ancestral, though not totemic relative — born out of the genetic pool, established before the essence was — the yuminga, where the genetic split between the spirits and their personal physical image occurred. 'This, of course, must be true,' thought Georgie. 'Otherwise, why would we undertake the ritual at all?' Then Manalargenna told Unc about the physics of cosmology and Unc sat listening, rarely asking questions, almost sated by the knowledge he had accumulated in the past two steps.

'It is indeed a long journey. There is much to hear, there is much to see and do. Yet there is little to say, or for me to say,' Georgie said quietly to the group gathered closely around him. Unc had immediately noted that there were a few more in the group he had met in the back of the cavern, and found that the intrinsic relationship he had recognised from that experience had simply extended itself to the additional faces. He could only think of the additional for there were no strangers in the enlarged group. 'I think the Mother has woven more shawl,' Unc said to himself, aloud. The

Testimonial Aunt spoke with an air of frustrated reluctance and a hint of ridicule. ‘I tole ya, ole man, don’t waste ya time chasing ghosts of the past. Come, step into the arms of the lord Jesus with me, an’ join me an’ ‘im in ‘eaven.’

The Day Father was barely beginning to stir, as Unc eased himself down into the crevice and traced the writing on the wall with the tip of his finger. ‘The time will come when it will, then it will be so. This is my part of my message.’ He said aloud, ‘I wonder what the text of the Aunt’s tribalism is based on. Only it would mean the loss of more that is precious and that belongs to the people to actually find out. Yes, what of the people?’ Unc called out, and the Aunt replied, ‘Don’t worry about them, they safe in the arms of Jesus.’ With his arm fully extended, reaching down into the muttingbaird’s warren, Georgie could smell the oily, beautiful, almost suffocating odour of the birds. Grasping the adult by the half wing and a single leg, Georgie extracted the bird, blessed it in the usual way and wrung its neck. The thoughts that pervaded Unc’s entire consciousness were those of the constant stream of these ancestral beings, those that caused the same family of many thousands of mutton birds to return to these same warrens, child after parent, after child form, to me and mine. Georgie said, as much to himself as to the birds and the sand dune in which they lived, ‘I wonder what time it was that these sweet birds first began their life — a life that entails circumnavigating the beautiful pear-shaped Mother.’ Unc skewered the now dead bird onto the picket and pushed some of the others along, to maintain the balance for the long walk back to the sheds.

There seemed to be a change in the cosmological space Unc was now occupying. A hand...no! a series of hands, seemed to brush his shoulders and arms. As he turned, he saw a cluster of the energies of the four ways, each converging. ‘Where am I?’ Unc said out loud. And the Leader said quite firmly, ‘At the core of the essence, my grandson.’ Unc looked directly at Manalargenna and asked, ‘Where have you been, my Father? I have been looking for you.’ The Leader smiled and gave Georgie a hand sign that simply said, ‘I know, and I have been waiting for you here, for this is the beginning of your journey, my son.’ Unc glanced around him, and all he could distinguish was a blur of energies coalescing and fusing together and focusing on a vacant space, which to Georgie’s vision — not eyesight but vision — seemed to begin

to become an occupied space. The energies focused and seemed to act as one and the space filled with a growing object that was not unlike the fruit that grew outside the Testimonial Aunt's house.

Unc reached up and took one of the fruit. Just as he was about to bite into it, the Aunt appeared on the porch. 'That'll give ya a pain in the guts, they ain't ready to eat yet, I tole those kids the same thing, but they won't listen to the likes of me.' She said in an angry undertone, 'When they see you eat'n' it they'll strip the tree.' Georgie nodded and held the pear at arm's length up to the sky, as if to take a closer look. As he turned the pear round in his palm, the Leader said, 'That is the womb shape from which you are to come, my son. It is the manifestation of the ancestors. You will call it Mother, for from it you will come as a caricature of the ancestors, in spirit and in whatever form they decide. You may well be what you think you are, or you may not be.' The Grandfather said soberly, 'For your journey is not even begun, you have far to go.' 'Where will my journey take me then, Grandfather?' asked Unc, in a voice barely audible above the music caused by the compression of the energies, emanating from the ancestors, as they completed the Mother — a nursery from which they all would replicate themselves, in the complex nature of unbridled, though not muted or chaotic energies.

Once the nursery was constructed, each Ancestor occupied a specially preferred area and proceeded to establish their lineage. For some, the essence allowed a huge variety of DNA development for experimental purposes. As some offspring proved less than desirable, in terms of spirit or behaviour, they were recorded in Law as examples, or models of deviancy, and left in Law as exemplars, siblings whose attitudes were not to be copied or emulated.

Those siblings that more 'properly' met the energies' (hereafter referred to as the Ancestors') approval became the spiritual, moral, legal and ethical examples, or models, that every animate or inanimate descendant of the Ancestors' entire 'implosion of creation' was forever to look to for guidance. It is these 'children of the yuminga' that set in train Unc's journey and, like his contemporaries throughout each generation of the family, animate and inanimate, he has strayed and experienced the

retribution, as a consequence of breaking the question. 'What is it you see now Nja... my grandson?' El... asked, in a voice that washed over Georgie's face like a cooling mist of water. Pausing, Unc walked back down the steps of the Testimonial Aunt's porch and called back to the Aunt; 'I'm going.' 'Where ya goin' ya silly ole man?'" she asked. 'I bet ya it's not to the 'ouse of th' lord Jesus.' And Unc nodded and signed 'NO.'

In an uncommon act of looking over his shoulder, he saw a gathering of men and women, all around his age. Yet, some were older than others and some looked quite young, especially the women! What struck Georgie was that it seemed that the Testimonial Aunt, had not seemed to notice this group, although there were not many. 'She simply cannot see them,' he thought to himself. The Leader placed his palm on the centre of his grandson's chest. The right hand and the left hand he placed on the centre of intuition and said simply, 'This group seeks you, as you seek them. Now sit quietly and wait for them to arrive, for they surely will.'

The muttonfish was cooked perfectly and as Unc gnawed at the flavoursome, but rubbery mollusc, Unc then saw the connection. 'I am still in the nursery,' he said. As he uttered these words to the Leader, Manalargenna nodded, as did El... and the others. For the first time a woman spoke. 'All the kids are sick and we have to do something now, or it will be too late.' 'Daughter,' said the Leader, 'it will never be too late, as you know. If necessary, we will all move to the essence.' At which point she signed, 'Yes,' then followed up with the words, 'But that journey is so painful for our sisters and brothers.' At that point Unc felt the right to speak, not as an equal or a potential Leader, but as a member of the group. It was the following that issued forth, that revealed much more than Georgie would understand for a long time.

Unc stated, 'We who are here are one, though many. We who are here have a task which may seem complex, and for me, at the moment, impossible to fully grasp. We must await those who reside in the Testimonial Aunt's house to pass by us whenever they choose. Further, we must allow them to abide with us. Though during this dwelling with us, you and I will be in their "now time"; we will be scattered amidst the Japanangka nursery. As for us, all and every nursery is furnished the same,

irrespective of which of our parents who created the essence. And from that essence devolved to all of their children, our siblings, the Law and the four elements of Spirit, Intellect, Intuition and Law; and we must endure long enough to tell what must be told. I only worry that what I will say will be proper.’ Then Unc fell silent.

The Leader signed for all to sit and all did so in a single group: no men’s camp, no women’s camp, just one hearth. He then said, ‘All that is known is known; all that is meant is meant; and all that is to come, has already been. Learn this and wisdom will flow, like the sweet tears of our parents in the water songs.’

‘Each of you has a task,’ he continued. ‘And some of you have been avoiding facing that task for decades; and some of you are in too much of a hurry and you have rushed by it. Wait and realise that the question cannot be pursued; it pursues you. When it finds you, you will be whole, and will join us in the right place, at the right time, to oversee our parents’ children. And remember that evil or good is not your place to distinguish or identify. It is your task to introduce the question, so that your brothers and sisters may be found by the Law.’

El... continued, ‘For it is not Law that tests us as children, it is being able to answer “yes” to the question. And the question as you know is: “Are you able to follow the Law?” not “Do you know the Law?”’ Unc immediately ‘saw’ the empty space in each of the individuals who constituted the group who were arguing outside the Testimonial Aunt's house, and carefully and tentatively offered the following comment. ‘Grandfather, El... is it the intuition that is numb? Is that why it is so difficult for some to hear the question? Is their intuition numb or dead?’ El... shot him a glance that was simultaneously both kind and reprimanding, and said hoarsely in human voice, ‘Not dead, just still. “Massage” and advise them of the presence of this vital energy and they will be complete. They will be Japanangka, or the appropriate facsimile. For each to their own nursery in absolute equality.’

The meeting broke, with each party quickly seeking the opportunity to caucus. This was an opportunity not to be wasted or compromised on. Some of the group started to say, ‘Well, something is better than nothing and maybe it can improve as time goes

on, or there is always a chance of a change of government at the next election,' while others, including Unc, simply refused to budge. 'No, it's this way, our way, or we say "no".' The others, who agreed with him, indicated that he should lead the negotiations at this stage. After all, he was the only one who had read and analysed all the documentation, as the others knew he would. In no time at all, Unc was the automatic Leader and was expected to follow through on the negotiations, arrange the infrastructure and finalise the matters at hand, whatever they might be.

Sitting in the room with the government officials and some of the Testimonial Aunt's nieces and nephews, Unc began the dialogue, enunciating the issues from the Leader and El...'s perspective regarding the development of the report and subsequent policies that would, by the nature of the bureaucracy, result from the 'consultation' process. While there was some resistance to the process Georgie outlined, one of the officials raised an issue often referred to as a logistics problem. Time was of the essence.

The room exploded with eons of voices denying this statement. 'NO!' they said in unison. 'Time *is* the essence; it is not *of* anything.' Unc felt the urgency in the voices as they continued to inform. 'It is better to wait, than to rush into anything. Work on the vacant space of these Pales for they are dying. They are in pain and their illness remains unknown to them. In much the same way the grass begins to die off, so do they. If they let you water them, they too will be regrown. But you must hurry.'

This is the interval of Unc, Georgie and the Testimonial Aunt's spoken history. At the end of this thesis the story will, as with the above, be a written act in the context of the Japanangka and be closed without 'sorry business'.

Finding a parallel Western concept to an Aboriginal Teaching and Research Paradigm — a Justification?

In establishing my hypothesis regarding the absolute need for a culturally appropriate teaching and research paradigm, I first wish to elucidate a series of views on the concept of 'knowledge' from my own *Palawa* frames of reference, and from the research paradigm of 'Reflexivity'. 'Reflexivity' is defined in a general research paradigm sense by Hall as:

This chapter is an argument and a method for researching reflexivity within emancipatory action research and for conducting research about emancipatory action research. It is based on the assumption that researchers in an emancipatory action research context are inevitably constitutive of the data they collect and of the way in which it is interpreted and analysed. Reflexive research practice is advocated in response to the author's criticism that often emancipatory action researchers, like many other researchers, fail to sufficiently display their interpretive work. That is, they fail to show their human influence in the process of selecting, interpreting, analysing and reporting data. This situation raises an issue of credibility that also encompasses political and ethical issues.

Clearly Hall asserts a paradigm of cultural ethics in research that shatters the Western sterile concepts of 'rightness in a straitjacket', causing intellectual incongruity, as a primary research *modus operandi*. Further:

Previously (Hall 1990), I made the bold statement that all educational researchers have ethical and political obligations to be reflexive in their research methods. I now assert that reflexivity is integral to emancipatory action researches and is a part that should be made more obvious. It is integral because it epitomises a basic epistemological position underpinning emancipatory action research. This position rests on the following assumptions about knowledge construction that:

1. Evidence is derived from authentic data (which resonates the life experience of the researched and researcher).

2. Relations between researcher and research participants proceed in a democratic manner.

3. The researcher's theory-laden view is not given privilege over the participants' views.

Extending the views of Hall to encompass an Australian Aboriginal teaching and research philosophy, in the context of reflexivity, is indeed not difficult. There are numerous features of Aboriginal cultural paradigms that subsume the concept of reflexivity easily. One such paradigm is the actuality of knowledge as a personal and living paradigm.

Is it your Knowledge or are you it?

There are numerous examples that draw one to this conclusion regarding the personalising of knowledge. The following dialogue focuses on the significant issues relating to the transmigration and ownership of Aboriginal oral history and cultural knowledge. The cultural paradigms are stated and reinforced in a context that is certainly open to debate. The concepts are signified, through the concept of reflexivity, as a Western research paradigm and the cultural knowledge of the author, Japanangka.

The primary focus of this dialogue is to establish, in terms of social justice and equity principles, that matter which I refer to as 'First Knowledge'. First Knowledge is the totality of Aboriginal thought, conceptualisation, psyche, morality, behaviour, social order and humanity. It is a combination of all things that make Aborigines members of the world community; a membership, incidentally, that is still far too quickly denied to Aborigines as citizens of a 'multicultural nation'.

First Knowledge is that knowledge that is 'person-constructing'. It is the core knowledge of the continuum of human societies, the credible and mystical discourse between two living, holistic tissues: that of the person and that of the land.

First Knowledge is such, because of the primary nature of its being. First Knowledge is absolutist, totally anti-egalitarian and profoundly dictatorial in its very nature. First Knowledge transcends the 'socio' and 'psycho' sciences of non-Indigenous societies. In fact it is the franchise, or the act of transition of those societies, from being ancient to modern (a situation of change that is, in most minds, compellingly 'either/or'). It discards the 'trappings of the ancient culture' for modernistic, plastic, transient and ever-changing cultural frameworks.

The implications of the transitional processes for First Knowledge result in two distinct, though not unrelated, phenomena. The first phenomenon is this: Aboriginal First Knowledge is the premise from which all other 'knowledges' emerge. As such, intellectual animalism predicts that 'other' knowledge. Modernistic or contemporary thought must devour, ignore, belittle or dismantle First Knowledge, for the sake of its (modernism's) own survival.

The second phenomenon is that of 'disconnected analysis'. These 'disconnections' occur as a consequence of humanity's need for it to be superior to itself. As Cathcart pointed out in *The Moment of Aboriginal History* (in Beckett, *insert f/n proper referencing 1988*) 'equality through re-socialisation' is the underpinning rationalisation for white and other non-Indigenous Australians' racism. There is a view, widely shared by the international indigenous community, that our 're-socialisation' is common (global) society's reaffirmation of their sense of high moral justice in practice.

Under the guise of investigative anthropology and archaeology, practitioners of re-socialisation are constantly devaluing the cultures of Aborigines and consequently, of First Knowledge. The application of imperialist bloody-mindedness over Aborigines' body of First Knowledge by the guardians of the dominant paradigm, academia, provides neither cultural currency, nor humanity, to the owners of that First Knowledge.

While First Knowledge naturally varies among Indigenous groups, there is one

universal, eternal truth that cannot be ignored: the spiritual and physical connection to traditional lands and waters. These monumental, parenting entities (land, the ether and water), validate First Knowledge. This validation gives form and purpose to the context and taxonomy of First Knowledge.

Western societies for their own reasons have sought to re-cast the concepts, the spirit and the frameworks of Indigenous First Knowledge by demanding that any such knowledge offered or explored in their space and time be drawn under parallelisms. The problem in this demand resides in the additional requirement to find simplistic and explicit symbols that are familiar to the Western mind. In the process it is essential that the essential elements that are of most importance to Indigenous peoples be removed. These elements are land, the ether, water and the secret cultural self. It is the presence of these elements that validates each Indigenous person. The glaring differential in the problem of transference of living Indigenous knowledge is the cultural imperative of commodification of all these Indigenous imperatives on the part of Westerners. For Aborigines, First Knowledge, at all levels of socio-humanistic interactions and infrastructures, through a marriage of spirit, hope and ethics, remains cosmic and natural truth as the following discourse demonstrates.

Indigenous First Knowledge — Traditional Patterns and Operations in the Twenty-First Century.

Conceptually, First Knowledge is that knowledge that is transferred, or imported, via a set of deliberate, culturally premised, constitutional procedures, perhaps best defined as ‘significantly transmudane’. These are the procedures that formulate the ‘independent cross references’ that individuals within their individual and collective cultural frames of reference require for stability. Further, these procedures provide a set of spiritual, political, social and military terms of reference, which ultimately constitute the physiology of the total person. The absence of such permanent and immutable structures results in anomie.

Aborigines’ Knowledge is ‘person political’. In Aboriginal societies, as with all other cultures which constitute the society of humankind, it is Knowledge that engenders power. Knowledge also engenders obligations and in First World (Indigenous) cultures there is no socially approved concept which permits the ownership of knowledge to be held in isolation from the general group’s development, or good. However, certain elements of the totality of a culture’s knowledge may not appear in the public domain. For example: the First Knowledge of initiation — women’s or men’s business — is essentially ‘person oriented’, as well as being political and spiritual. However, its currency is contained and shared through an historical process. First Knowledge is gained and maintained through the bestowal process. The procedures of bestowal of knowledge are complicated and essential to the social development of one upon whom the knowledge is conferred, in the context of that person's total humanity. **They must qualify to be a custodian of First Knowledge.**

In the vast context and array of what one may call ‘investigative analysis’ discourses in the western scientific sense through anthropology, archaeology and political by Westerner’s attempt to ‘understand’ Aboriginal societies and Aboriginal peoples, there is often a reference to the existence of a phenomenon called ‘the Aboriginal worldview’. This usually occurs when an explanation of a particular elemental framework, physical or conceptual, from the culture of Aborigines is being discussed. This term is often used when conceptually difficult frameworks are under discussion

and are hard for non-Aborigines to grasp.

The worldview of Aboriginal Australians is constructed largely as in all other cultures. The main difference in worldviews is in the configuration of the data constructs. This data construct is ethno-specific and largely depends upon linguistic, spiritual and social interacting patterns of behaviour. As a consequence, the key to understanding, then transferring and finally, interpreting that data or First Knowledge, is locked in a combination of these three factors.

Conceptually, an Aboriginal person's worldview is generally compensatory in that:

- ◆ It allows for adjustment in detail though not in context.

- ◆ There is room for regular shifts. New knowledge and new information does not change the truth of a matter.

- ◆ One truth yet the context or the domain of that set of knowledge and dimensional thinking does not cause a reconstruction of, for instance, the social patterns that existed prior to the existence of new, or alternative views or 'knowledge'.

There are permanent bodies of knowledge in Aboriginal worldviews and these may be either physical or spiritual, or both simultaneously. There are also transient bodies of knowledge which are present, sometimes as an intrusive element, that either go away, or diminish themselves, as a result of being under-valued and not accepted as a viable alternative to existing knowledge. There is also information that may be assimilated into the culture, thereby changing the designation of that information from transient to permanent knowledge.

There are some groups who divide their world into moieties or sections. For them, one half of the 'real' world is — as an example from one locality demonstrates — *Yirritja*, and the other is *Dhua*. Each world has clans and 'skin' groupings, group and personal language and dialects. The entire physical world of these groups is similarly divided.

Some factors of an Aboriginal worldview are that:

- ◆ Aboriginal society is person-oriented, not property-oriented.
- ◆ Personal obligations exist and in its many forms is a very powerful protocol of reciprocity.
- ◆ Knowledge ownership and honesty are essential to a successful social construct.
- ◆ Any breach of the rules regarding the use of knowledge that is secret, limited for public consumption, or of a similar nature is followed by punitive action.

The above is simply a brief overview of a concept inherent within elements of Aboriginal society and thinking and this simple overview is to assist in the 'clearing' of Westerner's thinking. By adding information on practice and protocol that, to a thinking person, should allow a broader approach than the foreign paradigms of Western thought when applied to Aborigines cultural processes and behaviours.

Consideration of the concept of the personification of Knowledge in Aboriginal societies

In Aboriginal societies, Knowledge itself has a cultural personality, which demands that it be treated as a cultural entity. The cycle of proper people 'owning' knowledge, and knowledge 'belonging to' or 'owning' people, is a cultural fact that must be recognised by non-Aborigines. This concept must also be understood within the total implication of the exchange of knowledge and consequences of that action, before any real cross-cultural benefits, or dialogue of a true multi-cultural exchange can occur.

The important issue in this discussion is that some knowledge is owned and negotiable; some knowledge is owned, private and non-negotiable; and all knowledge is owned. This is especially true of those blocks of knowledge that fall into the realm of oral historiography. This oral history component of the culture of Aborigines is one which must be addressed in some detail, and immediately. The immediacy of the issue

relates to the transference of oral history from the culturally appropriate mode of Aboriginal techniques of teaching to the Western mode of education.

It is the notion and fact of ownership of land and water that suffer the most intrusion. In non-Aboriginal society, there are conflicting views on the question of ‘the right to know’ and ‘the right to own’. Hence we see defensive and protective examples, as in the enactment of legislation such as the ‘Freedom of Information Act’, ‘Freehold Title’ and ‘Crown Land Acts’ in place. The ‘Freedom of Information Act’ is theoretically a protective legislated framework to ensure that ordinary citizens have access to a variety of details on matters in the private and public domain. Further, there is a definite limitation on the ‘freedom’ within the Act itself. It is interesting to note that the cultural rules of Aborigines, regarding these two general domains of knowledge, break down to at least three quite personal levels of: a right to know, knowing, and the ownership of knowledge. Stephen Harris in his dissertation on *Culture and Learning* discussed some rules of knowledge mobility:

Most balanda,⁴ in strong contrast to yolngu⁵, work on the assumption that ‘to know’ means ‘to perceive, to recognise as true, to be acquainted with, to have practical knowledge of, or to have information about.’ The typical balanda attitude to ‘knowing’ is fairly objective, concrete and measurable.

In comparison, the yolngu attitude is much more subjective and is closely related to status (where the state of knowing can sometimes be conferred) and having rights to know (through such processes as clan inheritance). The teacher of yolngu children needs to realise that yolngu students do not come from a tradition where knowledge is thought to be open to all who are intelligent and willing to work to gain it. Nor do yolngu students come from a tradition where knowledge is thought to be largely secular — worth having for its own sake. Furthermore, yolngu children do not come from a tradition where parents have often repeatedly urged their children to learn as much as they can, because later ‘success’ will largely depend on how much they consciously concentrate on absorbing that knowledge.

⁴ **Balanda** is a euphemism for ‘white person’

⁵ **Yolngu** is a generic self-selected term for Aborigines in the ‘top end’

Inherited Rights to Knowledge.

An important Yolngu attitude to knowledge, relevant to discussion in this chapter, is that much of this knowledge is not an objective, secular entity that is available for anyone to obtain who has sufficient mental resources to understand and learn it. Rather, gaining knowledge is often part of the whole network of the inherited relationship rights of individuals, depending especially on clan membership, birth order in the family, and of course on one's sex. For a Yolngu to say he 'knows' is almost the same as saying he 'has the right to know'. Or if a younger, less prestigious Yolngu man prove of his knowing or expressing that knowledge, the older man is likely to say, 'He doesn't know', in a disparaging fashion. For example: An anthropologist working in the Milingimbi area discovered that Mu ____, a man of about forty of a low status family, was able to provide a fluent detailed transcription of a song series that related to some sacred sites on Howard Island, which had been visited by the anthropologist in the company of Ba____, M____ and Mi____ three L __ men who are more senior in status than Mu____. Later the anthropologist was telling Li____ and Bi____, two Dj ____ . Their response was, 'Oh he's dhunga (ignorant or does not know). You should have asked us.' In paraphrase this meant, 'He does not really have the right to tell you that information and if you were better advised, you would be asking much more senior men for whom it is more legitimate to know that kind of thing.' Whether or not Mu____ did have the 'facts' in his head was not really the point at issue to Bi____ and Li____.

Another way in which this Yolngu attitude — that knowledge is largely equated with rights to knowledge — is revealed is that secret ritual information that is held by a few old Yolngu men is not information that is powerful because of its inherent potency, nor for its problem-solving potential, nor because any special maturity or wisdom or intelligence is necessary to comprehend it, but rather because of its exclusiveness. Secret knowledge is prestigious and greatly sought after partly because so few people know it. From a balanda outsider's point of view it is a real anticlimax to be told an item of the highly secret knowledge (if in fact what one is told *is* the highly secret knowledge) because one is expecting something of great 'insight' or

‘wisdom’ or of ‘deep metaphysical significance’, but it turns out to be something like a secret synonym for the name of a familiar paperbark tree.

Another facet of secret knowledge involves the right to see very sacred madayin (sacred or taboo) objects. Madayin represent objects once owned by wangarr (creator beings, totemic ancestors, or culture heroes). That some wangarr beings engender fear and respect was demonstrated in 1973.

As a result of some drilling in rock for construction work at the present site of the Milingimbi school, Dj_____, the senior ceremonial man in the area, went into a coma-like state of shock for several days. This was brought on by trauma or fear that the wangarr involved in the history of the site would be angered by the arrogant presumption of men interfering with their creation or habitation. Certain wangarr are believed to be extremely powerful and able to punish by illness, death or destruction.

In 1975-76, several cases of similar respect for wangarr in connection with the proper conduct of ceremonies were recorded.

What message of significance might be attached to the objects, apart from the fear they engender, is not the main element of their sacredness. Their value, as a balanda would understand it, seems to be in the fact that very few living people have ever seen them.

Harris further states:

... the yolngu capacity to add balanda beliefs (about religion, causes of illness, causes of changes in the weather, economic systems, and so on) to their yolngu beliefs and apparently, hold both sets of beliefs at once, without forcing themselves to resolve apparent contradictions. It is also stated in that discussion that these two sets of beliefs are kept separate by the means of maintaining two domains of living: the balanda domain of Western-type work and cash economy between 8.00am and 5.00pm each weekday; and the more salient yolngu domain of yolngu values and time orientation, socialising with relatives, use of the local vernaculars, and so on, that

exists outside the balanda forty-hour working week.

The Words ‘To Know’ Have Different Areas of Meaning for Yolngu.

The elements of ‘knowing’ as described in the above are constant with other experiences in which yolngu describe something as ‘knowing’ something. A yolngu person who has visited a place such as Oenpelli will be referred to as ‘knowing that country’, although he may have only passed through it for a short time. A balanda who has learned some of the yolngu language is often referred to by yolngu as ‘knowing’ it and that balanda takes on a status or legitimate standing as a speaker of yolngu matha even though he may know very little. Conversely, yolngu women are referred to as not knowing many aspects of ceremonial life because they have no right to know, whereas in fact, many of them know a great deal about it in an objective sense.

Conferred Status of Knowing.

Just as yolngu think that those with objective knowledge but without the appropriate rights to express that knowledge really ‘don’t know’, so the reverse can sometimes occur, where someone who has the right ‘to know’ actually knows relatively little in objective terms. If this happens in, say, a ceremonial context with perhaps the older brother being less competent than the younger brother in singing and so on, the younger brother will normally preserve the protocol by deferring to the older brother, and the latter will behave in a way that frees the younger brother to go ahead and do the job. At Milingimbi during 1976 it became clear that even some of the apparently more Westernised yolngu men were thinking along these lines in their balanda jobs. Associated with conferred status was their claim ‘to know’ what people in that position are supposed to know; or the concept of what role should be played by a person who ‘knows’; or the play for the exercise of power normally associated with the one who has the right to know. Consequently, there were cases where yolngu men who had ‘conferred status’ in balanda jobs (and therefore a ‘right to know’) but who did not know enough objective knowledge to properly fill that role on their own,

jealously guarded their right to exercise the power and privileges they conceived as appropriate to the job. This situation can become difficult to handle when balanda women and yolngu women filling jobs similar to those of the yolngu men, 'know' more in an objective sense. One man's solution to the conflict was to try to resolve the issue in terms of a power play based on his conferred status. This kind of behaviour probably occurs in any society, but it is of particular significance here because the gap between the role and the objective knowledge necessary to fill the role is often so very wide. It is believed that it can be so wide because in yolngu culture, rights to know are more important than the knowing.⁶

Extending the concept beyond the bush.

Harris's documentation of the cultural conceptualisation and socialisation of knowledge as a 'personality' or 'personal entity' specifically declares the cultural chasm between how Aborigines and Westerners understand and accept the place and role of knowledge.

The ascription to First Knowledge of an entity is not a difficult concept to grasp, when the personification of Knowledge is, in the context of that entity, a set of intellectual and behavioural factors. These factors are integral to the continuum of life, as a means of social, political and spiritual management and organisation, in Aboriginal communities.

Aborigines do not suffer from intellectual gymnastics over knowledge acquisition, distribution, value or propriety, as Western societies seem to. In the words of Charles Horton Cooley, (in Murphy, 1978, page 390):

Too long we were taught that good will was the same as goodness. We now see that most evil is done by those who mean well. What we urgently want is knowledge — true perceptions of the workings of each part on every other part in the common life of Man.

The anguish evident in Cooley's words is absent from the lives and daily interactions

⁶ Harris, Stephen, *Culture and learning*.....

of Aborigines. One of the essential secrets of such successful interaction, is the absence of the compulsion to, ‘do something’ with a piece of knowledge, over which you have no accountability and consequently, no participatory or ownership rights. The absence of such compulsion eases personal conflict, broadens social interactions and never disrupts or disempowers appropriately responsible people. If and when such rules are breached, the existence of other complex rules of etiquette is applied, thus restoring the social and cultural equilibrium in both a personal and a community sense.

We now have some understanding of the cultural assumptions and expectations regarding the responsible management of knowledge and all that that implies in the Aboriginal cultural context. Clearly Aboriginal men of high status inevitably made these expectations and assumptions when they were sharing certain confidential knowledge with anthropologists, archaeologists and the like.

A reflection on the historical European reaction to Aborigines’ cultural values pertaining to Knowledge.

The expectations of certain traditional owners of particular First Knowledge were not only never met by the majority of non-Aboriginal participants in the Knowledge sharing process; the subsequent exploitation through the exposure of this confidential First Knowledge and of the owners (who held in sacred trust such information) of First Knowledge to the entire world was always a main intention of the non-Aborigines’ secret, or at least unuttered, motivations.

The subsequent exploitation of confidential cultural Knowledge was not discoverable by the Aboriginal men who entrusted their secrets to these non-Aboriginal ‘friends’. Aboriginal people — in particular Aborigines who were the source of information disclosure during the early days of contact with whites — were, until recently, unable to discover the deliberate exposure of their secrets, for the traitor’s personal gain. They were unable to do so, because they neither read nor spoke fluent English and they were not familiar with the various tools of the media which were available to European society, nor were they allowed to mix freely with European society

generally. As a result, they would not have been permitted to associate freely within the exclusive and esoteric circles of society that would have received this information.

Consequently, they could not know where to search, and most tragically they would therefore never know that their secrets were exposed and often ridiculed, until things began to 'go wrong'. For example: one of the most damaging of the media tools used by anthropologists and archaeologists was film. Film showed every detail of ceremony, some of which may have carried severe penalties, even to the point of the application of the death penalty, for some Aboriginal viewers who were exposed to such ceremonial observations.

One of the effects of observations by non-Aborigines of ceremonial rites is the limited knowledge transference or knowledge mobility. However, two damning results accrue: First, the superficial observations and interpretations simply reinforce Western assumptions of their culture's superiority and the obvious effects of such assumptions on their attitudes. Second, the dishonest treatment of Aborigines through the total disregard for the privacy of and respect for Aboriginal culture and First Knowledge.

The entire set of politics, and the socialisation techniques applied to Aborigines and the gathering of Aboriginal Knowledge today are directly related to racism. Aboriginal people still suffer from two centuries of racial abuse. The indiscriminate exposure of certain cultural traits and mores, through ignorance of the inherent value to Aborigines of such mores, maintains that oppression.

Aspects of inquiry by non-Indigenous people and the effects of their behaviour.

A great deal of observation and, to a limited degree, wonder, has been evident over the traditional Aboriginal technique of retaining history and facts relevant to history within the cosmic conscience framework of the mind of Aboriginal leadership. The essence of all that relative knowledge transference is more easily explained by the

term ‘consanguineous continuity’⁷. This makes the knowledge and the possessor of that knowledge a unified and utilitarian instrument of socio-cultural and political value, whose great breadth of purpose is finally capped off by the presence of the spiritual Knowledge that completes the entire set of First Knowledge factors. It is to these factors to which the Japanangka directly relates.

The existence of oral historians and of the validity of their Knowledge is, to some extent, still considered an anachronism in this day of high technology and microchip recording. The presence of oral historians within Aboriginal society is simply a continuing sign that all is well and that the world is not at an end.

The European value system is, in itself, only safely expressed in written mode. The notion that the intellect can retain and regurgitate precious knowledge with absolute accuracy has fallen by the wayside. The comparative system that Aboriginal people have to contend with values not the essence of the above, but a powerful alternative written history. From this point we must reflect on the ultimate for of racism: *the need for Aborigines to explain ourselves and the pre-determined conduit of expression the written word in English.*

A simple example of the translation of Indigenous written and oral history to written History using a basic Western taxonomy.

The Western curriculum inventory below simplifies the perceived procedure of transmission of First Knowledge and exposes the number and nature of the transitional stages involved in antithetical cultural transmission from an appropriate paradigm to a foreign one. As a result of the foreign nature of Western syllabus construction the inclusion of antithetical First Knowledge on its way to becoming DATA! results in subsequent pressures that stress down on Indigenous cultural First Knowledge and Oral History information. When they (Oral and First Knowledge histories) are transferred to the Western education systems via existing Western curricular paradigms automatic dissonance results in a culturally un-natural act!

The following seven sequential steps are a simplified and somewhat repetitive

⁷ Consanguineous in the sense of lineage and heritable culture.

globalisation and broad category conduit through which Indigenous Knowledge travels on its way to the students in a classroom via the formal construction of a syllabus.

- 1) **Translation of data** — linguistically, conceptually, socio-culturally.
- 2) **Politics and racism** — Inability to faithfully adhere to cultural principles and to remain objective regarding oral history and cultural knowledge.
- 3) **Interpretation of data** — ‘Europeanisation’, synthesis (recast into a ‘useful’ form), forming of myths.
- 4) **Alienation of data** — removal of cultural specificity/humanity, placing of data into a frame of useless knowledge, a curiosity.
- 5) **Isolation of data** — removal of cultural context, reshaped to suit Westerners within Western pedagogy.
- 6) **Explanation of data** — subjective value system applied to validate the data in European terms, devaluing via mythologising and racist comparisons.
- 7) **Integration of data** — confining data to standardised curriculum models, exclusion of appropriate Aboriginal teachers, transmission of data into a literacy-based exposition mode.

To summarise the above the ‘hearer’ (reader) must accept that the sterility of Western pedagogical syllabus production re-casts the information into (a) Datum and (b) must be able to be replicated, in action, and in deed to accommodate the neophyte nature of Western curricula development.

There are a number of extremely important components that must be considered before the hardest question of all can be responded to in any depth. That question is: How do you teach a culture of a peoples whose history is essentially orally and unrecognisably⁸ writing-based, and multi-factorial in entity, to a cultural group whose history is literacy-based, valuing the written word in a psyche that is almost premised on theocracy and whose history is a corrugated set of carefully selected entities?

The first issue relates to the ‘how’ in the question above. How do we manage the

⁸ **Unrecognisable** in-so –far as the Invader’s incapacity to recognise superior cultural developments such as ‘scripting’ or writing of a complex and esoteric genre.

transfer of living written and oral histories, where the specific Knowledge sections are ‘owned’, and in turn ‘own’ the living chronicle or repository of that Knowledge — a living person or symbol — across the cultural differential. Further how do we have it ‘birth’ into the written word of another culture? Several things need to happen. One is that the Knowledge suddenly assumes a new cosmic personality. For the first time — perhaps the absolutely very first time — this piece of Aboriginal cultural information, once transcribed from cognitive to written Western frameworks, becomes completely public.

The conflict between the right of First Knowledge to be private and personal, and the act of plunging that knowledge into the psyche of literacy orientations of a foreign culture, is problematic. To offer knowledge of the nature of Aboriginal cultures to a system or culture where the fundamental principle is unrestrained exposure — often because of its curiosity value — to a culture that frequently discards knowledge as wantonly as ‘Macdonald’s wrappers’ the moment a new thought (relative to that wrapper) occurs, is dramatic and profound.

To my mind, this process is best described as a ‘transmutation’. The transmutation of Indigenous Knowledge shares all the hazards of the transmigrating soul. The sequence seems to be a set of transfixing changes that relate to existence, causality and re-emergence on an unequal or biased stratification, where original values and concepts are discharged and replaced with new devices that exist to ‘concretise’ the transmuted Knowledge. This reshaping results in one ultra-destructive enactment, the destruction of the psyche of the cultural Knowledge. The reshaping removes cultural relevance and replaces it with foreign cultural tags and appendages of the dogma of literate legitimacy. All of this occurs simply because of ethnocentrism on the part of the receiving cultural system, all a result of unnatural events.

Harris points out (above) the notion of ownership of Knowledge (extended, by this author, into the realm of Knowledge having a personality and existing as an entity). This certainly extension of the evidence one may extrapolate from Harris’ records on ‘knowledge ownership’ my extension certainly removes specific First Knowledge from the public arena, and on those occasions where any First Knowledge is in fact in

the realm of the public arena, recognition is still paid to the actual owner/s.

The following discourse on Indigenous ownership compared to the concept of Western ownership of knowledge will broaden the canvass conceptually and cognitively.

Exploring the concepts of Indigenous ownership of knowledge as opposed to Western ownership — in a Western paradigm.

In European society, once knowledge is committed to print, no constraints such as those discussed thus far are applied. Nor are there any serious contentions to value the Knowledge, apart from plumbing the depths of fame for the author. The notion of an author being the originator of a block of knowledge requires some thinking through, especially when the conceptualisation of that act is compared to the complexities of Aboriginal cultural perspectives.

Such a comparison will lead us to investigate and (hopefully) comprehend the singularity of the destruction suffered by Aboriginal cultural Knowledge once the transmutation is begun. The usual responsibilities of ownership in Aboriginal cultural contexts requires accuracy, appropriate sharing, factual interpretation — as distinct from inaccurate recitation — and the essential ceremonial and social stratification, along with plurality. The maintenance of the above principles does not seem to apply in Western society.

The authorship concept in European society generally equates with personal ownership, and knowledge placed in the public or esoteric arenas is often deliberately ‘tipped out’, hence the existence of copyright laws. In most contemporary Aboriginal societies, ownership equates with the notion of ‘retelling to keep living’. Authorship and ownership is a lineage issue that may be orientated to cognitive as well as lineage heritability (consanguineous heritability). This generally means that there is little opportunity for dysfunctional experiences and draws us to note that the whole process is person-oriented, in either a patriarchal or matriarchal way. This situation then essentially leaves the ‘owner’ of particular First Knowledge with the responsibility to tell and re-tell accurately, but never to be personally responsible for the origin of that

factual information or the effects of that factual information.

Knowledge such as our written and oral histories (any category) within Aboriginal societies is centralised and supervised, whereas in Western societies written histories seldom are, except in the academic control mechanisms referred to earlier. An Aboriginal oral historian is able to teach, rectify, teach and rectify instantly. The written histories placed in the public arena require translation, explanation, interpretation and not infrequently justification, all in the absence of the 'author/owner/creator' of the historical record(s). Culture then inveigles the owner of knowledge to manifest responses towards the totality of, in this instance, Indigenous written and oral history. This means that the owner of the knowledge displayed must be sure that the variables that must be understood and derived from the abstract manifestation of one's cultural personality, one's inner-self, one's Japanangka is clear to the 'hearer'.

One fundamental flaw in the conceptualisation of cultural transference is the notion of measurable and observable traits that are dogmatically interpreted as cultural behaviour. In the re-defining and re-designing of culture, in the context of this discourse, after considering a variety of factors and points of view, I from my active personal operating paradigm, my Japanangka I generically define my culture as follows:

Culture is a melding of the tangible with the intangible. Culture is mostly confined to the simple status of 'observable behaviours'. For example there are many cultures that publicly manifest themselves through icons or other artefacts or totemic symbols. This leaves the secret-self, the inner-self, free to continue to evolve. It is when the secret-self is forced out into the open that the fundamental challenge to the entire self occurs. It is at that point that one must have one's Japanangka working at optimum to provide a safety zone. Culture is as much about you as a secret person as it is about your occupation of the public estate allocation that is so narrowly defined by the body politic.

For me this definition finds its absolute truth in the development of oral history and its transferability across the cultural chasm into European literature. The effect of this is

a concentrating on expedient use of foreign cultural data to rationalise, in terms of Western history in Australia, Anglo-Australian historical pubescence. It is obvious that the total transmission of Aboriginal oral histories is a must, if any pervasive change to the understanding of Australian histories by the general population is to occur.

There are some ethical principles that we must address in this educational exercise. Foremost are the following. The obligation to transmit, through sound epistemology, uplifting, informative and socially responsible data. The obligation ought to be to ensure that the truth, the morality and the status of the data so transmitted is not recast or diminished in any way. These ethics bring us back to the above discussion of some of the issues pertinent to oral history's transmigration. These ethical debates rarely consider the issues raised herein.

An Alternative Conceptualisation of the Right to Know and to Represent.

This discourse is premised on the Western concept of 'the right to know' as a significantly different concept from 'the right to know' in Aboriginal society. For Westernised Australia, it is the public domain in which historical literature is established. One other important factor in this eventful sequence of transmutation, is the absence of accountability. As mentioned before, Western historical literature is author-owned, yet no real punitive instrument exists that insists the author adhere to fact or principle during any stage of literature production, from research and interpretation of data through to final editing. The author may choose to remain detached from the entire final stage, publishing and promotion, should he/she so desire. In Aboriginal society, those responsible for historic or contemporary Knowledge face their peers and their society on each and every occasion where 'historical enculturation' occurs.

Having identified certain complications in the process of the faithful transfer of First Knowledge from a written- and oral-based culture, to a singularly literary-based culture, I want to explore some of the possible techniques that might be applied to ensure a more successful transition.

Prior to this discussion however, we must establish some general facts regarding the Western epistemological schema, which is the intellectual and physical loom onto which the oral history and traditions of Aboriginal people must at present be transferred. The present systems of service delivery in education generally seem to equivocate between academic purity, political ideology and administrative centralism. What remains incomplete about these systems is cohesion of purpose and power distribution.

Another tier of issues relates to the public and hidden agenda of each tier of each system and of each competitive element, as enunciated above. If this scenario is not complicated enough, then consider that the whole institutional or systemic mechanism is itself preposterously complex and multi-functional. Each system is tiered and each tier generally duplicates the fundamental facilitating structure of the Parent Corporation. Extremely fundamental to this is a need for regular cosmetic reformation (often called 'a review'), with little substantial change to the centralised power bases. Much energy seems to be expended upon ensuring a core cloning, which narrow visionaries insist maintains the essential qualities of the cloning system. The 'hybrid hiccup' (known as restructuring) tends not to augur well for positive variations and new thought, hence the penchant for self-preservation seems to logically mainstream the status quo.

While such self-perpetuating systems exist, the unhappy situation facing Aborigines is the unlikelihood of ever experiencing having Aboriginal cultural material valued appropriately, or cultural knowledge ever avoiding Westernisation, as a permanent feature of 'inclusion' into standard systematised curricula.

Aboriginal oral history remains valid only while it remains in its cultural content. This simply means that, for Aboriginal oral history to remain intact and to be faithful to its origins, it must be conveyed within the realms of its own epistemology. This epistemology is tied to a number of values and procedures which are difficult to translate to Western education systems, because these systems' values and procedures are, almost without variation, opposite in nature. This is especially true in the practice

of teaching and responsibilities for administration of knowledge. Values such as parental, student and sibling participation in educational processes are common, in fact integral, to Aboriginal educational techniques. In Western societies, this principle is still under serious debate. Another variation is 'relevant knowledge' and there is a continuing debate over what should or should not be taught. One of the principle strengths of Aboriginal educational processes is their clear definition into categories of essential, useful, intense and casual knowledge. These categories are weighted and are non-competitive. One of the 'secrets' of the successful educational processes in Aboriginal society clearly relates to the absence of several principles and ideologies that are fundamental to Western education systems. These are the absence of what I call the 'convection' technique, where 'pressurised' upward mobility takes precedence over 'natural' upward mobility. This marked and categorised mobility exists in Western educational processes as a regime to measure 'success'.

One fundamental flaw in the process is the unavoidable destabilisation of the individual people who occupy the unenviable seats as students, or clients, in these systems. The Western attitude is that education is an end in itself, whereas in Aboriginal societies, education is a means to an end. Aboriginal societies have never mythologised the education processes Western societies always have. Connected to this Aboriginal education ideology is the fact that knowledge, not the student, needs staging. This Aboriginal cultural process allows for unrestrained interchange. It does not rely on 'pressure cooker' success, standardised and 'concretised' in the social ethic of competition. It militates for the production, not of a positive, mediocre or negative clone, within a systematically oriented mass production process, but of a whole person.

With little argument, it is possible to accurately state that the present process of 'inclusion' — that is, the attempted imparting of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and oral history within the present education systems — is simply not working. Many believe it is because we have 'put the cart before the horse'. An inescapable conclusion is that, like iron and clay, the two cultures do not mix and there are no conduits for the transmigration process to be changed to a transferral process. We face

a situation not dissimilar to the adage that one puts the baby in the bath, to see if the water is not too hot for one's elbow.

What do we do then, to redress this disunited and moribund situation? *First*, there is a need to renegotiate the mortgage non-Aboriginals think they have on educational processes. Aborigines need to challenge yet again the premise that, in education, 'white is might'. Aborigines need to insist that their precious culture be not dismantled, at the discretion of the managers of the education systems. Aborigines must insist that their ways are the only ways for them, that First Knowledge may be taught. Aborigines have an education system this is, by white estimations, 200,000+ years old. It is difficult to understand why a proven system of such maturity is utterly rejected by one that is merely minutes old by comparison.

A quiet reflection on the current processes of exchange between Aborigines and Westerners on this matter of oral history and knowledge transference provides little comfort to either group, when what is being siphoned off from these areas of Aboriginal cultural data into education systems is so important and precious. Several dangerous orientations have become 'hostage' areas in these negotiations.

Perhaps the greatest 'hostage catchment area' is that element of White Australia that vociferously argues for inclusion of Aboriginal cultural data, but steadfastly refuses to correct erroneous history in the Western context. This hostage area holds to ransom in the context of the race debate, three universal human standards: **truth, confrontation of guilt, and equality.**

Western education systems refuse, and in my view, are often refused permission to analyse and change the record of their truth, and consequently subject themselves to critical analysis by Aborigines' truth regarding the past 200 years and the previous 200,000 years. The idea of having white history and behaviour subjected to Aboriginal adjudication is essentially the reason for the second 'hostage' area: confrontation of guilt.

Clearly, there is no possibility of such a process occurring without there also being a judicial response. Nor can it happen without sides being drawn. The current processes seem to me, to be fanciful and cosmetic. To illustrate, consider the present trend of Aborigines being required to engage in the enculturation of Westerners towards teaching Aboriginal oral history and cultural knowledge.

Admittedly, the application of Haviland's words complicates matters, because it is almost without exception that the 'observable behaviour' is the constituent element of what is taught. However, in the history of black/white negotiations, where the above-mentioned hostages are at risk, there has been a 'treaty' established, which defuses all potential Aboriginal scrutiny. That treaty is premised upon emphasising what Haviland describes as abstract evidence, 'observable behaviour'.

Clearly, Aborigines have become satisfied with the hostage situation, because they remain in a conjunctural partnership, seemingly satisfied to have observable behaviour elevated to the status of a cultural statement. I believe this scenario is satisfying for Aboriginal peoples, because their worldview is holistically cast. The continuing failure of successfully transmigrated oral history and cultural knowledge to technicians of educational systems is merely because of the absence of a holistic worldview and the absence of the possession of the knowledge of an Aboriginal holistic worldview. Anglo-Australians view the observable behaviours as the end point of Aboriginal culture, not as evidence of that culture's existence.

This uncomplicated overview of one important section in the education debate must surely leave us with a set of concerns, especially in view of the hostage scenario. Aborigines, from a position of disenfranchisement, are compelled to remain within the educationally and politically immature 'first world' frameworks with regard to enculturation of Westerners, and remain limited to dehumanisation as a result of Westerners accepting only superficial evidence of Aboriginal culture. All that is accomplished is the reinforcement of racism. The bottom line in all of the negotiations on the transfer of oral history and cultural knowledge is simply this: 'What you see is what you get'. Surely this is, in itself, cause enough to insist that the next generation of negotiations only occurs if the universal standards of truth, confrontation of guilt

and the achievement of equity are the ideological end-points underpinning such negotiations.

Having canvassed some significant reasons why oral history and cultural knowledge are not successfully translated into Western education systems and their curricula, it is important to explore what might be done to generate positive moves to achieve the 'unblocking' of the corridors through which such transfers could be made.

There is clearly a huge job to be done in simply identifying the target areas. From the Western perspective, there is the complex infrastructure of management and synthesis that needs positive exposure to permit accommodation strategies to be formulated, that will become integral to those systems. This analysis is itself a massive task. My observations of past attempts to 'peek under the corner of the blanket' of systems that theoretically are moving to an auto-democracy are that they violently resist such exposure. I suspect that these systems also have at ransom, 'truth, confrontation of guilt and equity' and they are desperately trying to 'free their own social and ethical hostages'. There are a number of 'positive' activities occurring in the education systems and much of this activity is, to varying degrees, in partnership with Aboriginal people. One main problem is that systemic and non-systemic providers will only move on oral history and cultural knowledge issues within their own 'safe' parameters. What this means is that the 'positive' action is more apparent than real and that 'positive' action is more apparent, because of the absence of negative or oppositional reaction. Hence the positive is 'pumped up', rather than impressed by social demarcations onto a system truly integrated on bicultural lines.

Numerous barriers intrude. One profoundly important barrier is the ethnocentrism in qualitative evaluation, when applied to who may teach and what may be taught. Earlier I referred to the evolution of a group of educational technocrats who compacted and redressed ethnocentrism as helpful 'experts' in the transference and teaching of oral history. I have numerous examples of ethnocentrism but, perhaps the best 'worst' example, is from Ronald and Catherine Berndt's *The World of the First Australians* (page XV):

... this book is written for Aboriginal as well as for other people. It is for those Aborigines who still retain on appreciable amount of their own traditional culture — to help them in looking at that culture in perspective and in relation to others. It is for those who have lost their traditional culture — to stimulate and enhance an interest in their Aboriginal background, and to serve as a basis upon which Aboriginal identity may stand firmly...

This reference is to my mind a perfect example of two factors, one is the reinforcement of the mythology that Aborigines are ‘lesser people’ and the other is gold-plated ethnocentrism, racism. There are many examples of racist language in the above publication; one glowing example is found in reference to Eric Willmot and Ken Colbung and The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies:

Until late in 1984 its Principal was E. Willmot (who is of Aboriginal descent), while K. Colbung (an Aboriginal)...”

I am bewildered on several matters regarding the differing references to Willmot and Colbung, as both are of ‘mixed heritage’. Even a generous soul might have difficulty believing anything other than a racist formula being applied to these descriptions.

The point of the above example is to simply demonstrate that the Western ‘experts’ are so presumptuous that they believe their role is to sanctify knowledge and culture factors, making it OK for designated groups of Aborigines to continue being Aborigines. The terms used in the Berndt quote above deserve exposing: ‘... those who still retain an appreciable amount of their own traditional culture’ is one such example. The second is: ‘... for those who have lost their traditional culture — to stimulate and enhance an interest in their Aboriginal background, and to serve as a basis upon which Aboriginal identity may stand firmly...’ These childlike expressions do little for Aborigines in my view. However, the authors seem to catch all members of their (the authors’) definitive groups, coming and going: those who still retain ‘appreciable’ amounts of traditional culture and those who have ‘lost’ their traditional culture.

I assume that Anthropology is, through these examples, more oriented to the tangible and observable elements of cultural analysis, rather than the psyche (abstraction of the tangible and the observable) of cultural analysis. The authors appear to be committed to and concerned over the Aborigines' circumstances. Yet, they find themselves forced into drawing such conclusions and using language that offends many Aborigines. Be that as it may, the end product of their work and words stimulates racism and division both within Aboriginal and Western communities and between those same communities.

The above is an example of one of the entrenched, perhaps insurmountable, difficulties faced by Aboriginal people at the negotiating table. Oral history and cultural knowledge are translated into observable behavioural traits and never taken beyond that point. It is for these and many other reasons that there is a compelling need to establish an Aboriginal Research Paradigm that weds all that is traditional and contemporary, thus providing a viable alternative to anomie.

Demonstrating the need for a set of benchmark paradigms — facing political ascription through the ‘anonymity’ of public policy.

In preparing the following commentary, I have confined my response to a particular analytical construct, that expresses a set of historical perceptions translated into a summary discourse, that evokes both a personal and immediate political position on the matters referred to in the *Equity, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper*, prepared by the Department of Education Employment, Training and Youth Affairs⁹ (DEETYA).

This commentary also contains my perceptions and effects of the current managerial, political and intellectual culture, and the strategic hypothesis, which combine to drive the Australian body politic in Australian Indigenous peoples’ issues of equity.

In doing so, I have also established a different perception of the process analysis and subsumed the response under a broad heading of *Recognition of Issues Pertaining to Multi-Disadvantaged Group Membership*. I have elected to undertake this pathway, because I recognise that the consequence of constantly politicising the singularity of Australian Indigenous peoples’ issues severely inhibits every aspect of this equity group’s development. That fact, and the largely ineffective results of related and subsequent ameliorating programs, is not restricted to higher education matters.

By focusing on Australian Indigenous peoples’ apparent lack of appreciation for the immediacy of grateful reaction to specific Federal and State government policies, government agencies generally respond in a manner that greatly retards any specific meaningful or global resolution of persistent disadvantage in any practical sense. The personalising of such ingratitude, coupled with an ever-changing political landscape, also overwhelmingly compounds the general social disadvantage of that particular group.

It is apparent that continuing to focus on issues of disadvantage in a singular and often unrelated way precludes existential change, thereby resulting in frantic activity in

essentially non-achievement-orientated endeavour. The narrowness of the general approach by agencies at all levels of government manifests a ‘stalling’ in innovative programming. This stalling is abetted by the absence of public appreciation for the opportunities offered within those political constructs by equity target groups. Over the years I have lost count of the number of bureaucrats and the occasions when I have heard the expression, ‘ungrateful bastards’ when I have told ministers and public servants that what they were being given was not what ‘the people’ wanted.

Indigenous Australians collectively and as individuals are captured within several of the other five disadvantaged group definitions, not merely the specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander equity target group, as defined by governments in their political and program rhetoric.

There are several important configurations to the Indigenous group’s general presence and socio-political portrait, as members of the wider Australian society, enunciated in the DEETYA Higher Education Council's *Equity, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper* (Nov. 1995). This discussion paper seems to constrict its perceptions of Indigenous Australia by focusing on ‘cultural’ as the base factor for progress and programming, and, oddly, also designating ‘cultural’ as the principal premise of all this group’s direct or tangential complex ills and circumstances. Of course, these foci are strongly concealed in language and the general hidden agenda of the discussion paper, though they are grist for the mill of any race-based program.

The omission of Indigenous Australians from partnership with the rest of Australian society and from membership of the competitive multi-culturalisation of Australian society consistently and distinctly disfranchises them from the multi-strand strategic solutions, or options, that focus on ameliorating the critical and complex sets of disadvantage offered by multi-group membership. This principal omission also applies, in some measure, to all the other equity groups.

⁹ Higher Education Council, Federal Government Agency, distributed in November of 1995

Put simply, the body politic chooses to continually over-emphasise the Indigeneity of these groups, thereby isolating them from all other strategic program and policy efforts, when seeking systematic reparation for the other five equity groups.

The isolation is utterly complete, because the race-based factor has no conceptual connections with the other disadvantaged groups issues. This is especially true, as the race-base is one of Indigeneity, rather than ethnicity, because ethnicity, as a group label, wrongly combines all peoples (other than Australian Indigenes) into a theoretically homogeneous group that requires non-Anglo-Saxon racial origins, as mandatory for ethnic group membership.

For the body politic to continue to resist recognising that, through the over emphasis of Indigenous cultural practices, 'race' becomes the dominant disadvantage factor. However, when race is the dominant response factor, we see the unequivocal emergence of oppression, through active racism as a driving force, when effecting any type of positive response to disadvantage, because **the act of positive discrimination is, in fact, the universal act of racism.**

Such a constricting definition totally limits to racial shifts the evolution of effective resolution of particular issues of disadvantage. The notion of culturally recasting political utterance and assistance-focused programs, before it is deemed either workable or acceptable, actually creates an unworkable imperative. Unfortunately the application of programs that are so recast is left largely to the group that created the disadvantaged group's disadvantage and there are obvious and continuing problems with that situation, including the emphatic denial by the body politic of any form of general Australian societal responsibility, historically or current, for the Indigenous peoples' circumstances.

To constantly concentrate on Indigeneity as the key oppressive causal factor, rather than oppression through active racism, is to shift all situation responsibility to the target group, thus relieving the State of all responsibility for effective resolution of the perceived disadvantage. Even more importantly, this political posture relieves both

the State and general society of any responsibility for the causes of the group's disadvantage, as well as any responsibility for resolving the disadvantage.

The key element involved in the establishment and endless promotion of this comprehensive position is the massive theoretical shift of onus from the principal society to the designated disadvantaged group, in this case, Australian Indigenous peoples, through the hallowed, though hollowly practised, dual political concept of Self-Management and Self-Determination.

Further, the notion of treating race as a distinct, though global issue, with a single instrument (equity designation) for the holistic shifting of extremely diverse and complicated deficiencies in the areas of health, education, housing and employment, including all forms of human rights, is in every sense, useless. There are clear cultural and social paradigms, that sub-set Indigenous Australia as a self-contained systemic global unit, within the general Australian population. It is my view that the continued sub-setting compounds disadvantage. There is, therefore, little wisdom in using this sub-setting as the instrument of release, for it is utterly ineffective in this role.

The establishment of programs intent on resolving existing dilemmas of Indigenous Australians, underwritten by using as a base philosophy the presumed general elements of homogeneity of global Australian society, fractures all effort towards effective solutions. Because generic solutions are applied as a salve to the target group/s (the point of reception of all negative energies, the disadvantaged), rather than being applied to the source of the oppression (the site from which the negativity emanates: global Australia), very little meaningful and penetrating change eventuates.

In dealing with the conceptualisation by general Australian society of Indigenous Australians' situations, it is time to recognise that the tangible and observable circumstances Aborigines generally exist in are really exemplary outcomes of the racism that impels the global society in its treatment of this particular disadvantaged group.

I believe it is time to rename all the parts of the equity configuration, and the first element that needs renaming is the target group. The label 'disadvantaged' implies the occupation and relegation of some finite element of the total population to various irrevocable social and economic stratifications in global society. The resulting isolation of groups of citizens, because of difference, is indeed an unhealthy instrument of social construction. Partitioning of individuals into generic groupings because of difference is not, in its own right, necessarily a bad thing. However, when such partitioning results in a particular group's ongoing relationship being based on isolation and ascription in a negative genre with the major society; it certainly is destructive.

I believe unequivocally that 'casualty' is really the right label for Australian Indigenous peoples, because it properly juxtaposes past and present events and historical responses and outcomes through personalising the current circumstances. Acceptance of this moral posture seems the most difficult concept for global Australian society to grasp.

Many of us immediately recognise the implications of using this particular word as the official descriptive and generic label to describe the present circumstances of Australian Indigenous peoples, especially in the context of the Higher Education Council's discussion paper. This uncomfortable scenario, added to the already difficult public position of governments and their agencies and the lack of understanding and sympathy on the part of the general populace towards Indigenous Australians, means that the descriptive political lingua franca must not be obvious, libellous, or condemnatory. Unfortunately, this situation results in misnaming the efforts, or at least over-softening the public language required, as descriptive or explanatory labels.

The result, in terms of operational and theoretical discourse, is that while the general situation requires a degree of linguistic sensitivity, the actual circumstances must still be faced in their most direct and unconditional forms. This may result in shifting language usage from soft-sell discourse to a more politically clinical response.

Further, the general designation of disadvantage is frequently and effectively construed by the dominant group's members as necessarily defining a set of negative life paradigms that are fluid enough to allow transient membership, which, in their terms, indicates a high level of irresponsibility, disinterest and hopelessness on the part of a target group's members.

In fact, the majority of global Australian society and many members of the disadvantaged group believe individuals remain members of that group by choice, or by dint of their lack of personal ambition. These hypotheses must be challenged. That challenge may, however, only occur if space for debate is created without the consequential loss or stalling of existing advantage strategies aimed at the target group, because of the chaos and uncertainty likely to occur when the general status quo of current effort and support is under challenge. It is fundamental that governments maintain existing programs for the duration of the debate, however long that debate may take.

While the debate may move slowly, the simplest reactionary response from governments should be the continuation of systematic and co-ordinated provision of basic humanitarian services to all target groups requiring redefinition. This effort in itself would consume a significant level of energy and resources. From time to time, I glimpse the heady occupation of equity caretakers as being merely a public posturing around the intellectualisation of the issues, rather than development of focused solutions to the disadvantage of Indigenous Australia.

For over twenty-five years, Indigenous Australians have opposed the notion of mainstreaming tactical solutions. There is, currently, a strong feeling that mainstreaming results in the responsible State and Federal government instrumentalities only applying tactical solutions as global social remedies that, to most keen observers, are tenuous options at best and at worst, frequently disconnected from the target group's immediate needs. This situation results in single category infrastructures, with multi-purpose obligations that cannot be articulated cogently, let alone practised and applied efficiently and effectively. I believe it is time to carefully

review the anti-mainstream hypothesis, with a view to holistic community development.

At some point soon, discourse regarding the nature of certain requirements of Indigenous Australians must occur. Themes that field changes and new developments in areas such as political practices, human rights, cultural and spiritual imperatives and general quality of life situations, need to drive the debate, rather than have the discourse constructed and driven, as it currently is, by the needs of external political and social agencies, deemed to be responsible largely for the solutions, though utterly devoid of apparent connection to the causes.

Underwriting such discourse requires adventurous expenditures of energy and some financial resources, in a political atmosphere free of pressure and very focused, in terms of establishing alternative strategies, tactics and procedures to those used during the past four decades.

One significant element that must be faced early, in an anticipated twenty-first century remodelling of current political and support practices, is the aptness of the reasons for and techniques used in target programming, as well as the essential imbuing of all endeavour, through genuine collaboration with various members of the designated disadvantaged group.

Another important factor, seemingly missing from the current intellectual frames of reference constantly in use by provider agencies, is that change, improvement and advancement are desired outcomes that must be maintained for decades. The past decades have seen numerous initiatives introduced without context and cut to a very limited political time line, depending on the longevity of experience and level of interest and commitment of the relevant minister, government persuasion or senior adviser's ambitious personal vision.

These decades have seen political initiatives mainly used to 'de-mob' individual Indigenous Australians, because they seem to attain collectively agreed target outcomes, as a result of various combinations of impacting circumstances and through

having capitalised on certain elements of the various positive discrimination packages. The overall result constructs two concepts of interpreted behaviour: *first* those who capitalise on opportunities sustain an unwelcome shift in their group membership and *second*, they generally become the benchmark for the rest of the group's failures.

Governments and their instrumentalities must experience lengthy discourse regarding, for example, individual Indigenous people's various and complex cultural obligations and practices. By failing to gather, as a set of separate *rites de passage*, a wholesome, generic understanding of the principles of such practices and learning, to differentiate them from global issues such as quality housing, essential services, employment opportunities and choice of educational options, bureaucrats will continue to 'acculturate' in a false Indigenous Australian paradigm, unnatural and unrelated personal and global outcomes. Further, bureaucrats will continue to confuse individual paradigm shifts with global paradigm shifts within general Australian Indigenous societies.

It is time to realise that program targeting for equity outcomes may only be secured in a totally foreign socio-political context. It requires Indigenous Australians to practise a form of anaesthetisation of certain other cultural imperatives, before the desired outcomes may be fully realised. If the preferred outcomes are to embody improvements — not only in tangible areas such as employment, housing and other essential services, but also in the various forums of cultural 'rites of passage' — the cultural operational paradigms, the practical solutions and attendant infrastructure must be separated conceptually and literally.

In attempting to establish such progressive programs during the eighties, some of the most intense activities of equity-oriented programs for Indigenous Australians, (PEP etc), were focused on altering the culture of global Australia in areas such as schooling, TAFE, general health and local government, through articulating equity and EEO principles. However, what actually happened was that they (the equity group) had the tables turned on them, when both the systemic and sectoral education providers conferred responsibility for their failure back onto the target group. We then

saw the emergence of a limited number of Federal programs aimed at imposing certain standards and expectations of behaviour modification.

The most acclaimed of these classical conditioning projects was and remains, the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), sometimes laconically referred to as the 'work for the dole trick', administered by local governments such as legally constituted community councils.

The CDEP originally emphasised several theoretical strategic activities and outcomes that projected positive and monumental social and cultural infrastructure changes in participating Indigenous Australian communities. One very public and prominently postulated outcome was to provide to Australian Indigenous participants a sense of self-esteem, some measure of improved quality of life, a sense of well-being and an opportunity to become a worthwhile member of the community. The production of picturesque physical environments that left clean streets, empty public refuse bins, restored roads, houses, gardens and the like was emphasised as exemplary practice and therefore preferred CDEP outcomes.

Separate from the targeted generalised benefits in the pre-program literature, including the body of data contained in the *Miller Report*,¹⁰ considerable emphasis seemed to be placed on issues pertaining to general community self-worth, community obligation, social contribution and individual professional and personal development. CDEP was a major tactic for global equity, through a focus on strategies that, in many ways, applied the essential functional principles of assimilation. For example, self-worth and the other desirable outcomes of the CDEP, through erroneous labelling, were more easily recognised as global non-Indigenous traits, presumed as natural outcomes if one was gainfully employed. The presumption that these traits being were missing in the Aboriginal personae underwrote the value of the CDEP. At the same time, these presumptions also reinforced racism in a pure and public sense.

¹⁰ Miller, M. 1985. *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs*, AGPS, Canberra.

Apart from the very dubious, though mixed bag of results that has emerged from copious minor and often anecdotal reviews of the CDEP, one profoundly important factor to energise CDEP has remained largely unmentioned. This factor is the relativity of CDEP to the numerous isolated tactical programs designed to lift the weight of heritable oppression of Indigenous Australians, through having them being seen to earn their own way, in the most deficient of all engaged national employment strategies, 'working for the dole'.

However, it was possible that through the CDEP participants could undertake a variety of recognisably useful works that are easily identified as the productivity artefact required by institutional managerialism as evidence of normalisation. That fact remains as almost the only constant in the daily activities of every CDEP community.

I contend that the enormous struggle undertaken to Indigenise mainstream society's classic conditioning strategies and the abundant infrastructure options utilised by the Indigenous leadership in various sectors of critical situations — such as access to decent housing, general employment, broad education and satisfactory levels of health or the CDEP objectives — has failed miserably.

It is clear that government, at any level, will only transfer authority and responsibility from their own agents to Australian Indigenous agents when Indigenous agents mirror the provider infrastructure. This approach seems sound, until we recognise that there is no real substance required by governments, only imitation of their image. Rather, it is a historical fact that self-management reception infrastructures need to *look* sound, rather than to initially *prove* sound.

All of this and the implied extrapolations, when considered in the context of single equity group's designation, forces me to conclude that the only outcome not realisable in any practical and wide-ranging sense is success.

Success requires different ingredients each time pragmatic techniques are applied to situations that are circumstantially similar, but substantially different. Once we

recognise and accept that the Indigenisation of non-Indigenous infrastructures and methodologies will never positively prevail, we are then left with a series of questions, rather than a functional infrastructure for solutions.

My original point in canvassing the CDEP in this discourse is to illustrate the global social justice/equity option, related to all of the above, but principally to the act of the apparently necessary dislodgment and diminution of Indigenous First Culture initiatives, practices, causal factors and fundamental values that guarantee continuing political support.

The introduction of CDEP was premised on a number of expectations and designated outcomes. To achieve all CDEP goals, the first truth that had to emerge was a simple but devastating one. The first truth recognises that global Australian society generally believes that Indigenous Australians, in very particular situations (socially, culturally, geographically and economically), are largely wasters of taxpayer money. There is also a perception that Indigenous peoples spend their days in intense pursuit of activities that the premise of CDEP ascribed as useless, time-wasting and non-productive, which would not shake the cornerstone of beneficial changes in any Indigenous community.

There are numerous other examples of inexact strategies and goals set to reduce the current negative circumstances of the majority of Indigenous Australians. There are also as many dismal failures, in terms of similarly benevolent, though largely isolated strategic options, proffered by governments and their instrumentalities as solutions to Indigenous problems, all to no avail.

The continued reference to and restriction of Australian Indigenous peoples to a single equity group status results in the deregistration of Indigenous Australians as a complex people, with complex issues. The absence of such clear perceptions of these complexities reinforces the blinkers worn by bureaucrats and some Indigenous leaders, which prevent the development of multi-strand strategies on important Indigenous equity issues. As a practical example in the higher education sector, restricting the conceptualisation of current equity strategies to main campuses is very

limiting and offers university education to only a very narrow percentage of the potential Australian Indigenous cohort, yet that is what is happening. In fact, some universities are closing community-based programs, because of a claimed lack of funding.

The existing higher education equity formula needs to be focused and disciplined, and the following should serve to illuminate further discourse on this matter.

The Australian Indigenous peoples' equity formula has several critical factors that must be recognised and adhered to. *First*, as a matter of ethics, Indigenous Australians should automatically receive all essential services, at a standard circumstantially equal to other citizens. These services **must** exist at an effective level that ensures permanent, positive, changes to existing health, education, housing and employment standards and opportunities, and general social and cultural situations, before maximum Indigenous population use of university equity programs will occur.

This critical ethic must also abide by the numerous international charters established to protect Indigenous peoples' rights and freedoms. Exceptions, such as being defined as disadvantaged because of rural residency or extreme isolation, apparently present a ponderously more difficult scenario to articulate. The University sector currently receives sufficient funds to accommodate the request for access programs on a significant number of home communities. We should remember that clustering communities is a viable and cost-effective option, yet is untried in any co-ordinated or extensive way.

For example, in rural and isolated communities, essential service facilities must be maintained at a constant operating level, and the cost to the community should be calculated in the context of the community's ability to pay and should conceptually shift the existing general equity and the provision of basic support services to a holistic approach. In situations where the circumstances of a community preclude payment for essential services, the relevant authorities should provide the service **free of charge** within the long-term concept that, should the community's general

circumstance in this regard alter positively, then some effort towards meeting basic costs would be expected.

Second, an integrated community strategic plan, embracing all service delivery agencies and the communities involved as equal partners in service provision and maintenance, must be the core essential in any general equity operational infrastructure. This scenario requires strong and effective inter-departmental and multi-tiered governmental agreements that focus on co-operation, rather than inter-departmental competition, at important bureaucratic management and budget decision-making and program-development levels.

Third, the elimination of negative isolation factors is critical to establishing minimum standards of living conditions. The advent of such a co-operative infrastructure will ensure long-term changes on communities. Governments must accept that while some co-operative strategies will see immediate, positive results, other strategies will see changes occur on a generation time-line. The centrifugal force of such co-ordinated approaches should focus on quality of life standards and not merely on minimal survival standards.

Finally, it is clear that nationally, the present theoretical and financial arrangements specifically provided to Australian Indigenous peoples constitute little more than an incomplete and inadequate base funding, proffered in recognition of the **absence of basic human rights**.

I believe that at all levels of funding and strategic planning undertaken to improve the circumstance of Indigenous Australians, through initiatives such as designated higher education equity target group policies and programs, should in global terms confine the managerial artefact and the provision of funding such target groups to innovation and the extension of innovation. This political position presumes the existence of all basic services, and that the package of equity focuses on excellence and equity, rather than principally on diversity, as the current political discourse does.

The *Equity, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper* seemingly refers to the importance of equity infrastructure, or the need for a holistic approach, that extends university activities beyond existing concepts of obligations to current client groups, though it falls short of actually saying so. (p. 9, para. 1)

Before considering several other statements in the *Equity, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper*, I complete this section of my response by admonishing governments at all levels to remove the race-based factor as the principal difficulty from all considerations when responding to physical community needs. The race-based preferential configurations may easily be attended to, once agreements to provide holistic infrastructure are made. At present, it seems habitual that cultural configurations define service delivery, and this approach proves far too difficult when the infrastructure providers do not understand such configurations.

As an example, I believe that most State and municipal governments would forbid a group of non-Indigenous people to establish a community in a locale if, while seeking an independent lifestyle and socio-cultural facility, they failed to co-operate with all local government legislative requirements regarding adequate community hygiene facilities, housing construction, educational experiences (especially compulsory schooling) and other home and workplace safety standards.

My primary question therefore is: why do State and municipal governments countenance the continuation of such appalling living conditions for Indigenous Australians? For the majority of isolated and rural community groups, the country they occupy is the paramount artefact of Indigenous Australians' heritable and spiritual cultures, where relocation is not a viable option.

The selection by country, rather than the selection of country, is a factor that cannot continue to be ignored. Authorities must also recognise that this principle is not extinguished for urban-dwelling Australian Indigenous peoples, irrespective of any foreign laws to the contrary.

In essence, the above discussion is meant to raise absolutely fundamental concepts, critical to establishing a fully integrated holistic institutional approach, rather than to articulate specific, though random, solutions. It is clear that all agencies responsible for strategic planning in the various areas of designated disadvantage must confer and negotiate an articulated regional plan that supports and abets each individual developmental element, to ensure maximisation of effort and outcomes.

This approach may require extensive and complicated consultations. However any lesser approach is merely piecemeal and distracting. The consultation process is extremely important, as Australian Indigenous peoples still hold to the literal interpretation of the dual policy of Self-Management and Self-Determination, though others may have given up the struggle and may now interpret the dual policy as most non-Indigenous people do, figuratively.

Put simply, the all-embracing ethic of consultation between governments and Australian Indigenous peoples in establishing strategies for self-management and self-determination must permeate the entire exercise.

While these comprehensive tactics must compel the actions of government and the creation of their policies, following the joint determination to act, they **must not be used to define** the actions required, but **rather to focus** the action required. With this notion of ethics and tactics prominent in our thinking, the final strata of the formula require at least the following for maximum utilisation of university education:

- ◆ The establishing of sufficient essential services for Australian Indigenous peoples so as to attain satisfactory quality of life standards as citizen rights.
- ◆ The general reclassification of current consultative mechanisms and operating strategies and obligations within the context of multi-equity target grouping, to ensure positive results through agreements made with the Australian Indigenous Equity Group members.

Specific Issues emerging From the Higher Education Council's *Equity Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper*

Based on my belief in the need for a new, transparent, multi-equity (Indigenous) group

resource distribution practice, I believe the discussion paper *A Fair Chance for All*, promoted a very limited and undemanding strategy of university education options for Aborigines. These limited and limiting perceptions of the tertiary needs of Australian Indigenous peoples are espoused in the following extract from the *Equality, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper*:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Objective: To increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in higher education with the emphasis on bachelor and higher degrees and certain disciplines including Law, Business and Administration, Medicine and Health Sciences.

Targets: An increase of 50% in Aboriginal enrolments in higher education by 1995; an increase in the proportion of bachelor degree enrolments by 1992 and to 60% by 1995; improvement in the graduation rates of Aboriginal students to that of the total student population by 1995, improvement in the number of Aboriginal students across all courses by 1995 in particular in Law, Business, Medicine and Health.

Outcomes: Participation rates for Indigenous students have increased by 48% since 1991 and in 1995 indicate that overall participation is still below population share (88% of the expected rate). The field of study and level of course analysis summarised in Appendix 1 shows that participation has increased for all fields other than Architecture and Engineering. The broad objective has therefore been met although the majority of Aboriginal enrolments are still in enabling and sub-degree programs.

Table 3 shows the relevant statistical information for the specific targets.

The overall participation target set in *A Fair Chance For All* has not been met as the growth since 1991 is only 42.6%, and the percentage of enrolments of bachelor degree level is only 53% compared with the target of 60% in 1995. Graduation rates are not easily measurable but since they are a combination of success and retention, improvement in those indicator values parallels changes in the graduation rate. These show that in 1994, the latest data available, success and retention are respectively only 77% and 75% of those of non-Indigenous students, well short of the target of parity. However, the field of study targets have been met and in the case of law and health, have been dramatically exceeded.¹¹

While the *Equity, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper* contains discrepancies regarding institutional outcome statements and student attainment statements regarding Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in higher education, the statement extracted above is the most damaging because, after declaring high levels of success on the part of Universities to meet targets or to come close to meeting targets, the equity target group is re-ascribed as victims through the statement ‘...the broad objective has therefore been met, although the majority of Aboriginal enrolments are still in enabling and sub-degree programs.’ (*Outcomes*; p. 14.)

From an Aborigine’s perspective, the above echoes the following hidden dual agenda. *First*, the institutions are rigorously striving to meet set DEETYA targets and *second*, the Aborigines still prefer or need enabling courses. While the latter may be true, the power of the outcome’s disclosure tips the scales in favour of the institutions. One glaring difficulty is that, apart from single-equity group membership, the Discussion Paper does not link the results stated above to the issues of massive inequity that underwrite the daily living patterns and circumstances of Australia’s Aborigines and the Indigenous peoples of the Torres Strait Islands.

11

The definitions of ‘other’ via a political shroud of ‘invisibility’.

The *Equality, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper* provides an interesting insight into the Federal government’s tendency to avoid issues by failing to confront directly senior levels of university management for fear (I assume), of breaching the **mythological** culture of institutional autonomy. The following quotation highlights two important factors in the context of action in the current equality debate. The *first* is covert (a lack of intensity), the *second* overt (lack of reason to participate), though both points relate directly to funding as a catalyst for inaction by universities in the global, social justice paradigm.

While data has not been presented for individual universities, it is clear from the analysis that the system is not performing uniformly in achieving equity targets. While most of the general targets set in *A Fair Chance for All* may be met, the differentiation in emphasis and achievements between institutions is a concern particularly because there is a resource burden associated with provisions of support and other services to some equity groups.¹²

Earlier in the same discussion paper, the following statement appears to present a different, more malevolent institutional profile:

The Department of Employment, Education and Training reported that higher education institutions had shown increased commitment to equity through the development of improved equity plans and the implementation of a number of special programs.¹³

Following the above round of applause for some discreet movement in some universities, despite the comment regarding the unattractiveness of equity funding as an inducement, the report shifts the authority of participation responsibility from universities to an entirely different group, in our case, Australian Indigenous families.

¹² Ibid, p. 8

¹³ Ibid, p. 8

The evaluation draws attention to the fact that, in spite of these advances, considerable inequalities still existed in higher education participation and success, and many of these began at school level. In particular, it mentioned research that indicated that ‘children whose parents do not have post-secondary education and who come from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to complete year 12 and continue to higher education’. The report noted that overcoming social and psychological factors, and the lack of recognition of higher education as a viable alternative, are equally important in providing awareness of access for such people. These results were also confirmed by a team from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), which reported in 1993 that higher education participation remains a poor representation of the total age cohort, and still does not reflect the composition of population in the final year of secondary schooling. (Williams et al. 1993) Differences between participation rates for equity groups and the general population relate to family attitudes about higher education as well as to the degree of support that they need to provide to their children. (p. 9, para. 1)

There is a clear struggle inherent in this discourse. It appears from the above that there is an emerging difficulty in reconciling appropriate or theoretically positive, equity-orientated programs from within the University sector with a less than fully enthusiastic response from the target equality groups. The imagery contained in the above certainly relaxes universities’ self-scrutiny activities in this important area.

Apart from failing to recognise the dramatic shift of emphasis by the Indigenous Australian equity target group towards higher education as a viable option over the past two decades, by implicitly including Australian Indigenous peoples in the failure culture, as stated above, the discussion paper also fails to recognise and articulate the essential factor of program timing and longevity.

Timing is certainly a critical factor in establishing the level of Australian Indigenous peoples’ success in all the preferred indicator areas — access, success, non-traditional discipline studies, graduation levels and general undergraduate and post-graduate studies. Timing and co-ordinating the universities’ academic offerings with the expressed educational desires of Australian Indigenous peoples requires a set of broad

and interesting options that need to be available in places other than main campuses, or adjunct campuses, of urban homogeneity.

In concentrating on timing as a critical factor, a recapitulation of the genesis of the reports theme, of reviewing the outcomes of *A Fair Chance For All*, is required.

Just prior to the release of the *A Fair Chance For All* discussion paper in 1990, a decision was apparently taken to establish some benchmark targets to use as indicator probes towards consolidating equity, equality, access, success, participation, graduation rates and undergraduate and postgraduate studies, for the Labor Party's keystone social justice objective.

First, however, the government had to designate a certain target assemblage, and six groups emerged, following fairly broad consultations and continuing lobbying on the part of welfare groups already marginalised in some way.

The six groups were identified as follows:

- ◆ People from low socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- ◆ Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.
- ◆ Women, particularly in non-traditional courses and postgraduate study.
- ◆ People with disabilities.
- ◆ People from non-English-speaking backgrounds.
- ◆ People from rural and isolated backgrounds.

Each group was allocated at least one global objective, outcome and global strategic benchmark statement.

Based on a formula espoused in the benchmark statements, the resultant criteria defined individuals and clustered them into contemporary equity target groups. Through being selected out of the concentrated population norm, each group earned its particular right to exist on a miscellaneous basis. Ironically, the combined numerical membership of these marginal, or miscellaneous groups, represents a

significantly larger sector of the total Australian population than the group defining its largely Anglo-Saxon self as the dominant and governing regime.

My cynical understanding of what precipitated the establishment of the six contemporary equity groups — apart from identifying a series of segmented constituencies, who would remain grateful especially on polling day — is that while in a position of power, a social and political minority established its supremacy, by **formularising difference and recasting it as disadvantage**, thereby offering capture to free agents and then, in a very controlled manner, facilitating their quest for freedom through the equity programs.

I believe that in many ways, the areas identified as contemporary target equity or disadvantaged circumstances are psychological, rather than actual. I firmly believe that in the current environment, individuals actually fail to pursue the freedom discourse, time and again, unless the crutch of equity marginalisation is their constant catalyst. As a result, groups and individuals self-reconstruct and self-regulate, within that context, their efforts to break the shackles of equity oppression.

Historically, it is not an unfamiliar strategy for the body politic to pressurise atypical members of their own society into groups, who then herald their own idiosyncratic traits as the principal cause of their designated separation and collective identity and existence. Evidence of the enforced marginalisation of people from non-dominant racial group stock is overwhelming and terribly exploited by the body politic. Following the acceptance of separation, the body politic not only legislates such divisions, or posits a legislative framework, but nurtures these divisions to the point of almost impossible reconciliation between contemporary and futuristic equity goals and outcomes and the concept of the norm. The habit of treating individuals in this manner, merely because of racial difference, is an age-old social purification tactic.

The purification or cleansing of the dominant group, through isolating individuals who fail to meet a fictitious norm, has taken a variety of shapes during the history of humankind. However, in modern society, the isolation is more debilitating than at any other stage of human development, because it defines social, racial, gender, economic

and residential, geographical differences and situations, as anomie. Worse though, are the outrageous inducements, such as providing public, political and social forums to marginalised peoples, to plead their humanity and normalcy. The dominant political group underwrites these inducements with offers of targeted funding, that also attracts deep and vengeful resentment from the rest of the populace, irrespective of which group they belong to.

Might we not begin a thorough, mobilised and aggressive investigation into the uncivilised pursuit of access to the power source of the political phenomenon of rule of the minority¹⁴?

The debate rages through the likes of Andrew Theophanous in *Understanding Social Justice — An Australian Perspective* where, in discussing the concept of self-determination he exposes simple concepts as in the following extract:

Democracy, therefore, attempts to maximise self-determination. To let others determine goals for you is tantamount to becoming a slave. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the eighteenth century French philosopher who became a major champion of democracy, in his *Social Contract*, rejects the notion of one person determining the social goals of another and thereby ruling over him — for this leads to tyranny and oppression. An anti-democrat could respond to this argument by claiming that the strong ruler is necessary to ensure the unity of society (particularly law and order). To this Rousseau replies:

It will be said that a despot gives his subjects the assurance of civil tranquillity. Very well, but what does it profit them, if those wars against other powers which result from a despot's ambition, if his insatiable greed, and the oppressive demands of his administration, cause more desolation than civil strife could cause. There is peace in dungeons but is that enough to make dungeons desirable?

¹⁴ Theophanous, Andrew. , *Understanding Social Justice An Australian Perspective* 2nd Ed., Elkira Books Publications, Carlton South Melbourne, Vic., 1993, Chapter 2,

For Rousseau, it is only when all the persons who are members of a society or a social group make a collective determination of their will, that we have genuine democracy. On this criterion, a society is more democratic the more the people participate collectively to determine the goals and purposes of the society.¹⁵

The separate treatment of citizens by the polity is disturbing, because the process continually recasts social justice principles as warrants to rights, rather than reasons for equity, thereby establishing conflict as a core interactive principle, especially when Indigeneity and ethnicity are the principal equity qualifications. Such encouraged and ultimately enforced separation from the dominant group, irrespective of its social per capita percentile, is indeed social purification.

The over-simplification of the social classificatory system, a caste system in many ways, ensures the existence of negative circumstances that, in numerous social justice contexts, are converted to positive *rites de passage*. In nurturing this social contortion, the body politic ensures its own existence eternally, because once a group is formed out of adversity, they, by definition, work to establish and authorise a separate alter ego group (the bureaucracy), that must also exist eternally to service the newly formed (and frequently reaffirmed and recreated as new), eternally defined, marginalised congregation of the unfortunate.

While it may seem an extreme extrapolation of the situation, it is possible for Australian Indigenous peoples to believe that the other equity groups have been established to camouflage the heinous social crime of racism against them, especially when one surveys the daily political statements and general media statements pertaining to equity and social justice issues. It is only Aborigines that are named daily in press and parliaments as an equity issue group. Even Torres Strait Islanders fail to receive the same level of notoriety and pressurised attention.

Interestingly, most commentators mainly refer in such statements to land rights and other direct results of the illegal, military conquest of Aborigines, such as poor health, housing, education, poor social behaviour, poor employment prospects and the like.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 28–31

Equity is never the context of these discourses; conflict and financial encumbrance on the public purse always is. The total absence of positive parliamentary and media attention to contemporary equity issues of Australian Indigenous peoples consistently reinforces the cyclic nature of racism and general negativism.

This newly formed marginal class of Australian Indigenous peoples (equity target group) continually requires a harmonious Indigenous public body to adjudicate on every matter, circumstance and option on offer from government, and to accept general accountability responsibilities. In the process and context of public liability, judgments regarding every nuance of activity are made on behalf of the marginalised peoples, thereby forever removing from that group their obligation to be not only self-managing and self-determining, but also self-discovering.

As a result, in less than one generation, the disadvantaged group's differences are focused so that they need to continually reconstruct the core differentials, generation upon generation, or they believe they will cease to exist. For Australian Indigenous peoples, this process is also indemnification against white normalcy and global embodiment. For the body politic, it is the insurance for demarcation and effective cultural, political and economic supremacy.

The new human ethic of dependency, established through the above political constructs of each disadvantaged equity group, presides over a compelling desire to change the group's situation completely, while at the same time working arduously and often violently to keep unchanged that which they need to change, in order to qualify for universal acceptance. Not surprisingly, the combined effect of these activities has seen the evolution of a phenomenon in Indigenous Australia, in which any consolidating group membership traits require conformity to disadvantage as a certificate of legitimisation.

This phenomenon occurs largely because the State polity, after constructing the disadvantage paradigm, has sermonised and revered the now marginal group's causes of marginalisation so intensely, that to shift the core differentials will cause many marginal groups to believe they will, as a result of such a shift, cease to exist.

The dominant group's political rectitude which at present impels all equity target group policies and programs, seems motivated by the effects of exclusion. At the same time, the dominant groups continue to elevate and fund the desires of equity groups to appear to opt for inclusion into the majority society, while having their individual equity group membership and integrity cancelled as a result of such mobility.

The State polity has defined these equity target groups as being in lesser human circumstance with such intensity, that marginalised peoples now use available resources and strategies to ensure that their group's particular, lesser, human circumstances underwrite and authorise all changes and options exercised. This, of course, results in no change of circumstance at all.

To ‘Aboriginalise’ or to ‘de-Aboriginalise’ — is that a question?

A very simple example resides in the thinking of some Indigenous Australians, who believe that to take a Western university education actually de-Aboriginalises one. Of course, it suits some to promote this hypothesis, because even a basic belief in one’s intellectual creativity favourably shifts the point of buoyancy in the equity debate towards the disadvantaged.

The acknowledgment that equity groups such as Australian Indigenous peoples might be capable of scholarly endeavour, at a level so advanced that they disdain Western academic paradigms, is to seriously question the existence of social justice equity issues, and focuses us on issues of deliberate and insidious exclusion. As a result, the constant quest for equality, opportunity and the exercise of one’s choices is enveloped in an almost spiritual belief that, should one succeed, one forfeits one’s self.

On the matter of de-Aboriginalisation, however, I believe there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to justify a level of disquiet regarding in-context politics and social pressures bearing down on Australian Indigenous students in university studies, to at least understand the fear of pressurised personal change, even though I do not subscribe to the de-Aboriginalisation theory.

- ◆ To offer a view on the theory, in support of that fear, it is necessary to highlight certain experiences Australian Indigenous students are compelled to share on a regular basis that other higher education equity groups rarely experience. Some of these experiences are:
- ◆ Continuing and broad community involvement, which frequently includes irrational expectations and interference with outcomes, in terms of satisfying personal and political aspirations.
- ◆ Continuing pressure within the university sector to justify one’s presence in, and membership of, a marginal group.

- ◆ Unfounded jealousy and criticism by academic staff and student colleagues, regarding privileged treatment and their belief in Indigenous students receiving excessive leniency in terms of academic standards and personal achievements.
- ◆ Constant wrangling with university administration and academic line managers, regarding accessing adequate levels of targeted funding and the use of funding on expenditures peculiar to the Indigenous students' equity profile.
- ◆ Continual requests and requirements on all Australian Indigenous students to manifest advanced and refined 'Elder level wisdom and knowledge', to be displayed in teaching/ learning situations.
- ◆ Assumed level of total knowledge of all Indigenous cultures and political histories.
- ◆ Extraordinary pressures to comply with the public rules of equity group membership.
- ◆ Experiencing embarrassment at being continually spotlighted publicly, especially when achieving either exceptional levels of academic excellence, or paucity of results.
- ◆ Experiencing entire academic career in a deficient learning context.
- ◆ Experiencing extreme reactions, positive and negative, to public displays of cultural activities, that are often mandatory if one wants to retain open recognition by non-Indigenous peoples of one's equity group membership and acceptance of membership by other Australian Indigenous group/ community members.
- ◆ Constant struggle with the effects of historical and continuing appropriation of one's cultural knowledge and artefacts by non-Indigenous academics.

- ◆ Constantly being the subject of sociological, anthropological and personal in-house academic research activities.
- ◆ Being forced to apply recently acquired intellectual and hypothetical subject-based skills, to self and home community analysis, rather than to generalise global Australian society, as other students do.

All of the above, and more, are pressures that members of the Australian Indigenous equity group student cohort experience on a daily basis. In my experience, those expectations, in context, are not prevalent in the daily lives of members of the other equity groups. Clearly, there is extreme pressure when one identifies as an Australian Indigenous student.

The Higher Education Council's *Equity, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper* of November 1995 is presented as an evaluation of the goals, targets, orientations and achievements proposed, in the DEETYA Discussion Paper, *A Fair Chance For All* (1990), though it is certainly not a comprehensive evaluation of the targets and philosophy set out in that paper. In the foreword to that discussion paper, the then Minister for DEETYA, the Hon. J.S.Dawkins, made two important points. The *first* referred to the ethics of education social justice practices. The *second* related to the need for national and institutional planning regarding institutional commitment to equity as an operating principal.

Focusing on the under-classes.

With regard to the ethics of education social justice, Dawkins stated in the *Fair Chance for All* paper that:

Education and Training are vital factors in providing opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups. (p. 3, para. 2)

Reflecting on Dawkins' words and views expressed in the foreword, it is clear that he considered it was not merely access to education and skills training, but more

importantly, that the acquisition of the intellectual and practical outcomes of education and skills training is required if disadvantage is going to shift proportionally and permanently.

This perception of meaning by many Australian Indigenous students and Australian Indigenous academics has not been omitted from the intense debate over orientation, practice and resource usage that has raged among higher education equity target groups, particularly the Australian Indigenous equity group, the higher education sector members and the funding body, DEETYA. It is not to understate the relationship between these key participating groups to refer to it as **the love/hate triangle**. This is especially the case for Aborigines and the Australian Indigenous peoples who live in the Torres Strait Islands.

Fundamental to evaluating the outcomes of *A Fair Chance For All* is an acceptance of the above as a true representation of meaning for Australian Indigenous equity group members, when reconsidering Dawkins' views, on the matter of the ethics of education social justice.

The *second* point of importance Dawkins made related to developing a national and institutional plan that would underwrite the acquisition of global education and skills, as well as define the practice and focus of the work and global orientations of the love/hate triangle.

Again, two of the equity social justice forums (Universities and DEETYA), found conflicts and some joy in articulating, from a self-perception base, the following statement made by Dawkins, also in the foreword to *A Fair Chance For All*:

I am pleased to issue this statement of the Government's objectives, targets and strategies for achieving equity in higher education. It was prepared after advice from the Higher Education Council and consultation with higher education institutions and Commonwealth bodies representing disadvantaged groups. This document acknowledges the substantial commitment to equity which many institutions have

made in previous years and builds on that experience to develop a comprehensive national and institutional plan for achieving our overall objective.¹⁶

Again, in analysing Dawkins' words and views, it is clear that he has a strong grasp, at a conceptual level, of the need for a national and institutional plan to respond to the public understanding of his previous points — access and opportunity. So, rather than responding to the meaning of the first comment cited above, the love/hate triangle began to operate frantically, though in often dysfunctional ways, in terms of providing a national and institutional plan.

The energy expended in supporting Australian Indigenous peoples as an equity target group was so intense that at least two universities in a southern State received targeted Indigenous funding for at least one (or two) full financial years, before they established a program, and yet another university, which was funded solely as an equity institution, refused to acknowledge that they had received targeted funding for the same group. One should not become too cynical though. It is important to note that in the mid-seventies, when many Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE) became involved in equity education programs for Aborigines, those efforts required a funding inducement. For example, in Victoria participating institutions received around \$10,000 per Aboriginal enrolment triennially. These institutions also received Abstudy Special Course Funding, as additional support funding on an annual basis.

In the 1990s, Universities received, on average, around \$10,300 per enrolment, on an advanced target EFTSU basis, as well as substantial support funding; both these allocations were triennially funded. It seems that the historical interest in equity programs for Australian Indigenous peoples has always been associated with additional funding. I believe it is time to comprehensively review all universities and assess their efforts in terms of successful outcomes for Indigenous Australian students against the period of time they have been receiving generous allocations of disadvantaged program funding. The review should include a detailed assessment of

¹⁶ Op. cit. p. 3, para. 3

graduation patterns, including discipline focuses and analysis of actual expenditures on Indigenous students, against actual incomes of target funding. Of course, there are many other issues at hand, but these would emerge in the context of a comprehensive review.

Before commenting on the outcomes, or indeed the possibility of any outcomes meeting the meaning of the first point in Dawkins' statement (acquisition of education and skills training rather than merely opportunity and access to education and skills-training facilities), it is essential that several other important political and strategic events occur. These are, in essence:

- ◆ Extensive dialogue between the three stake-holder groups on establishing appropriate equity and mainstream infrastructure in universities.
- ◆ The articulation of a new paradigm in which to positively operate and to actively dislodge oppression and racism.
- ◆ Promotion of cultural reformation in the context of the retention of Australian Indigenous cultures and the adoption of practical, operational practices in program delivery.
- ◆ Commitment to holistic planning.
- ◆ The identification of problems by jointly defining the dimensions of diversity as a positive paradigm and establishing agreeably appropriate strategies, as well as focusing on shifting the prejudice base of global Australian society.
- ◆ The consolidation of essential ethics in terms of dealing with racial differentials and preferred or requisite mobility of equity group members, at all social, economic, cultural and political levels.

It is important to note that many of the principles espoused throughout this response to the discussion paper (*Equity, Diversity and Excellence*; 1995), certainly apply as

instruments and artefacts, to secure change and power in an holistic, social justice sense. As such, the principles relating to essential strategies, freedoms, options, practices and concepts contained herein, for Aborigines and the Australian Indigenous peoples of the Torres Straits, also apply in many ways to the other higher education equity groups. This conceptual alignment aids our analysis of the six equity group scenes, even though they are all cluttered with individual debris and juxtaposed differently, though at the same time being proportionally similar and transient. I believe certain circumstances, which have been delineated as traits of disadvantage, are merely usual life experiences. Of course, this opinion is not broadly held within the Indigenous nations, though I think the concept deserves broad public debate.

When all six equity group scenes are monitored, we find almost all the debris is metaphorical in shape, colour, proportion and transportability; all debris, that is, except one (or possibly two) elements that are truly confined, in a universally peculiar manner, to only one of the six groups. At the end point in every equity debate is the persistent determination, or will, of the target group to fully participate in what is being offered within an established formula, that should require the academic establishment to ask each group, ‘what they want’, as part of the process of facilitating effective equity programs.

This consultative process often proves to be the scourge of the higher education sector, because of their eternal and sacred ceremonial autonomy and operational arrangements. These structures are certainly a challenge to all the preferred arrangements of the Federal and State funding groups — or they should be. However, even if those funding groups transcribed the equity ideal to practice, there would still be inherent inhibitors to Australian Indigenous peoples’ success in attaining higher education, because of the nature of the original relationships between Indigenous Australians and the invaders’ descendants.

One major inhibitor to such success is the extreme isolation within which all education social justice strategies operate. There has never been a time when the trio agreed to deal with certain education equity issues and training equity issues as a single, co-ordinated entity.

Should that conceptualisation prove difficult to achieve, the option of contiguous treatment of education equity issues and training equity issues seems at least a graspable notion and should result in establishing achievable strategies.

To my knowledge the contiguous policy and program option has never been considered, or even widely canvassed. Further, the extremely debilitating argument between the various sectoral education providers over whose responsibilities and obligations are whose, has been nurtured in each sector by their own seemingly limitless complacency over the question of implementing and inculcating quality education social justice practices for each new generation of students.

This complacency resulted in conceptually avoiding the simplest conceptual amalgamation, that of education and training. Further, the general combatant nature of each sector's approach, coupled with the internal competitive nature of each sector's individual agency, totally hamstring innovation and collaboration. I believe that innovation and collaboration are the two vital ingredients required in establishing functionally mobile education equity and social justice practices and programs.

Of course, I have not yet considered inter-sectoral collaboration, which in itself would establish new, holistic, operating paradigms, which would change the entire world construct for Aborigines and Indigenous peoples living in the Torres Strait Islands, by bringing a harmonious and co-ordinated approach to redressing the broad equity issues at hand.

The extreme reluctance, based on racism and sectoral territoriality, of the love/hate triangle to operate in a co-ordinated manner within the existing national tertiary arena has resulted in a set of fractured sectoral policies and strategies which achieve little in terms of shifting equity imbalance. As a result, I do not look with any joy to the future, where I believed a collegial approach might work. Unless we successfully negotiate cross-sectoral collaboration, we will not, in any sense, positively affect the lives of the Australian Indigenous community's rank and file members.

The preface of *A Fair Chance For All* did highlight issues such as those above. However, what the preface did not highlight is the massive, disproportionate, social

and racial struggle and conflict, about the questions of ‘who is finally responsible’ and ‘what ultimately needs to be done’.

The very poor analysis and cursory nature of the *Equity, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper*, in reviewing the targets and strategies of *A Fair Chance For All*, caused me to remonstrate by not responding to the Higher Education Council’s draft discussion paper. Even though universities have received massive funding and have had an exceptionally long time to focus on the groups, targets and strategies and to get it right, the concept of equity, as advanced in the paper, still eludes them, even though the paper clearly stated that:

The main areas of success raised by responding institutions related to perceived difficulties in the definition of disadvantaged groups and the identification of students within these groups; the resource implications for institutions introducing suggested strategies; the inadequacy of earmarked equity funding and the need to consider **alternative** mechanisms for its allocation; and data collection and monitoring requirements and their relationship to national targets and performance indicators¹⁷

The covering letter to the *Equity, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper* was utterly disappointing, because it demonstrated that conceptually the Higher Education Council does not clearly understand the issues of equity. For example, the covering letter sent a clear message to this effect to higher education equity group members, when the Higher Education Council’s Chair indicated that consultative arrangements regarding the issues raised in the paper would see the discourse on these conducted separately for groups of Senior Managers of universities and equity practitioners, with an emphasis on these different aspects of the Discussion Paper. Apart from noting the use of lower case for the practitioners and upper case for the Senior Managers, the notion of separating the groups for an evaluation discussion demonstrates incredible lack of appreciation of the issue at hand.

The Higher Education Council actually promoted the gap between administration and authority for funding equity programs and the practice of ethics of equity through

programs on the ground. The Council underwrote and tacitly approved the continuation of current separation practices in universities, and it is those practices that actively block the development of equity groups.

It is clear from the above that the debate on ‘who’ and ‘what’ truly constitutes disadvantage, or the disadvantage across the six equity groups has not occurred within government, or within the university sector generally, because in the Equity discussion paper, the following point regarding the pursuit of working definitions for all target equity groups was made:

In 1992 DEETYA conducted a formal evaluation of the Higher Education Equity program and compared outcomes at that point to the objectives and targets set in *A Fair Chance for All ...* the definitional problems for ... three groups (rural and isolated people, low socio-economic status students and people with disabilities) prevented an assessment of progress being made against those targets. The Department of Employment, Education and Training reported that higher education institutions had shown increased commitment to equity through the development of improved equity plans and the implementation of a number of special programs (for 50% of the total nominated target groups). The Indigenous programs were in place for a decade and a half by 1990 - ¹⁸

The three functional groups — Women, Aborigines and Non-English-Speaking Background peoples — seem easier to focus on, because one equity issue is race, one is ethnicity/language diversity and the third one is gender.

However, the natural, common membership of the peoples who constitute each category, and may also belong to more than one equity group, should, in my view, have assisted the articulation of issues for all equity groups. The reference to ‘the Disabilities group’ in the Equity discussion paper is of serious concern, because the

¹⁷ Ibid. p. v, para 3

¹⁸Op. cit. p. 3, para 3

reasons given for paucity of data and strategies is focused on the inability of universities to establish uniform definitions and agreed data collection systems. Should one ask the members of that equity target group for some assistance?

The above realisation prompts the question: Was there merely an agreed demarcation, based on the “not like us” philosophy, used to allocate proportional separateness, through the political raffle for equity group membership conducted by governments over the past decade or three? Or was it merely an act to silence vulnerable constituents and to sequester the ruling classes from the polluted social vascular system that forms the constituency of the body politic? I believe that systematically identifying multi-ethnic Australia, with Aborigines as the core target and consistently the most isolated group in society, achieves that aim.

The preliminary consultations, external input and advice, (*Equity, Diversity and Excellence*, p. 3, para. 3) regarding establishing the universal objectives in the equity/social justice areas, resulted in universities re-interpreting existing universal perceptions, to locate both the spirit and intent of the Federal government’s 1990 social justice objective. I believe the universities constructed a comfort zone consisting of an apparently grandiose allocation of natural justice and the provision of a puissant percentage of the total equity funding allocated to that sector as a privilege, rather than, as confirmed in Dawkins’ following statement, an obligation:

Politics and integrity — an oxymoron — or the re-christening of oppression?

Social justice is a keystone of Labor Party policy, stating that all Australians have the right of access to services and benefits that our society offers and an obligation to contribute to our social, cultural and industrial endeavours. This Labor Government was committed to the achievement of a fairer and more just society, and was working towards the removal of barriers preventing peoples from many groups in our society from participating fully in the life of our community.¹⁹

From the perspective of equity group membership, the true universality of the above social justice objective is, in my opinion, one of assimilation with a welfare gait. For example, the term ‘right to access the services and benefits’ urges the other two members of the love/hate triangle, (Universities and DEETYA) to negatively mind-set their views not only of the other partner, the six equity target groups, but to ‘over-resent’ the Australian Indigenous equity group as a privileged cohort and pass those feelings on to the other five disadvantaged partner groups. Also, the preceding tentative and real mitigating options are constructed as a welfare genre, where the Higher Education sector members interpret the participation of any or all of the six equity groups, as using a special, largely merit-free option, or set of easy options, to join the ‘well off’.

It is clear that any levels of success by equity target group members, through such special arrangements, are interpreted by universities in particular as occurring because we provided special support for them and at undergraduate or postgraduate study levels. The key to any of the six target group members’ success, is a combination, not of that individual’s abilities, but as a result of *three* causal procedures, such as:

- ◆ We let you in without normal qualifications.
- ◆ We molycoddled you though mainstream studies.
- ◆ Without ‘us and our equity programs’ you wouldn’t be graduating today.

¹⁹Op. cit. , p. 3, para. 1

The final element of my overall perception is that the Higher Education sector members chose to participate in the equity programs with marginal success and to chase the elusive social justice keystone of Labour policy, all the while receiving massive injections of funding earmarked for that very purpose.

Any conclusions?

It is clear that there needs to be a significant reassessment of the purposes of equity programs. The notion of the perpetrators of the most insidious forms of oppression being made independently responsible for the resolution of that oppression is, in every sense, a non-sense.

I close this dialogue by citing, with incredulity, the final paragraph in the summary section of the equity group's discussion paper:

From this summary, it is clear that the implementation of the policy framework described in *A Fair Chance for All* and the provision of specific equity funding to universities have succeeded in bringing about considerable improvement in participation for some equity groups. Many of the targets have been met and it is now time to address the culture of the higher education system, as identified through the values expressed in the major functions of teaching, research and community service. Some access and success issues for those students where participation and strategy development are still deficient will also need further attention.²⁰

I cannot believe the above summary is serious. Is it suggesting that the global equity issues of all six target groups are resolved, except for a little tinkering for some obscure malingerers?

What is the precise situation if, as is stated above, after over half a decade of equity program funding and application, the university community will suddenly consider a new paradigm, such as providing equity in the context of the values expressed, in the

major functions of teaching, research and community service? What then have universities been doing for the past five to six years? Where have the equity programs been situated? What has the funding been expended on?

I think the entire report is less than an apology for an evaluation of such deeply personal and profoundly important issues. The six equity groups could be forgiven for joining forces and dumping the university sector, until it manifests a serious and understanding attitude towards people, rather than funding.

Describing the *Walpiri* written text of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm.

It is in these albeit briefly summarised circumstances that the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm has been established, as a first statement on teaching/research infrastructure and embodiment from an Aboriginal perspective.

The research paradigm is presented in a physical matrix, based on a *Walpiri* statement/painting that articulates the ebb and flow in a particular context and within the intellectual confines of a particular person who has been involved in Aboriginal education, thinking and practice for over twenty years. The matrix is in fact the *Walpiri* story of this individual's life and activities, in Aboriginal education.

The Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm is best simply described as three sets of concentric circles joined by two sets of four dotted lines. Of the three sets, two have six bands or inner circles. These two sets present at each end of the diagram. The third set sits half-way between the other two and interrupts the continuity of the four dotted lines. Reading from left to right, the four linear sections created as spaces between the dotted lines contain space for the strategies that allow the shifting and manipulation of established retained focus. The investigation of positive and negative results, environments and anomalies thus allows the researcher to re-focus, against the applicable universal research themes. This is possible, because the first set of circles,

²⁰ Op. cit. (p. 23, para. 1.

furthest to the left in the matrix, contains the research topic, case study and research hypotheses and literature search data, among other things.

The middle, or third set of concentric circles contains items such as focus and process detail, establishing a theoretical base for research measurement against Aboriginal philosophies in the context of research projects, reference to appropriate contemporary texts, and identifying 'new knowledge' as blocks to be retained within the Japanangka process. Other issues, such as levels of private culture and spirituality, are integral to cross-referencing, with the third set of concentric circles.

The second set of concentric circles is positioned on the extreme right of the physical matrix and these six inner bands begin with evaluation of independent research, review of literature search and the development and testing of survey instruments, along with the cross-referencing of data developed through direct field work, readings and new writings, evolved in circles one and three. Further, the second set of concentric circles (extreme right in the physical matrix) is linearly connected to the third set of concentric circles via four dotted lines, and has three spaces. These three spaces permit two-way movement, to allow broad cross-referencing of sections of the information base, derived from circles One and Three. It is here that time-lines, new knowledge and the place of First Knowledge, configuration and reconfiguration — though they will not likely be erased, as critical units of a holistic — may be juxtaposed, to establish a first framework towards assuring a firmer doctrinal posture. The shifting and cross-referencing through circle three forces a clearer vision towards, say, a thesis format.

The Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm has fourteen other elements or units in the physical matrix. These fourteen units are alternately inverted 'camp sites' (horseshoe shapes), representing a variety of action research pathways. There are eight units: four either side of the dotted linear spaces between circles one and three, confined within the length of the four linear dotted lines.

The other six units are confined similarly, though between circles three and two. These six units relate to critical readers, cross-referencing data base materials with,

for instance, research questionnaire evaluation and an evaluation of the entire data base for the initial independent Indigenous research activity.

Introducing the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm.

Before launching the original thinking and presenting the paradigm map, which will lead as an example of Indigenous teaching and research paradigms, in this case the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm, it is essential to establish a conceptual difference between the appreciation of equity and the application of social justice in Indigenous Australian political paradigms, even though these matters are crucial to obtaining an appreciation of the need for, and fact of, a particular Indigenous research paradigm. This is especially true if Australian Indigenous peoples are going to make a positive contribution to the set of 'Australianised' notions that constitute Australian societies generally. It is also important to recognise the continuous, absolute politicising of all complementary activities of Australian Indigenous peoples and that that politicising is publicly manifest through equity and social justice programming.

Mick Dodson, while a full time Social Justice commissioner at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (The Commission), is referred to here because of his expressions on the rightful context and conduct of Australian societies, particularly in areas such as enactment of social justice strategies and given the fact that Commissioner Dodson is, in my view, the most profound author on Indigenous human rights to emerge in the history of Australian black/white politics. As a result of Dodson's writing and research, there is now a place for a working definition that teases out the operational functionalism of equity and social justice practices between mainstream Australia and Indigenous Australians.

The eight core sub-paradigms or dimensions of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm.

The eight sub-paradigms or dimensions crucial to the holistic Japanangka Teaching and Research paradigm are:

- i Cultural dimension**
- ii Spiritual dimension**
- iii Secular (quality of life) dimension**
- iv Intellectual dimension**
- v Political dimension**
- vi Practical dimension**
- vii Personal dimension**
- viii Public dimension**

Each of these sub-paradigms or dimensions is critical to the establishment of a comprehensive research activity, a holistic research activity. As such, the above eight sub-paradigms require early articulation, at least in the form of initial definitions, in any research proposal. The following statements are, therefore, to be understood as working definitions or statements. It is recognised that these may well shift in orientation and configuration, though they will not likely be erased as critical units or sub-paradigms of a holistic research paradigm such as the Japanangka is. Through the application of Indigenous philosophy, general research and case study discourse, I contend that these eight dimensions will be established as a common locus in the general thinking of Aborigines in any contemporary situation.

The first of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Sub-Paradigms is the Cultural Dimension.

The Cultural Dimension is a set of circumstances or life experiences that both defines and articulates Indigenous people's responses to all matters in a sense of global configurations. These responses are behavioural and measurable reactions, as well as abstract, internalised syntheses of experiences, emerging from an Indigenous individual positioning themselves in a culturally precise, linear timeframe. This timeframe is indeed the reference point against which all occasions, situations and outcomes in the sum of each individual's life experience are measured. This culturally sound and appropriate timeframe is conceptualised by engaging the corridors of time, such as: **the distant past, the immediate past, the present, and the immediate and distant future**. The engagement in this linear timeframe by Indigenous peoples is contiguous and cognitively instant. It is this timeframe phenomenon that allows an Indigenous person to instantly analyse the implications of language, deeds and the spirituality of any given situation and to truly 'hear' the many agendas of governments or colleagues and of the antagonists to Aboriginal advancement (of course this list also includes the apparent supporters of the development of Aborigines). Often the Indigenous hearer 'hears' beyond the basic conceptualisation of the speaker. This ability frequently begets a round of complicated dialogue, where the non-Indigenous speaker or actor expresses bewilderment at the interpretation, because it is often aggressive or negative. The premises of these responses are inextricably bound in the knowledge and practice that is timeless in distant, prior, immediate, present, distant and immediate future and holistic sensory interpretation of events or outcomes, and often result in confrontations.

For example, Indigenous peoples rely heavily on the elements of living culture, which perpetuate that culture in a contemporary setting. Elements such as genetic memory, intuition and oral histories are portable in terms of morals and ethics and the human capacity to reconstruct from the entire eight sub-paradigms a self view that is total and operational in that person's life, in a complete sense.

The Second Sub-Paradigm is the Spiritual Dimension.

The Spiritual dimension is the globalisation of an Indigenous person's personal spiritual contexts, based on the aforementioned timeframes, which authorises the internalised and interpretative responses and reasoning that equate experience and circumstance (anticipated or unanticipated) to future outcomes. In other words, the nature of explanation of all matters is spiritual, in the company of the other seven Japanangka sub-paradigms. It is very interesting to note that it is not unusual for these responses to be accompanied by Indigenous explanations not requiring public domain, extra, or additional personal definitions and excuses and discrete abstract understandings. In other words, the Spiritual dimension is pervaded by a sense of acceptance and (almost) fatalism. The result is a spiritual, cognitive schema of explanation of all things, that relates to the above timeframes and Indigenous ontology. For further information on 'ontology' see: *Speaking Towards an Aboriginal Philosophy*. (West E. 1998)

In the lives of many Indigenous peoples, especially those who are intuitive and operate their cultural sub-paradigm constantly, there are numerous situations that translate to the spiritual sub-paradigm. One example that is very powerful and quite regular, in the sense of outcomes of the eight working contiguously, is the ability to observe and manage omens. In many cultures, omens are powerful signposts to the future. Indigenous Australians are no less subjected to the events of omens. There are however, many different reactions to omens. In my group, we may well see an omen, or a signpost, weeks before the event occurs, thereby enabling us to anticipate, in a general phenomenological sense, a variety of outcomes. However, when the event occurs, we are able to deal with the matters at hand in a relaxed fashion. For example: if the omen is one that signposts death, we are anticipating a life's closure and are able to deal with the event in a less stressful way, because of the absence of shock.

Of course, many other aspects of the spiritual dimension affect our lives daily. One other example is the advent of storms. For many of us, heavy rain is a bathing of the atmosphere and of the spirit; cleansing our minds and hearts and refreshing our souls.

These are the practical purposes of rain, for as it heals Indigenous peoples, it also quenches the thirst of the Mother Earth and the cycles continue.

The Third Sub-Paradigm of operation is the Secular Dimension.

The secular dimension is constructed around an Indigenous person's personal and public domain experiences and circumstances, often including conflict. The secular dimension consists of the 'quality of life' situations — literal and symbolic, concrete and abstract — that is defined in a sense of 'timelessness', that coalesces an Indigenous individual's cultural dimensions on many planes of existence. It is similar to the regular state one finds oneself in, in the context of issues of the spiritual dimension.

Examples of what the secular dimension relates to are not difficult to identify. The matter of greatest value in the life of Indigenous Australians has two faces: *one* is the Mother Earth and the *other* (which is intrinsically bound with the Mother) is family. Therefore if one's secular dimension is to operate successfully, one must be close to and be part of one's family on a daily basis. This is the 'quality of life' goal; for it is the purest love. There are other matters that are important in this dimension and some of these are the ability to properly care for one's family, loyalty to the people, and 'the resistance'. The stress of 'the resistance' is as important as one's heartbeat, for if you are not fighting you are submitting. This is an unfortunate outcome, but nevertheless a real outcome.

The Fourth Sub-Paradigm is the Intellectual Dimension.

The intellectual dimension exists in that sphere of multiple Indigenous worlds that contains the ethereal tapestry of thought divination, that is complex and may well include simple acceptance of outcomes, foreboding or prescience, relating to events or outcomes of understanding matters past. The Intellectual sub-paradigm is established through the continual and contiguous application of all eight Japanangka sub-paradigms, on a life-cycle continuum that is self-rejuvenating. It is necessary for this

dimension to continually heal the ‘tears in the fabric of life’ of Aborigines’ individual and collective humanity, irrespective of the origin of the source of, or the implement causing, the tear.

It is the intellectual dimension that confounds almost everyone, Indigenous or not, because there is little belief and less ‘living’, or overt awareness, and almost no public recognition of this dimension’s existence in the operating sub-paradigm of Australian Indigenous peoples.

With the other seven dimensions, in everything an Aborigine does, every moment an Aborigine breathes and during every moment that we spend in the non-physicality of beyond-body existence and action, the Intellectual dimension is the most power-packed dimension, for it requires nurturing from all other seven dimensions for it to become the eighth.

For instance, there are many unexplainable manifestations that occur in the context of this paradigm and, interestingly, they relate to the sub-paradigms that have been discussed already, in that the holistic concept of intellectualism is, in Indigenous terms, embracing of many matters, from intuition to sorcery and a copious number of other ethereal experiences in between.

The Fifth Sub-Paradigm is the Political Dimension.

The political dimension, like the other seven dimensions, has a ‘Yirritja’ and a ‘Dhua’, a Yin and a Yang. This dimension applies in the context of the research sub-paradigm matrix as a spiritual and by definition a political logistic. This logistic projects across the multitudes of ‘twin worlds’ of Indigenous, universal paradigms, to draw on applicability of experiences and integrity as a common ethic, as benchmarks for all action in the research paradigm this matrix describes.

The political dimension describes and is described by applicability and integrity, through the operation of public domain and spiritual, confidential, cultural principles,

that are embedded in the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm through the interplay of the entire eight sub-paradigms variously.

The political dimension, therefore, requires the expenditure of some, or all, of the individual energies contained in all of the other seven dimensions and its own, if a holistic outcome or set of outcomes is to emerge. The political dimension is manifest in the principle and fact of the pursuit of the good of the greater number of sisters and brothers, irrespective of their juxtaposition, in regard to their individual idiosyncrasies and activities, orientations and secular, cultural, or any of the other eight sub-paradigms, as long as that individual remains spiritually Indigenously intact.

By way of example, consider the immense space Indigenous peoples of Australia are forced to occupy, in the public estate of this society's political cultures. There is a saying, born of grass roots expression, 'Kooris do not have to become political or be politically active. You are born political and you die political if you are black.'

The political dimension is the most stressful, because it is not innate to our cultures; it is imposed via the process of contemporary colonisation and vindictive self-hatred that is a permanent element in the twenty-first century psyche of white Australia. The implications for the political personae of Indigenous peoples — when stretched across all levels of society and across all of the various schools of politics, from gender politics to race politics and all that falls between — means that there is little time or space for one to *be one's best self*.

The Sixth Sub-Paradigm is the Practical Dimension.

The practical dimension is so profoundly important, immediate and dispersed, because the secular, cultural, intellectual, public and personal sub-paradigms are matters that are variously problematic to many Aborigines who are trying to maintain a holistic presence on this planet we call the Mother Earth. That there is no place or time for hypothetical or spiritual posturing beyond the circumstance of the moment is a matter not of great concern but of beauty to Indigenous peoples. The fact that the human body is principally constructed from water does not prevent thirst from

snuffing out a human life; so too with knowledge. Unless it serves a purpose of significance in one or more of the Japanangka sub-paradigms, it seems of little use to an Indigenous mind.

Herein lies the ‘rub’ of the apparent mortality of much of the new age, new world and non-Indigenous knowledge, scientific or sociological experiences, in the left/right brain analysis of Indigenous peoples. What is the point of the information, what is the reason for learning, or gaining awareness of, certain blocks of Western knowledge? The cosmic chasm that seems to separate the value systems and the cognitive schemata of the day-to-day operations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, must be of primary consideration, before the inducement to tread the path of learning the white man’s ways will become integral to the eight dimensions of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm.

The practical dimension encompasses the notion of satisfaction of purpose. It should be the bread of activity and we should sate our appetites, if we are to enjoy the great purpose of life ... **Life** itself. The overarching motivation must be to be elected to membership of the caretaker society that allows one the liberty of issuing authority to personal ambition, as a passenger on the transit system of life, rather than tragically obtaining a driver’s licence for a single passenger vehicle.

The Seventh Sub-Paradigm is the Personal Dimension.

As the great purpose of life is indeed life itself, the primary obligation for Indigenous peoples, in the personal dimension of this research paradigm, is to maintain life essence. Each Indigenous person’s life essence is equivalent to each individual wattage, that combines to produce a force of energy enough to provide a power source capable of lighting a major global village. There is serious belief that the presence of Indigenous peoples is essential to the continuation of the multi-universes of the spiritual and physical world of the human continuum.

The Eighth Sub-Paradigm is the Public Dimension

The operations of the public dimension are constructed of a series of artefacts of cultural pluralism. This pluralism configures into the holistic theme of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm, in much the same way that ULURU is an alignment of cosmic and human experiences, compacted into a solid icon of overwhelming spiritual import and physical dominance. This icon is a monolithic symbol of eternity, peremptory as an ephemeral symbol and as such, is a beacon of enlightenment for Indigenous peoples for many and varied secular and theological reasons.

In the end, the personal dimension is likely to be the most fragile of all the eight sub-paradigms, in as much as it is the personal attributes, inclinations, aspirations and self-perceptions that are assailed by the minute. So intense is the blatant confrontation over one's identity, that they emerge almost everywhere: in newsprint on a multitude of occasions; via television, radio, literature, music; in general street conversation by the minute, the hour, the day, the week, the month and the year. This emergence is especially so on the 'special white days' such as Australia Day, Anzac Day and the Queen's Birthday. One must also include all the religious ceremonial days, which are of a public nature. **The war is unrelenting.**

Summary

Linear (vertical and horizontal) thinking is the premise of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm. These complex and contiguous thinking patterns are underwritten by the notions expressed in the eight dimensions or sub-paradigms. For many years, Indigenous peoples in education and other disciplines have argued difference of understandings and appreciations of time, values, perspective, articulation and cosmic parameters of cultural imperatives. The research paradigm I propose eliminates the need to seek knowledge of the quality of cultural universality in Aboriginal Australia; those matters are given in the context of the paradigm. What is left to establish are the fluctuations of intensity and the compelling orientations of a research action, in the connection of non-white methodologies and frames of reference, in the action of research. This drives the outcomes into Aboriginal self-

actualisations: Gestalt in a culturally holistic sense. The following working definition summarises the Japanangka Paradigm and the implications of its importance:

Aboriginal cultural holistic is a set of diverse and sophisticated cultural norms and practices. These norms and practices ensure that a context of comprehensive cultural maintenance is integral to every pathway to the attainment of a given personal or public goal or achievement through the capacity to value all information, expression, theory, action and re-action in the context of the eight Japanangka sub-paradigms.

Vertical and horizontal thinking sub-paradigms are the instruments of holistic and provide the capacity to comfortably retain conflicting views, competitive concepts and antithetical hypotheses without causing conflict or confusion that may block the analytical processes. Holistic is crucial to the constancy of retaining contemporary culture experientially, and to balancing the four primary behaviours of extemporaneous cultures: love, spirituality, authority and compliance. When taken as a holistic, these primary elements ensure stability and space, tenure and the application of all available competing and reciprocal perspectives.²¹

A discussion of a framework in the ‘nature’ of Western methodology within which non-Indigenous and Indigenous researchers may operate.

The following example of formal guidelines constitutes a framework that considers principally the ‘protocols’ of research, rather than a discrete framework in which one may actually apply the Japanangka, given that they were derived from a consultation process best described as ‘multicultural’. I believe it serves the needs of the present and the immediate future in the context of the Japanangka vertical linear timeframes. The following two discussions are in an ‘as printed’ format.

²¹ West, E., *Speaking Towards an Aboriginal Philosophy*, Linga Longa Aboriginal Farm, National Indigenous Philosophy Week Conference, 1997,

A set of operating frameworks for researchers²².

1. Introduction.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in North Queensland, Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands have developed these guidelines to ensure that researchers appreciate and begin to understand the sensitivity and ethical issues in all areas of research and research methodology concerning Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and their cultures and lifestyles.

With regard to University research projects and proposals, the University's Indigenous Research Ethics Committee is a sub-committee of the University's Research Ethics Committee and will act as agent between the community and individuals and the researcher. The legal contractual arrangements are designed to protect the interests of the targeted community or individuals and will be binding between those people and the researcher.

These Guidelines and the attached Pro Forma apply to all research undertaken within the University that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business, even if this business is merely part of the research sample. The guidelines apply regardless of the geographic or social location of the subjects.

In articulating specific points of ethical and academic principle, these Guidelines will assist researchers to carefully consider the appropriate approach and methodology for a particular research topic within Australian Indigenous communities or with Australian Indigenous individuals. They are concerned solely with the ethics of the proposed research and its processes, not whether the Centre or any other body agrees with the topic of the research. The process of review of research proposals relates to ethics, not censorship, as long as deception does not apply or is practised.

²² These Guidelines have been released in draft form at a National Indigenous Research Ethics Conference I covered in 1994 in Townsville. I have amended the draft for inclusion in this thesis to demonstrate the implications of the Japanangka in an actual research model of protocols.

The community targeted for research will also be empowered through these guidelines. Their interests are inherently protected within the guidelines and they will have *de jure* ownership of the research findings.

The University's Indigenous Research Ethics Committee will also act in an academic advocacy role between the communities and researchers.

The philosophy and purpose of these Ethics Guidelines are to:

- a) Ensure researchers formally consult with and actively involve appropriate Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander people in all aspects of the proposed research project including establishing the context and purpose for any research proposal.
- b) Ensure that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander people maintain ownership of the process and information contained in research projects that specifically include them.
- c) Ensure that targeted communities and individuals receive acknowledgment in all research results published, including excerpts from unpublished data.
- d) Ensure that targeted communities and individuals who are the owners of the information retain the right to cancel all data that they consider to be sensitive or private or choose to designate as confidential.
- e) Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals receive copies of research produced, including publishable documents (such as extracts or short essays).
- f) Ensure that research practice is of a consistently high standard and is primarily beneficial to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- g) Prevent deception in any form from being practised during any research project.

2. Historical background.

For over two hundred years, Aborigines and the peoples of the Torres Strait Islands have been subject to undisciplined research and analysis. The premise of most research and analysis has been locked into the belief that Indigenous Australians are anachronisms and, in defiance of the laws of evolution, remain a curiosity of nature, and are 'fair game' for research. The overt and covert presumptions underwriting all research and analysis into Indigenous Australian cultures are the inherent view of the superiority of non-Indigenous society's cultures.

Historically, Indigenous Australians are treated contemptuously by researchers as research subjects having no cultural rationality. Such treatment, based on the mythological concept of white supremacy, relegated Aborigines to the category conveniently manufactured two centuries ago: non-human or, at best, primitive status. Indigenous Australians are still often researched and analysed in that conceptual framework, covertly. Papers and research projects that remove the humanity of Australian Indigenous peoples abound. This type of research merely reinforces non-Australian Indigenous (essentially white) dominance over Australian Indigenous peoples. For over twenty-five years, Aborigines have been demanding a greater say in the research enterprise in a bid to gain some control over the product, the process and the effect of such research. Research became a tool of exploitation used by non-Indigenous society and its researchers to acquire and retain power. To avoid a continuation of this exploitation, Indigenous Australians want to regulate research, but not to halt it.

These guidelines are evidence of that concern. There is ample evidence that racism is the basic foundation upon which historical, anthropological, and linguistic research is built. The problems lie within the following non-Indigenous concepts, points of view, and research practice;

a) The assumed *right* of researchers to undertake research into the culture of Indigenous Australians.

- b) The notion that cultural knowledge recorded in research reports is **the only legitimate or lasting medium to protect knowledge and data** exposed by such research.
- c) That research needs to expose apparent dominant and latent primitivism of Indigenous societies.
- d) The assumption that all knowledge, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, should be placed in the public domain.
- e) That only non-Indigenous researchers do research well.
- f) The belief that the privatisation of knowledge is not a social or cultural premise in Indigenous Australian cultures.
- g) The assumption that the right of all people to access all knowledge is also an Indigenous cultural absolute.
- h) The belief that the apparent absence of sophisticated Indigenous infra-structural mechanisms to maintain cultural continuity requires Western research and techniques to preserve culture.
- i) The apparent right of a conquering nation's intellectuals to both exploit Indigenous Australians and promote their own status and self-esteem by investigative analysis and historical research.

All non-Indigenous people who protect these Anti-Indigenous frames of reference do so in an attempt, either consciously or sub-consciously, to remove the right of the Indigenous Australians to express their opinions as members of research target groups. In so doing, the opponents of such freedoms of expression reinforce the above negative frames of reference. **Indigenous Australians no longer wish to remain victims of uncontrolled research as a silent minority.**

These Ethics Guidelines will accomplish a number of changes to the act of research, the purposes of research and the practice of research. These changes will effectively remove Indigenous Australians from the ‘victim’ or ‘subject’ category, in what is essentially an unfair and disproportionately unbalanced relationship. The context of the acquisition of unique Australian Indigenous knowledge has shifted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control, even though Australian Indigenous peoples treat and respond to the responsibility quite differently to other groups.

3. The University’s Indigenous Research Ethics Committee’s Role.

The University's Indigenous Research Ethics Committee has a mandate to:

Develop and extend existing links between researchers at any university and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and communities in order to form an effective co-operative network capable of responding effectively and sensitively to the research and information needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider community.

And to:

Co-ordinate research efforts within the University so as to foster modes of enquiry that are culturally appropriate and collaborative, and that also address areas of research supported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and communities, while they retain the right to allow or veto research. The Indigenous Ethics Committee will ensure that the proposed research clearly articulates benefits for all those who are subject to research projects.

The guidelines are in response to situations where ethical issues have either been totally ignored, or given minimal consideration by researchers. For example, on frequent occasions the objectives of research projects have not been negotiated with the communities and feedback to communities of research results has not occurred.

Research proposals which fail to address the matter of ethics and procedures will

result in the continued exploitation of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander people. This exploitation must cease. These guidelines focus on ethical and general procedures, for conducting research into any aspect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life. The Centre Ethics Committee has established a process that enables researchers to demonstrate the proposal's benefits to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander people. Further, this process ensures that researchers be reflective in gauging the suitability and scope of their proposed research topics.

Through consultation with the staff of the Centre, as well as representatives of the relevant community, the suitability of individual projects and methodologies will be more effectively established.

The Indigenous Research Ethics Committee will, through the Co-ordinator of postgraduate programs, provide guidance to researchers on how to conduct research in a way that does not breach these ethics guidelines. For instance, researchers might want assistance on 'how' and 'with whom' to formally consult about the research. The direct result of the Guidelines application will result in a research product that will be viewed by Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders as a quality product, thereby adding to the paradigm of quality currently under discussion.

4. Research among Aborigines And Torres Strait Islander People.

When considering a research proposal, the Indigenous Research Ethics Committee and the particular community will determine whether the proposal conforms to the following categories:

- A) Research Project Criteria**
- B) Researcher Obligations**
- C) Protocol and Community Involvement**
- D) Ownership and Publication of Data**
- E) University Department Responsibilities**

A) Research Project Criteria

Consultation with the co-ordinator of research, or postgraduate supervisor, during the preparation of a research proposal is required.

Submission of research proposals to conduct research must occur at least 30 days prior to any funding deadlines, closing dates or any time imposition set by the community, or any other stakeholder, including the mainstream University Research Ethics Committee.

The following criteria must be met unequivocally, before the Indigenous Research Ethics Committee approval will be given. The research proposal must demonstrate:

- a)** That the proposing researcher has sought advice from a broad range of people in the targeted community.

- b)** That a detailed and explicit statement explaining and defining the proposed research is accessible to the targeted community and/or individuals and be clearly understood by them.

This statement should include:

- (i)** Evidence of face-to-face discussions with community groups and individuals concerned.

- (ii)** A detailed statement of agreement on the processes or arrangements for the collection and analysis of data.

- (iii)** A statement on the procedures of drafting and publication of the research reports.

- (iv)** A detailed statement of all potential costs and benefits to the community (the statement should contain information on financial, social, cultural and political costs).

(v) Evidence of agreements and consent between the researcher/s and the targeted Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community or person/s (original statement of agreement must be attached to the proposal).

Researchers must demonstrate that exploitation of an economic, cultural or sexual nature will not occur. Researchers must not enter into private economic arrangements and unauthorised negotiations for cultural visits, investigations and exchanges.

Members of targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities must assist in the research project and must be paid for the assistance. Funds to support such professional assistance must be included in the research budget.

B) Researcher Obligations.

Researchers are in a position of privilege and trust; and should conduct themselves accordingly. To ensure that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander people thoroughly understand the implications of agreeing to be the subject of any research proposals, researchers must:

a) Demonstrate an understanding and working knowledge of the nature of the research they are to undertake and implications of the research results for Indigenous Australians. Failure to demonstrate such knowledge will result in the rejection of the proposed research project.

b) Ensure that sufficient time is allocated for the community and individuals concerned to assimilate and respond to complete information regarding the proposal and possible outcomes.

c) Advise the Research Ethics Committee, through the postgraduate studies and the targeted community, in writing, at regular intervals of no longer than six months, on the progress of the research project.

d) Explain the uses to which any film, photographs, sketches, audio and video recordings will be put. Researchers must negotiate the conditions under which access to this data occurs.

e) Respect and expressly agree to any decision by a community or individual to limit access to and use of any data.

f) Pay particular attention to the use of visual and sound images of deceased persons and of parts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life to which public access is normally restricted.

g) Provide evidence (original documents) of agreements with a community, or individual, regarding the return of all material or data, or its destruction, or secure storage, on completion of the research project, prior to the commencement of the research.

h) Submit a copy of the final report to the Ethics Committee and the targeted community, or individuals simultaneously at the conclusion of a research project. This must be done within six months of the completion of the project and certainly prior to publication of the research findings.

5. Protocol And Community Involvement.

The community and individuals being researched have the power to veto the research and to reclaim any data collected at any stage of the research project. This enables communities and individuals to retain ownership and to determine the direction of the project. As a result, communities and individuals will be directing the researchers into areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and life which is for public knowledge and to inform them of acceptable protocol in the respective communities.

Failure by researchers to respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customs and beliefs can result in bad public relations for themselves and the University, which will negatively affect future research projects in that community.

As a result researchers must ensure the following:

a) In an appropriate manner, comprehensive information regarding the procedures, aims of the research, and the known and possible use of all research results must be given to the community and individual Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders involved in the research project prior to the commencement of the project.

b) No procedure may be added to or altered after project consent has been obtained. Researchers wishing to alter agreements require re-assessment of the entire research project and any changes to original agreements are subject to the informed consent of the targeted community and individuals concerned and the Ethics Committee.

c) Researchers must obtain the consent of all persons recorded, including those in background and large groups, when using film, photography, sketches, audio and video.

d) Researchers must observe the normal proprieties in respect of personal privacy of individuals. Practices such as concealment, to any degree, are utterly unacceptable.

e) Clear evidence ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men will be involved in research projects regarding women's, men's or children's issues is essential. The specific cultural and social circumstance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and men must be recognised and satisfactory arrangements negotiated.

f) Researchers must accept the right of the community to question an aspect of on-going research, and accept that any changes in research protocols, procedures or methodologies will require new negotiations with the community and the Ethics Committee. Any changes to detailed and negotiated agreements are subject to the full consent of the community. Evidence of such re-negotiated agreements must be forwarded to the Indigenous Research Ethics Committee and is essential for the project's continuation.

6. Ownership And Publication Of Data

When research projects are concluded, the community and individuals who are the subjects of the research, or who participated in the project, must be fully informed of the research project's results in a clear and comprehensible manner, including a plain English statement.

a) All original material collected and where appropriate negotiated for, or removed from the community or an individual during the course of the research, must be returned to the community, or stored in accordance with agreements reached with the owners.

b) Researchers must not retain original materials or research data for archival purposes, except that which is specifically agreed to by the owners.

If the researcher wants to use any information, photographs, recordings or other materials gathered during the course of the research for any purpose other than that for which consent was obtained, further permission must be sought from the community and new agreements made prior to such use.

Research proposals must show that any data and materials collected from within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, or from individuals during the course of the project, will remain the property of the community or individuals and that:

a) In all published papers and reports, researchers will publicly acknowledge the communities and owners through joint copyright.

b) All photographic material and film, sketches and audio and video recordings will only be published with the written consent of the participating community or individuals depicted.

c) Researchers must accept that some material such as narratives using names, names in text, or pictorial, audio or video material may not be allowed to be used if individuals who are the subjects of those materials become deceased or involved in certain ceremonial rites, until authorised by the community or individuals involved.

In any event, such circumstances must be accorded the highest respect.

Careful consideration of the content and form of material used can minimise the number of these occasions for conflict. For instance, using the first two letters of someone's name in a text and avoiding having a collection of people in the background of photographs or videos can reduce the number of times that material has to be withdrawn, even if the withdrawal is only temporary. Guidance to the users of the materials should be included with those materials by an agreed statement in the text. In this way, subsequent users of the materials can be sensitive in their use of those materials.

The way certain knowledge or materials need to be handled varies according to who the owners are and when decisions need to be made in the context of the timing of the project. Assistance on negotiating with communities and individuals in such circumstances is available from the Indigenous Research Ethics Committee and is highly recommended.

The following examples show some approaches that may be suitable when dealing with data that includes photographs, or sketches, or film of a deceased person whose image should not be seen.

a) If the circumstance occurs during the research project, seek guidance from the elders of the community on how to handle the circumstances, preferably through the Centre's Research Ethics Committee.

b) If the circumstances occur when the research outcomes are in the process of publication, notify the publishers that release of the materials will have to be withheld for a period of months. Guidance on the appropriate time for withholding release must

be sought from the elders of the community, preferably through the Indigenous Research Ethics Committee.

c) If the circumstances occur after release of published material, then in some circumstances, the researcher will not even be aware of these circumstances having occurred or the distribution of the materials is of such a nature that nothing can be done. However, there will be times when direct action is appropriate. For example, if published materials have been widely bought by schools, publishers should be asked to notify schools of the circumstances and the appropriate action that schools should take. The Indigenous Research Ethics Committee will provide advice and assistance in these circumstances.

7. University Departmental Responsibilities

Within the University, it is the responsibility of departmental academic staff to ensure that undergraduate and postgraduate students undertaking research projects in relation to Indigenous Australians are aware of these guidelines prior to undertaking any level of research, and that all submissions or proposals for research comply with these guidelines.

8. Processes For Consultation.

Consultation is defined through a series of factors, some of which have to do with the mind-set of the person initiating the act of consultation.

In the case of a researcher, it is important to recognise that the Western paradigm of consultation is most often construed as the act of seeking agreement for that researcher, or a group of researchers, to 'do' something to, in, or with Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders and their communities.

The objective of consultation is to secure approval to undertake specific acts and interactions that result in developing, through various mediums, a usable info-base.

The paradigm within which most Aborigines and peoples of the Torres Straits Islands function, the Japanangka, is also one of agreement or approval. However, the paradigm shift relates to offering such co-operation in the context of partnership, ownership and self-management.

These factors are constructed around the notion that sharing information does not bestow upon the receiver ownership of that which is shared. Sharing is not giving. Researchers must understand and abide by the notion that issues about ownership will always remain, because ownership is, among other functions, a primary function of Western research paradigms.

Consultation must be regarded as the process by which researchers secure the right to participate in a particular knowledge domain, for a specific set of negotiated outcomes that they may use only with the agreement of the owners and managers of that knowledge domain.

Historically, Aborigines who live in circumstances that Western society describes as 'traditional', often use English as a third or fourth language. Therefore, to accommodate the presence of a researcher, they frequently bestow a name that gives reality to the intruder. This name is euphemistically referred to as a '**skin name**'. Non-Indigenous people usually interpret that bestowal as a process of adoption and use the name as a credential outside the actual bestowing community and, unfortunately, use the name in their own society as a credential as well. Researchers must respect the process of naming and recognise that it applies in a specific context and is most likely to be geographically specific and certainly group-specific.

The above is an example of one interaction of the consultation process going wrong, because the circumstance has been relocated into a foreign paradigm and as a result, appropriates Indigenous knowledge through the fake extension of a site-specific and situation-specific process.

Consultation is a process that allows the people being consulted to say NO, or to say YES, with or without conditions and agreements applying, including the fictitious time-lines of funding and study limitations.

Research Ethics Pro-Forma.

This pro-forma is designed to be of use to both the researcher and the Indigenous Research Ethics Committee. The pro-forma is designed to assist the researcher in clarifying questions and to address the criteria for research proposals. Further, it is designed to ensure the Indigenous Ethics Committee is aware of all research planned within the University and its potential benefits to both the Centre and the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people or communities which are to be studied.

The pro-forma requires information about a number of matters including community involvement, formal consultation and participants. In answering these questions, the researcher can clarify those issues which concern both the Indigenous Ethics Committee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the participating community or communities.

The submission to the Indigenous Research Ethics Committee must include the following information:

Section 1 - Description of project.

1. Title of the Project.
2. Chief and other Researchers and details of qualifications.
3. Main Aims of the Project.
4. Description of the Project.
5. Theoretical Methodology and Orientation.

6. A statement indicating how the proposal meets the policy on Self- Determination and Self-Management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
7. An explanation of how the data obtained through this study will be used for purposes other than the stated aims.
8. Duration of the project.
9. Time-line of events
10. Description of the data collection techniques to be used in this project.
11. Description of how the data will be analysed.

Section 2 - Consultation with the Communities.

1. Identify the community or individuals that have been selected for the research.
2. Identify the people or organisations (within the community) that have been consulted with regard to this project.
3. Identify all other parties who have or are likely to have a vested interest in this project.
4. Describe the steps and processes that have been or will be taken to explain the aims and purposes of this research to members of the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community and the participants involved in the project.
5. Identify the processes by which there will be continuing formal consultation with the community throughout the project.

Section 3 - Community participation

1. Identify the community person or persons who will be involved in this research.
2. Define the roles of these people within this project.
3. Explain the benefits that these roles will have for these community people.
4. Explain how community people will be financed through the research budget and how they will be paid.
5. State how community people, through their involvement in this project, will learn relevant research skills.

Section 4 - Ownership of the Research and Publication of Materials.

1. Define the processes to be used to feed back the findings of this research to the community and individuals involved.
2. Identify the form in which the findings of this research will be published (academic journals, seminars).
3. Explain how the sensitivities of participants, location of the research and participant anonymity will be protected.
4. Explain the steps taken to ensure that publication of sensitive material does not take place (i.e. photographs, explicit description of ceremonies).
5. Identify how the community will contribute to the writing of reports and exercise their right to veto data.

6. Explain how community contributions to and assistance in this research project will be acknowledged when publishing the research reports or monographs.

7. Explain the potential of the research findings for benefiting the community directly and how the findings will be translated into practical and useful formats to benefit the people in the community.

8. Given that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has ownership of the research data, it is desirable that the data be kept at a place decided on by the community. Explain what has been decided in conjunction with the community about where the data will be kept.

It is rather obvious that the above requirements are suitable for the application of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm's entire eight sub-paradigms, as each of the eight is a benchmark measure that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

Issues of Indigeneity in developing curriculum paradigms.

Overstreet argues that there are at least three insights that are well-established psychological axioms. These are:

That **(a)** no human being can be his/her best self if he/she is always trying to be someone else instead of himself/herself. That **(b)** s/he cannot be her/his best self unless s/he enjoys a reasonable self-respect and sense of worth. That **(c)** particularly in childhood, but in some measure throughout life, his/her estimate of her/himself reflects the treatment s/he receives from key figures in his/her environment; it is not something s/he makes out of nothing, but something s/he makes of other people's responses to her/him. As others see him/her, so he gradually tends to see him/herself.

Our psychiatric wards and penal institutions are occupied primarily by persons who have experienced failure repeatedly²³

²³ Overstreet, in Klausmeier and Ripple, *Human and other Abilities*, Harper and Row, NY, 1955 p. 81

Seeking an Appreciation of Contemporary Indigeneity — in the context of general quality of life of Aboriginal Australians, beginning with an Indigenous declaration on educational rights.

The following is a basic document, which was drafted by me and another seven Indigenous people in anticipation of the International Indigenous Education Conference (Wollongong, NSW) during the Year of Indigenous Peoples.

There is no one to teach me the songs that bring the Moon Bird, the fish or any other thing that makes me what I am.

No old women to mend my spirit by preaching my culture to me.

No old man with the knowledge to paint my being.

The spectre of the past is what dwells within — I search my memory of early days to try to make my presence real, significant, whole.

I use my childhood memories of places, people and words to re-create my identity.

Errol West: Tasmanian Aborigine

Indigenous peoples of the world have the right to access education at all levels which reflect our own distinct cultural bases.

Indigenous peoples have an inalienable right to use our own social, political and spiritual beliefs and desires of our home cultures. The development of our own education systems will enhance and sustain our independent economic development and self-determination.

The *Kari-Oca Declaration and Indigenous Peoples' Earth Charter* (Brazil, 25-30 May 1992) contains the following statements about education:

Indigenous peoples should have the right to their own knowledge, language, and culturally appropriate education including bicultural and bilingual education. Through recognising both formal and informal ways, the participation of family and community is guaranteed.

Indigenous peoples must have the necessary resources and control over their own education systems.

Elders must be recognised and respected as teachers of the young people.

Indigenous wisdom must be recognised and encouraged.

The use of existing indigenous languages is our right. These languages must be protected.

At local, national and international levels, governments must commit funds to new and existing resources to education and training for indigenous peoples, to achieve their sustainable development, to contribute and to participate in sustainable and equitable development at all levels. Particular attention should be given to indigenous women, children and youth.

The UN should promote research into Indigenous knowledge and develop a network of Indigenous sciences.

As creators and carriers of civilisations which have given and continue to share knowledge, experience and values with humanity, we require that our right to intellectual and cultural properties be guaranteed and that the mechanism for each implementation be in favour of our peoples and studied in depth and implemented.

Equally important are the recommendations about education that came from the Second Indigenous Youth Conference held in Darwin, NT, Australia in July 1993. In their wisdom the youth at that Conference declared:

We, Indigenous youth, believe we must exercise and maintain our right to self-determination. Our peoples have the right to decide our own forms of government, to use our own laws, to one day raise and educate our children in our own cultural identities without interference.

1. Right of Self-Determination

We, Indigenous youth, recognise self-determination is a right which cannot be given. It is a right which is exercised to increase self-respect and therefore respect among Indigenous peoples.

A. Indigenous peoples have the right to self-government.

B. Indigenous youth demand greater participation in the decisions which affect us.

C. Indigenous youth demand training and employment in Indigenous social welfare services.

D. Indigenous youth accept and respect Indigenous peoples of mixed heritage and demand the end to discrimination against them.

2. Right of Language

We, Indigenous youth, recognise our languages are an important link to maintaining our cultures. Indigenous languages must be maintained at a local level.

A. Indigenous youth demand the right to reclaim and revive our languages.

B. Indigenous youth demand the right to speak our languages, free from discrimination.

C. Indigenous youth demand nation states incorporate and promote the learning of Indigenous languages in education systems.

D. Indigenous youth demand Indigenous media play a role in the revival and maintenance of Indigenous languages.

3. Right of Education

We, Indigenous youth, must have the freedom to learn our true histories. We make a call to our elders to open the way for us to learn about our heritage; to help us reclaim our past, so we may claim our future.

A. Indigenous youth demand the inclusion of Indigenous studies in the education systems of all nation States, to be taught to all peoples.

B. Indigenous youth demand that these education programs be formulated, produced and taught by Indigenous people.

C. Indigenous youth demand that the education authorities in nation States take active and immediate steps to increase Indigenous culture awareness among school principals, teachers and staff.

D. Indigenous youth demand that our Elders, as determined by our own communities, be given access to youth in schools and other educational forums, to teach tradition, law and values.

E. Indigenous youth demand nation States recognise the value of traditional forms of education, and allow youth to express this knowledge free from discrimination.

4. Self-Determination

Self-determination is the most important of all Indigenous rights.

In the *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, as revised by the members of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations , July 1993, Article 14, Part IV states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to all levels and forms of education. They also have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages.

Article 15 goes on to say:

Indigenous peoples have the right to have the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations appropriately reflected in all forms of education and public information ...

For Indigenous peoples to achieve the outcomes of self-determination they must be able to establish a social, political and spiritual environment which both suits the need to function independently, and allows our culture to remain strong.

All arrangements or structures must be designed to balance the literal interpretation of self-determination by Indigenous peoples with the limited interpretation and expected outcomes of the governments who dominate Indigenous peoples. Self-determination

can be achieved by Indigenous people only when the various government agents cease providing only material and political solutions.

Essential to the success of any such arrangements to establish the required balance is the continued occupation and re-occupation of traditional lands and/or the negotiation of compensation.

Indigenous peoples are connected to the physical and spiritual phenomenon of what most call 'the Earth' in the same way as children are connected to their parents. As a child's hopes and securities, aspirations and comforts are fundamental in their relationships with their parents, so are Indigenous peoples' with Mother Earth.

Governments must realise that our parent relationship with Mother Earth enables us to negotiate, use and maintain the land and to build and/or rebuild the social structures needed for us to function effectively. There are no single, common solutions to the issues of self-determination, only spiritually focused, land-based solutions.

Self-determination in Indigenous education embodies the notions of:

- A. local control/governance
- B. development of educational policies
- C. development of programs and appropriate curricula
- D. development of our own, and influence on existing, teacher-training programs
- E. research by and about Indigenous people with attention to the ethics involved
- F. evaluation/assessment
- G. definition and identification of exceptionalities especially giftedness
- H. language use, i.e. bilingual education programs
- I. teacher certification
- J. development of independent or private schools that are non-systemic
- K. development of criteria for school structure, operation, licensure
- L. recognition that Indigenous peoples' rights are differential in many instances, i.e. not equal, but equitable

5. Language

For Indigenous people the feelings and thoughts they have about the land are the very basis of their identity. Land gives life to language and culture. Language can be the foundation for liberation of thought that then provides the direction for social and educational change.

Native/First Languages are a legitimate, valid means of communication for Indigenous peoples. Language is a social construct; it is a blueprint for thought, behaviour, interaction and self-expression.

Language is the vehicle for transmitting the culture of the past to the present and the future. While understanding that the Native/First languages of many Indigenous peoples have been destroyed it **must** be recognised that Native/First language is the **best** way to teach our knowledge and stories to be remembered and used.

The survival of Indigenous language is imperative to ensure accurate transmission, maintenance and preservation of Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices.

The importance of Native/First language has been recognised in the following example from legislation in the United States.

Public Law 101-47 [S. 2167] ; October 1990

Indian Education Programs; Native American Languages Act Sec. 104.

It is the policy of the United States to:

- (1) preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practise, and develop Native American languages;
- (2) allow exceptions to teacher certification requirements for Federal programs, and programs funded in whole or in part by the Federal Government, for instruction in Native American languages when such teacher certification requirements hinder the

employment of qualified teachers who teach in Native American languages, and to encourage State and Territorial governments to make similar exceptions;

(3) encourage and support the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction in order to encourage and support -

(A) Native American language survival,

(B) educational opportunity,

(C) increased student success and performance,

(D) increased student awareness and knowledge of their culture and history, and

(E) increased student and community pride;

(4) encourage State and local education programs to work with Native American parents, educators, Indian tribes, and other Native American governing bodies in the implementation of programs to put this policy into effect;

(5) recognize the right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies to use the Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior;

(6) fully recognize the inherent right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies, States, Territories, and possessions of the United States to take action on, and give official status to, their Native American languages for the purpose of conducting their own business;

(7) support the granting of comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a foreign language, with recognition of such Native American language proficiency by institutions of higher education as fulfilling foreign language entrance or degree requirements; and

(8) encourage all institutions of elementary, secondary, and higher education, here appropriate, to include Native American languages in the curriculum in the same manner as foreign languages and to grant proficiency in Native American languages the same full academic credit as proficiency in foreign languages.

6. Pedagogy

Pedagogy is the art of teaching. It is the inter-relationship between learning and teaching methods. There are pedagogical principles shared by all Indigenous people, but there are also those characteristic to the culture, language and land of each of the world's Indigenous peoples which contribute to a particular style of learning and teaching and its context.

These pedagogical principles are holistic, connected, valid, culture- and values-based, thematic and experiential. They promote co-operative learning, the unified co-operation of learner and teacher in a single enterprise. They describe who teaches and when teaching occurs. Indigenous pedagogical principles recognise the role of non-verbal communication. All learning is clothed in the medium of spirituality so that notions of well-being/wellness and ethos become important in the learners' learning. The teacher is a facilitator of learning; one who promotes achievement and success. Culturally appropriate environments are employed to reinforce knowledge being imparted to the learner, which then reaffirms the learner's significant place in the world. The involvement of community in places of learning is valued.

Responsibilities of Non-Indigenous Peoples

The following 1992 statement by G. Mike Charleston in *Not Just Another Study of American Indian & Alaska Native Education* expresses the responsibility that non-Indigenous people have in the education of Indigenous peoples:

Both Native and non-Native people must be involved in the solutions of problems facing Native education. Although Native people are and must continue to be involved fully in every aspect of Native education, the fact remains that the public school personnel serving thousands of Native students are and will continue to be primarily non-Native people. The education of all Americans, not just Native students, needs to be reformed — all Americans need an education that enables them to understand and to relate positively to the Native people and tribal societies of this country.

Responsibility of Non-Indigenous Peoples to the Charter

Non-Indigenous peoples, as the dominant society, have a responsibility to recognise and uphold the education rights of Indigenous peoples and to know that these education rights are **not negotiable**.

These include the right to:

(i) equitable access to funding to fully resource Indigenous education and education for Indigenous peoples within mainstream/dominant society

(ii) equitable access and participation to decision-making and policy-making in educational structures

(iii) access to an education of our choice

(iv) a culturally safe environment and to define and determine what that environment is and how it is constructed

(v) learn and teach in our own languages and to teach our own cultures

(vi) observe cultural imperatives and obligations implicit in our cultures without discrimination or prejudice

(vii) involve Indigenous communities (elders, family, parents) in the education of their children

(viii) advance socially, politically, intellectually, spiritually and physically in education to access a higher economic order

(ix) self-determination in education

Yet a different appeal to be ‘heard’.

The general circumstances of Aboriginal people regarding the education services and environment throughout the Government and non-Government systems and across all sectors is, at best, dire. Aboriginal students in the K-12 category are, in our view, the most disempowered and vulnerable, simply because of the lack of knowledge, directed skills and the presence of racism in attitudes, literature, politics and expectations inherent in the Western-dominated education systems approach to teaching our people.

Fundamental Issues

The following comments and recommendations relate to Overstreet's Three Psychological Axioms:

- ◆ The empowerment of students, teachers and Aboriginal communities

- ◆ The obligations of the Commonwealth and the States to seriously address the core issues in Aboriginal education and cease to behave in a disconcerted 'fringe interest and commitment' fashion

- ◆ Develop a real nexus between pre-service providers, employing systems and industrial organisations to establish an Aboriginal Affairs policy aimed at achieving at least the issues raised in this response

- ◆ Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring all teachers receive 'quality training' (pre- and in-service) in issues pertaining to Aboriginal education

- ◆ That Schools accept the mandate to promote the issues relevant to Aboriginal students (K-12) school-based programs must be designed to ultimately provide better quality of teaching Australia-wide.

- ◆ That Schools, through the final or successive reports on the quality of education and teacher training, address the issues pertaining to Aboriginal students (K-12) as a specific factor in enunciating quality teaching issues and also to reference these issues throughout the report to ensure the raising of the reading public's consciousness on Aboriginal Education issues.
- ◆ That Schools establish contact with the local community of Aborigines and that a formal advisory arrangement is established to ensure as broad a representation on Aboriginal education issues as possible occurs.
- ◆ That Aboriginal studies be compulsory, and an integrated and specific compulsory core course of study be implemented from kindergarten through to higher education graduation.
- ◆ Higher education institutions ensure that the theoretical and philosophical content of pre-service courses in teacher education are tied to teacher training practice, through serious reviewing of practical activities, and that evaluations are done in the context of the philosophical and theoretical premise that Indigenous peoples should have the right to their own knowledge, language, and culturally appropriate education, including bicultural and bilingual education. Through recognising both formal and informal ways, the participation of family and community is guaranteed.
- ◆ Indigenous peoples must have the necessary resources and control over their own education systems.
- ◆ Elders must be recognised and respected as teachers of the young people.
- ◆ The need to specifically train pre-service teacher recruits to teach about Aboriginal history, cultural principles and about the treatment of Aborigines over the past 200 years under an oppressive military regime.

- ◆ The need to specifically train pre-service teacher recruits in the particular and specific methodologies and learning strategies relevant to discrete groups of Aboriginal students, taking account of language, geography, cultural priorities and the usefulness of Western implications of the impact of the competing influences of teacher unions, teacher employers, industry and student needs.
- ◆ The setting standards and expectations of educational outcomes in bilingual schools staffed by monolingual (English) speakers.
- ◆ Attracting teachers to staff some majority-enrolled schools, particularly those in Aboriginal communities, through inducements such as rapid promotion and higher salaries; and in the context of Australian history as a contiguous exercise, not permitting their knowledge to fall victim to ‘time’.
- ◆ All teachers should be able to ‘fine tune’ their skills and knowledge towards improving the education experiences of Aboriginal students in terms of the directional thinking and analysis of curriculum data, methodology, school environment and usefulness of knowledge.
- ◆ Issues relating to the cultural, environmental, political and inter-personal impact between the standard authoritarian posture and the guilt-edged paternalism of teachers and systems, and the anticipation and expectations of Aboriginal students and parents of the usefulness of Western education in the context of their future ‘quality of life’ expectations.

Is it not clear from the above that Aborigines have a high level grasp on issues of epistemology relating to their desires and aspirations regarding education ‘outcomes’. The obvious intent is to permit Overstreet’s ‘three psychological axioms’ to attain maturation, via the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm. There is evidence aplenty, in the matters that precede and succeed the above section, which articulates the eight dimensions of the truth of the Japanangka.

For institutions that either 'give birth' to pedagogues, or are responsible for the practice thereof, to fully impact upon Aboriginal Education, the issue of the ability of teachers to nurture Aboriginal students through a series of learning environments that allow the acts of learning to occur, while maintaining the individual student's culturally established paradigms, is crucial. At present, the situation faced by Aboriginal students is generally one where that current process insists that 'successful' learning must cause the students to change (or dismantle) their culturally established status. Clearly, the public and the hidden agenda of the systems and education providers is simply **Assimilation**.

I believe that teachers are required to assume responsibility for and are held responsible for far too much, both by the employing authorities and certainly by the public in general. The public image of the teaching profession is appalling and there is little wonder that their perceptions of themselves are being diminished. The situation teachers find themselves in is not ameliorated by the lack of resources, over-large class sizes and the odd notion that the student's total development, especially the intellect, can be nurtured and excited and, in an undefined way, be free and eager to learn, through the systematic bureaucratisation of the information, the technique, the environment and the teachers.

In 1985, the then Commonwealth Schools Commission, as part of the *Quality and Equality Report*, recognised the need to ensure the quality of teaching in Aboriginal community schools and subsequently in majority-enrolled schools (Aboriginal students), and as a result of that recognition, recommended a program known colloquially as the *Teachers in Aboriginal Schools Scheme*. This scheme sought to ensure that distinct initiatives were undertaken and that appropriate teachers were employed to teach Aboriginal students. This scheme emphasised the need of the Aboriginal schools community to be involved. In the early 1970s, Aboriginal people were voicing the same notion and in the 1940s, the quality of teaching was so important that the Strelley people (WA) started their own schools. The need for this scheme proves that, to date, nothing significant has occurred within the pre-service or continuing in-service programs, to alter the educational circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Currently, professional development programs and

the majority of teachers' personal, professional mobility, through further study, does nothing to address the issue of quality of teaching in regard to Aboriginal students.

Making Education Useful and Safer for Aboriginal People, in a humane school environment.

In the generic experience of Indigenous teachers, in the context of the structural authority, relationships between teachers, the school and the community are of 'elastic proportions'. The elasticity of flexibility open to the senior management of individual schools permits actual contradictions to occur, in particular, the depth of both specific Aboriginal programs (Aboriginal Studies) and the amount of community involvement. Seemingly some principals are considered as being 'good', because of their personal philosophy towards both Aboriginal Studies and the involvement of Aboriginal community members in the school management and community. These 'good' principals encourage Aboriginal participation and empower the Aboriginal community representatives, while other principals are seen as 'no good', because they do the opposite. Teachers who want to involve Aboriginal people in their schools either are encouraged to do so, or are denied the opportunity to do so, by the school administration. The reality is that the 'standing orders' for school management permit senior management at the school level to exercise discretionary powers and therefore, the community requires a principal with 'good will' before any serious work can be done.

The following are obvious matters that need attention if the Japanangka is going to abide within the consciousness of the teaching profession. To begin with, the systemic and non-systemic providers should at least attempt the following:

- ◆ Demystify the schooling process and school management.
- ◆ Consciously include or consciously create opportunities for increased Aboriginal parent participation.
- ◆ Ensure teacher/parent contact on occasions other than negative situations.

- ◆ Avoid token involvement of Aboriginal parents.
- ◆ Frequently feature Aboriginal achievers, i.e. elders, parents, celebrities and students (not only students who ‘do well’ at something).
- ◆ Increase classroom participation by parents or other relations.
- ◆ Avoid systematising Aboriginal parental involvement —this requires the deregulation of management thinking on complete parental and community involvement.

There are other simple activities that may be undertaken in the school environment. For systemic and non-systemic providers of education to develop in a contiguous fashion, an effective curriculum, which informs on essential data — increasing in maturity and sophistication, in terms of content — is necessary as the students progress through the education conduit. The employing authority should ensure that the ‘standing orders’ relative to the bureaucratic management requirements are set into the pre-service courses available. The major benefit of such an inclusion would be to:

- ◆ Reduce the chasm between the educational theory and administrative obligations assumed by teachers in system employment.
- ◆ Establish a balance between the ideological impetus that grows from theoretical and philosophical content of pre-service training, and the realities of functional performance as a classroom teacher.
- ◆ Assist pre-service recruits to understand the dualities of system management: that some responsibilities are decentralised and some are not.
- ◆ Clearly enunciate that quality teaching is a conceptual ideology, which must be developed within the concretised management techniques (for legal reasons

perhaps) and the variations between the systems public education agenda — and its hidden agenda — usually established through party political franchises, which also connect to a bureaucrat's personal ideology and ministerial ideology.

A brief historical overview may assist in making the real issues clear.

Contemporary Aboriginal people from all sorts of communities have been nationally active in demanding a better education, in the context of our own recognised needs, desires and aspirations, for around 20 years. Not only are segregated schools present in the living memory of middle-aged and elderly Aborigines, but historical evidence shows that as late as the early to mid 1960s, segregated schools existed. Generations of Aborigines have been limited to the absolute minimum level of education. Therefore, there has for many years been little value placed on educational achievement. There is ample evidence to prove that Aborigines have been 'held under the water' in terms of education progress, while society generally has established program after program to enhance the lot of its under-privileged, degraded, oppressed and ethnically various groups. For political reasons, Aborigines have never experienced an effective education program which has been anything other than an Assimilationist / Apartheid system.

The principle policies of Assimilation/Apartheid are:

- ◆ Terra nullius
- ◆ Segregation
- ◆ Assimilation
- ◆ Integration
- ◆ Self/Management and Self/Determination
- ◆ Reconciliation

What are the compound effects of these policies in an individual Aborigines life? Let's start with the concept of leadership.

During the following discussion on issues relating to the psychology of leadership, an Indigenous experience reference is made, in greater detail, to the events of life and politics that placed the collective experiences of the current emerging leaders of a group who hold 'Strata Title within the public estate', and are expected to use the experiences that constructed them — their Japanangka — to provide qualitative and quantitative advice and decisions regarding many public and very complex issues. At this point, it is important to refer back to discussions on the eight sub-paradigms, or dimensions, of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm, particularly in the sub-paradigms of the secular dimension, public dimension, spiritual dimension and political dimension. This element of that discourse is pure cognitive heuristics.

The skills required for effective leadership are multitudinous. The complexities of interacting elements in effective and affective leadership practices require cognisance of considerably more than the public and much vaunted personal attributes of leadership. These attributes, including visionary perceptions, hard work, constancy of ethics, approachability and the like, are essentially constructed, not so much in the leader's perceptions of themselves, but in constant, though fluid contexts of the leader's constituency.

Each leader is confined within what is principally a complete micro-society, where all configurations of the whole general society are present and demanding.

With regard to leadership in Aboriginal groups, there are many primary and very different strategic leadership cultures, or contexts. The first context is leadership, in a culturally holistic sense, such as the Japanangka. This holistic context arches across every element of the eight dimensions of that paradigm. It is possible to identify two very active dimensions, the secular and the spiritual, because with these two, as concomitant of the entire eight, the bestowing of authority requires a leader with stature that credentials her/him in a sociologically homogeneous, Aboriginal context.

These contexts require an immediate and exceptional set of intuitive and interactive skills, which enable her/him to juggle historical events and influences, along with the effects of modernity and futuristic innovation, simultaneously and contiguously. A leader without a finely tuned Japanangka, or the equivalent, is a leader in name only.

Another strategic culture or context of leadership requires guilelessness and articulate skills of advocacy and representativeness. Leaders should function in the *out-world* context, where they abide in an ambassadorial role of enormous importance. It is in this context of leadership that one is required, quite wrongly, to totally represent their constituency, without the opportunity to consult broadly, openly or frequently. It is clear that both leadership contexts and cultures are, for similar and dissimilar reasons, fraught with danger and terrible stresses.

Setting aside the well-known complexities of the *out-world's* issues of sanctioned confusions over multiculturalism, gender, poverty, aristocracies, fractured economies, poor education, health, housing and deep social discord, it is important for our leaders to recognise, respect and operate within the complexities of Aborigines' 'home' Japanangka, if each is to establish a strong profile of effective and affective representational and adversarial leadership.

A quick though scholarly scan of contemporary literature in the modern science of psychology reveals no less than seventeen psychosomatic manifestations, relating to dysfunctional inter-activity, seemingly present in Australian Indigenous societies. Before one construes this statement incorrectly, let me say that the invasion has caused unparalleled upheaval and discord between individuals and groups of Aborigines and their ever-present secular and ethereal cognitive Japanangka.

To accept that there are numerous elements of conflict, resolution, challenge, negotiation and innovation, to note but a few, ever present in the daily operative exchanges between Aborigines and the rest of Australia's societies, is to accept that peace and harmony are constantly under challenge and unlikely ever to prevail. Of course, cursory reflection exhibits evidence that the majority of these dysfunctions are driven by *out-world* interference and insistence. To state the obvious, this is the

environment from which Indigenous Peoples must emerge and in which they must flourish.

The extremely complex nature of this burgeoning regime of oppression and inherent dysfunction makes the maintenance of leadership roles extremely temporary and at the same time hotly contested.

At the risk of immediate impalement, the following list is merely a series of opinions regarding the pathology of Racism, which, when in place, causes disorders or points of termination of a leader's Japanangka.

Before all the psychologists in Australia, especially those who are experts in Aboriginal cognition, engage in **anxiety** and **enforced cognitive dissonance**, liberally mixed with **affective disorder** and a little **general adoptive syndrome** thereby inducing apoplexy: I am merely luxuriating for a moment, in a large slice of life narrative, spiced with a dash of de-automatisation sprinkled with a pinch of fundamental attribution error.

Consider the following points made by whites in Black Psychology in regard to African Americans. I have however transferred these views and expressions to Australian Aborigines, even though the discourse is focused entirely on Africans who live in America!

The views commonly advanced by a group of psychologists called self-theorists may be helpful because the self-theorists take the view that in order to understand what a person is and the way he views the world, you must have some awareness of his experiential background, especially as it might include experiences with institutions such as the home, family, immediate neighbourhood, and the agencies of both cultures which directly affect the person's life.²⁴

²⁴ p. 8

From a black psychological standpoint we have to work to make the kind of breakthrough that puts black children in typical situations rather than into distorted unreal worlds.²⁵

Stokely Carmichael has repeatedly stated (in the context of an African who live in America) that: ‘...if hard work was the key to advancement, black people would be the richest people in the country.’ We have worked in the fields from sun-up to sun-down, laid rails, picked cotton, scrubbed floors, messed with chain gangs, reared other people's children and at the end of three centuries have very little to show for this monumental effort at hard work. Since hard work has not dramatically altered the future of black people, we have evidence to believe that what happens to a person is more related to luck or chance than to hard work. To plan with the belief in the future is to plan for disappointment and heartbreak. Hence black folk have done their best to deal with the concrete realities and needs of the present. This does not mean that black people are present-oriented in the sense that they are impulse-ridden or incapable of delayed gratification. What it means is that the benefits of the white dream of hard work have not paid off for us. That being the case, as a group, our management of time is not bound or guided by a future orientation and time is not measured in the work-unit values of the dominant white culture²⁶.

Part of the objective condition of black people in this society is that of a paranoid condition. There is, and has been, unwarranted systematic persecution and exploitation of black people as a group. A black person who is not suspicious of the white culture is pathologically denying certain objective and basic realities of the black experience. *The Bourgeoisie*, and the authors of *Black Rage* discuss the value of healthy black paranoia. White psychiatrists and psychologists often have considerable difficulty working constructively with the hostility and suspiciousness of black patients. This is because their frame of reference tells them that excessive suspiciousness is psychologically unhealthy. If a white dude were to tell a white psychiatrist that people have been systematically picking on him from his front door clear to the White House, the psychiatrist would diagnose him as in a psychotic,

²⁵ p. 10

²⁶ p. 11-12

paranoid state and hospitalise him. Using a black frame of reference with a black patient should not result in the same diagnosis, and possibly white psychiatrists should stop diagnosing us and spend some of their time working to change the system, which persecutes black people.

A comprehensive theory of black psychology will have to explain in much greater detail the dynamics of the black home, family, hero, role models, language systems, work and time management, and the nature of suspiciousness. Many other areas will have to be included, and hopefully the challenge of excellence will be met by a younger generation of black students who are deeply committed to the development of a true psychological picture of the black experience.²⁷

In closing, one further comment on group encounters might be considered. While white people in their group encounters with other white people may need to deal with the questions of sex, aggression, affection, tenderness, shame and guilt, black people, especially black change agents, have a completely different set of priorities. In moving from one pattern to another and more rapidly from one crisis situation to another, if one is not careful, it is easy to slip into a state of psychological fatigue with the accompanying systems of depression and angry despair. In this state of mind, without realising it, we begin to use words like revolution, liberation, Tomming, imperialism, agent provocateur and many others in very general, undefined global ways — sometimes more for self-affirmation than for real communication. Furthermore, in such a psychological state of fatigue it is very difficult to see clearly both the goals one is striving for and the relevance of the tactic to the immediate situation. We mix up rhetoric about change with the process of change itself.

Rhetoric properly applied can make us psychologically conscious of what it means to be black. But we must not equate the imagery of this black consciousness with the actualities of concrete social progress. A carefully developed psychological group encounter conducted with change agents, co-ordinated by a black person with psychological training in the black experience, might facilitate the process of regeneration, self-renewal, and meaningful communication. Like any human

²⁷ p. 12

endeavour, in order to continue to be creative and productive, the black struggle must construct models, which will take care of the process of internal cleansing and meaningful reflection and as such serve as self-corrective guides.²⁸

For while I am not a Psychologist, **I am, indeed, an Aborigine** and I know what has happened to me during my life, for I have been continuously engaged with the *out-world*. Because of my many sojourns out of the *out-world*, I understand the nature of interpretation of one's behaviour in leadership and as a *Parkie*. The list above may or may not be nonsense; it is your heuristic journey, not mine. However, a similar listing exists, as pointed out by White. White's listing of interpretive, dysfunctional behaviours exists for your people, but these are quite wrongly applied to my people. These labels define a list of important pressure points, that in *out-world* terms, explain a way we are cognitively defined and the application of our Japanangka. These are matters of 'true and present' as elements manifest as masks and tactical options. For example, the pressure to make right choices and yet maintain our Japanangka in the discourse on Reconciliation, is often overwhelming. Indigenous Australian Leaders must construe their own importance in contexts such as these, if they wish for positive outcomes.

Leadership in Aboriginal societies is about several dimensions, all in the context of their own cultural paradigm. One of the first critical dimensions relates to personal vision. Personal vision is construed through a capacity to 'hear' what is being said and is then focused through a personal commitment to attain a level of excellence which others do not think is possible or inevitable. Such a level may only be attained via a holistic, culturally sound, operating paradigm.

A second critical dimension is establishing within your constituency a level of personal trust. A leader who does not enjoy the capacity to trust colleagues and companions, who chooses not to join the leader in the personal vision underwritten by their constituency, will never attain the vision or articulate the pathways, simply because these acts require broad wisdom and unequivocal commitment from those

²⁸ p. 13

who are ultimately charged with the responsibility for constructing each piece of the objective.

This is a complex dimension, because one needs to balance a colleague's commitment and abilities against the intensive and unrelenting demands, that the isolated and often-scorned track that a leader of a new paradigm construction begets. Leadership in this second dimension also requires a constant, selfless sharing of one's own intellectual property, to the point where one's companions come to believe that they 'own' those views entirely.

I believe that this level of selflessness is an essential quality of remarkable leadership. It is also crucial if one wants to attain the goals set for pursuit. Those of us who have worked in such an environment will also have observed that if one's colleagues are 'not up to it', amazing innovation becomes pedestrian practice.

The key factor of understanding the psyche of leaders in the 40–80-year-old cohort (no gender differential may be drawn), dealt with in the discourse regarding the psychology of leadership as an Indigenous experience, extensively reviews the impact of the public estate's oppressive regime, via the formal policies this group were born into and grew up under.

It is important for this immediate discussion to visit the primary sociological constructs (public estate policy) that defined Indigenous leadership in the 40–80-year-old cohort, if references to matters of contemporary, parental involvement, self esteem and public participation in the civics of Australian education system are to be fully appreciated.

While the past two centuries plus have seen a conspicuous literal and metaphorical 'bloody' antagonism, expressed in the most horrific and inhumane terms imaginable, against Aborigines, the past fifty to sixty years have seen a trial and error policy, applied compulsively at 'light-year speed', to resolve the effects of these antagonisms. The incredibly high levels of social and racial antagonism have been translated from essentially a dual basis of racism and militaristic hubris into public estate policies.

These policies were and remain, in fact, monographs of the social, cultural and criminal philosophies of the British Empire. These monographs set the agenda (public and hidden) to establish seven basic political activities, which directed Aborigines in their relationships with the original British and subsequent Western social 'offspring'. The seven basic political activities against Indigenous Australians are terra nullius, segregation, assimilation, integration, self-management, self-determination and finally reconciliation.

Each political activity overtly affected Indigenous peoples in at least eight discrete ways, with each presiding over a multitude of direct and tangential, cause and effect results, that are now woven into the tapestry, not of the past, but of the present and unavoidably (except in a rare, individual basis) of the future. The inexorability of British dominance is so thoroughly observable in each political activity, that there are many leading Indigenous intellectuals who argue vehemently that there is still really only one political activity in place: **segregation**. The other six policies are clumsy expressions of disguise, principally because, at the end of the twentieth century, the diverse Australian communities are holding an international public debate on, not the presence of racism so much as the practice of racism.

Regarding the concept of leadership as an Indigenous experience, there is some relevance and merit in commenting on the public and personal, psychological profile of almost every Indigenous leader in the 40–80-year age bracket who experienced a confined life style under the 'Hitler regime' of the 'British conquistadors'. It is relevant to a number of issues reflected upon or discussed in this thesis, either in terms of general social interactive relationships, in a bicultural sense, or as a key to appreciating some issues of leadership. These may not be locked into behaviours and orientations of the Western concepts of public leadership (as bizarre as theirs seem) in either a real or imagined set of congruent political acts as an Indigenous cultural rather than a political occupation of leadership in the general public estate.

Evolving sanity in the midst of insanity — of being lost in the Diaspora.

Tying human development to well-trialled psychological paradigms of self-actualisation and general Gestalt theory reveals the image of a present-day leader whose life was unnaturally interfered with through broadly applied child abduction policies, with their attendant sexual and psychological abuses. These policies were/are based on the mathematics of blood, or just plain bloody-mindedness. This leader spent the formative years under a segregation policy which saw the leader isolated from the extended families as well as white society. These situations also saw these same peoples shifted to foreign countries where, for many, their authority and spiritual standing was neutralised and the physicality of their homelands was absent except in an extraterrestrial sense. To enable confirmations, transactions and/or a renewing of the spiritual/physical cycles of life to occur, it must invariably and inevitably create a very public persona, in a Japanangka sense, of **anomie**.

These matters, coupled with the trauma of ‘concentration camp living’, were to permanently cast a mindset that formularised self-worth concepts in black-white relationships. Should a leader have been born into such a regime and developed the fundamental concept of self under such conditions, setting the patterns for adulthood, it is reasonably easy to prophecy, in general terms, the adult psychological profile. However, when we then take that cohort of Indigenous prisoners and completely (and instantly in intent), turn their very controlled lifestyle on its head, through the policy of enforced assimilation, we surely recognise the aggravation and the struggles that must have occurred.

Simply put, the policies went from utter rejection (except for those in bonded slavery, agricultural workers and ‘honorary white’ Aborigines), to forced membership of the ‘eminent other’, in the space of barely one linear and vertical moment in the newborn life cycle. Integration was infused with a reward system and, unlike Pavlov’s reflex theory, even with such a reward system Integration failed in practice (though records no doubt show that it was administrated in a masterly fashion by the bureaucracy), and had a lesser lifespan than Segregation. But this lifespan was not so short that

many of the current cohort of leaders missed being born into a self-actualising culture of Integration, with a living history of segregation as a point of reference for them to acquaint themselves with their obligations under integration policies.

In summary, what we have is a group of Indigenous women and men who are reaching the end of their lives and are casting around to find a place of peace and acceptance in a society that governed their formative years as prisoners or slaves, or both. A society that then freed them overnight and forced them to immediately seek membership of the approving society and to successfully negotiate all the pathways to residence, without recrimination and without anything other than passive knowledge of how to value, preserve, secure and trade in 'their' new society, though in reality only at the fringe in terms of residential addresses. History must demonstrate that in cultural terms, Australian Indigenous peoples were so deeply cast into slavery under segregation, that they were not even permitted to hold a bank account. Under Integration/Assimilation policies, this same group had to assume all the trappings of the society they were forced to join, without any sense of place, secular or any other aspect of the Japanangka dimensions in place or in possession.

Then again, within the space of one linear or vertical newborn cycle, another shift in their total relationships with and within the public estate occurred. Suddenly integration was deemed as not being a 'successful policy' and Indigenous peoples were, through political edict, 'marked' to renegotiate their place in the society that had incarcerated them and then forced adoption on them. Should one reflect on the social construction of each member of the human race, irrespective of competing value systems, one recognises that aberrant behaviour is found largely in those who consistently experience unstable, erratic or violent events during their formative years, and who are never able to break the nexus between formative instability and disrupted maturation. Each experience compresses and confuses, as well as infuses the other, until aberrant behaviour becomes the lifestyle of the victim. In this way we are referring to an entire nation of people expressing a living nightmare of instability.

At some point during the 1960s, it became clear that Assimilation was not working as a recuperative policy either. Indigenous peoples were in fact re-grouping into clusters,

very similar in many ways to their pre-segregation days. This was problematic to the white administrations that now constituted the Federal government and its constituents, the sovereign States and Territories. For a growing population of Indigenous leaders, their self perceptions and their perception of the dominant society had been constructed around a very physical set of policies that saw them accepted publicly as:

- ◆ Prisoners.
- ◆ Unwelcome adoptees.
- ◆ Uninvited migrants.

From these experiences, coupled with dealing with one of the world's most prosperous slave-trading nations, as a black-skinned entity, might one not be less coercive and critical in demanding the emergence of a strong generational cohort of warrior leadership?

The 1970s saw these same people thrust into every person's dream: the political dream. They were actively lobbied to act in a very powerful sense as self-managers and self-determiners. Of course, the then Indigenous leadership saw self-management and self-determination as the key to release from the compounding oppression of the previous three policies. Their current predicament occurred because of a simple error of judgment. The error was the interpretation of the concepts of self-management and self-determination. For the Leadership interpreted this in the same manner as the application of all previous policies, in a literal sense. However, not to be outdone, the Governments of the day interpreted this policy in a figurative sense. Another round of reactive depression set in, as the difference of interpretation and the implications of the differences dawned on the people and the leaders.

The picture is then almost complete regarding the public estate profile of the leadership in Aboriginal Affairs, in a generic political sense. In less than one generation, Aborigines were shuffled from being 'prisoners of war' to an apparent position of socio-political luxury, where they were to determine their own needs, solutions, remedial apparatus and futuristic infrastructure and advise the national polity accordingly.

While on the surface this situation seems a quality remedy, one needs to review the second and third personal and political sub-dimensions, in fact all the dimensions of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm, to understand why this situation was merely another visit from the Western, political, subterranean paradigm. Apparently, our interpretation caused an inexorable dilemma for the general Australian in the street.

However, the personae, particularly the public personae of individual Indigenous Australians, shifted dramatically not only in the eyes of white Australia, but in the eyes of Aboriginal Australia as well. That shift compounded into a 'no-history phenomenon' that was strongly reflected in the uneasy, new, interactive relationships between black and white Australians; in many ways, for example, this was reflected in the previously mentioned situations at school levels. The prisoner was expected to assume the mantle of public estate priority in every social sense, and this new scenario was problematic, in that **no time for grieving was permitted.**

The capacity of any individual or group to continually and instantly reconstruct themselves under either well-considered or ill-considered political paradigms, is by human nature complicated and difficult in every sense, when race is the primary factor in the relationship. For many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, self-management and self-determination, as a political treatment for human behaviour, equated somewhere near equality in a very narrow, social sense. This is particularly so, given that Indigenous Australians were, it is widely held, offered citizenship under a national referendum conducted in 1967, noting a majority vote in the affirmative. The Indigenous leadership was indeed propelled into a set of political scenarios, where they became immediately responsible for providing needed solutions for troubles they still saw happening. All this anomie was concretised, under the formula of the self-management/self-determination policy and is elevated to unbelievable heights under the policy of **Reconciliation.**

The disquiet that resides both within Indigenous Australian communities and the general population in the late 1990s is a direct result of generic, immediate and

unsupported political actions, largely because these actions were also an admission by the national polity that it had failed to resolve the issues of social justice and egalitarianism for Indigenous peoples of Australia.

Grieving or coming to grief - which is it?

In the Japanangka the concept that must be given consideration is that mentioned above. This must include the time and process of grieving.

Grief at all that brought Indigenous Australians to the point of being offered political self-management and self-determination is still grief unresolved. This grief is greater than the loss of her child to a mother, or of his child to a father. It is greater than the loss of parents or siblings in death. It is grief at the loss of all of these, multiplied a hundredfold, coupled with loss of language, loss of land and consequently loss of the right to religious freedom, to political freedom and stability and the loss of high culture. In short, the grief is the grief of the loss of one's first self.

Though it serves little purpose for either the sake of proof, argument or understanding to be reminded that the grief is also for the acts of horrific physical, psychological and economic punishment visited upon Indigenous Australians in **the great 200-year war**. The high level of displacement has resulted in behaviour that is now the contemporary culture of many Indigenous Australians. Had these acts and behaviours been perpetrated under 'usual' pre-invasion conditions, some of those behaviours would be considered so aberrant and extreme that under traditional Law, men and women would consider the death penalty for the perpetrators if they remained unrepentant and demonstrated their lack of repentance under Law. Of course, some actions are indeed unforgivable and would receive the maximum penalty.

Yet from all of the issues discussed though superficially considered — because of the limitations, both human and academic, of an ungainly and ill-balanced equation — comes the call for solution and adherence to white, bureaucratic, principles of operation in obtaining the dramatic, positive shifts required to rectify the contemporary situation of Indigenous Australians.

If a curriculum is going to lead all students down the pathways to freedom and self-actualisation, it must not only recognise the detail of history, it must allocate responsibility for actions and outcomes in a comprehensive sense.

The allocation of responsibility for actions is not a concept that is foreign to standard, mainstream (systems) curricula. Society does not cringe at the exploits of the landed gentry in establishing a rural industry in an ‘arid and violent land’, nor do curricula avoid issues of white conflict, such as the ‘Eureka Stockade’, the bushrangers, or their conflicts with the constabulary. Nor do these curricula avoid harnessing fact and emotion in the area of civics, nationalism, or great accomplishments in sport and the sciences. Surely, it begs the question of the integrity of the public estate in devising generic curricula, to ask: **Why is the Australian 200-year war not mentioned in any detail whatsoever?**

Some Indigenous parents still refuse to climb the invisible walls of racial doubt, rejection and racism in order to enter the school grounds. For it is in the core social world of the school — the ‘playground’ — where their children experience doubt, rejection and racism daily. They might require something more than protest and anti-racism statements, before they push these walls of white Australian rejection over and assume their rightful place, as all parents should, in the school community. Some of these barriers will be eliminated when Indigenous scholars begin operating at senior research levels, across all disciplines, using research paradigms like the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm. It is this paradigm’s function to embolden Indigenous researchers to operate within parameters that are culturally comfortable and sound and to be sensitive to the priorities that drive them as researchers. These priorities may be either scientifically driven, or politically driven, or both.

The Japanangka Paradigm allows Indigenous researchers a forum of intellectual and spiritual excellence, located within the public estate of Australian academia and where Indigenous scholars are no longer apprentices, but peers, or even masters.

In summary, it is necessary for the discourse on Indigenous peoples' issues to range widely, because there is a phenomenon rampant in Australian general or global society, that needs argument check-points and what may be called a sub-textual alternative discourse. The sub-textual alternative discourse is where the author or purveyor of argument for an Aboriginal perspective needs to locate fine points of argument, or new hypotheses, with information that is consistent and credentialed from an Indigenous perspective, even though the dialogue, or event, may source from non-Indigenous peoples; hence the references in this dialogue to racially-based expressions by teachers about some Indigenous parents or guardians in a schooling (rather than an educational) context.

Is there a tunnel at the end of the 'light'?

Indigenous scholars have struggled for decades to secure a site in the general public estate, that welcomes the elements of their social, political, personal, public, spiritual, and personal essence, to pure Indigenous research. The Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm goes some way to facilitate that forum. While in the beginning there was no word, we may well be on the track to producing the first utterances, or to be amongst the first of Indigenous research paradigms. The Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm may have a short lifespan and be repaid by this generation of Indigenous researchers, or it may stand the test of time and serve Indigenous scholars for a decade or more.

Indigenous Australians have struggled to negotiate a series of learning pathways, political and pedagogical, through the emerging and often tenacious systemic and non-systemic education systems, at both Federal and State and Territory government levels, with very little success. There has been no burgeoning renaissance, in the 'white man's' thinking, regarding the presence of Indigenous paradigms that operate as discrete sets of schemata, as enunciated in the Japanangka model. Neither has there been a re-emergence of the protocols nor the infrastructure of 'First Knowledge' as a pathway. What the struggle has brought us is simply a fight to lessen the dramatic negativity racism begets in the entire schooling cultures of Australian societies.

Education/enculturation/assimilation — synonyms?

One of the most important gaps in the intellectual enculturation process is the absence of a practical and culturally sound set of Indigenous epistemological/pedagogic paradigms. The continuous conceptual application of non-Indigenous intuitive, though largely unformulated, ‘sound’ theoretical/extrapolations of Western theory and pedagogy across ‘cultural boundaries’, in an attempt to include Australian Indigenous peoples, has failed.

In Australia, at least for over four decades, the attempt to totally repress the inappropriate learning infrastructures and broad, poor practices of systemic and non-systemic educators has failed. This failure, in the general systematic approach to education of the common masses generally and to Australian Indigenous education in particular, has resulted in an ‘industry’ commonly called ‘Aboriginal Education’.

One of the primary weaknesses of this set of ‘sound theoretical infrastructures’ is the absence of at least one epistemological/pedagogic/research paradigm, that is considered satisfactory by Indigenous Australian educators, to allow Australian Indigenous peoples to enhance their participation in the general education systems in Australia. As a result, a state of dubious educational functionalism has motivated and predicated the identification of some very doubtful ‘cultural traits’ that pass as explanatory or causal factors in the totality of poor learning outcomes for the majority of Australian Indigenous students. These dubious ‘cultural traits’ include a presumed lower order of general intelligence, poor cognition, poor social skills and linguistic retardation, poor span of attention and the sixty-four-dollar one; poor behaviour and lack of co-operation on the part of Indigenous students.

It is interesting to note that anecdotal evidence from around the world hotly pursues an uncomfortable premise regarding the unique similarities of non-white-skinned races worldwide. It argues that the negative aspects of the education of coloured people, with similar contexts, practices, epistemologies and political scenarios to those experienced by Australian Aborigines, places them in double jeopardy: first by the colour of their skin, and then by their Indigeneity. Educators must recognise that

colour plays a very important role in the ‘defining of self’ and ‘defining by others’, the others being, in a schooling sense, primarily the teachers.

Historically, the racist ‘mathematics of blood’ formula has so deeply underwritten the public and individual race relationship estates that, as Indigenous peoples recognise, the ‘blood mathematics’ formula is still used to facilitate the destruction of Australian Aborigines, by dividing our peoples into ‘real Aborigines’ and ‘not quite Aborigines’. Such racist categories are still used to quantify culture in a manner offensive to all thinking people. This racist and rancid paradigm is indeed a core issue in unravelling the key issues of teaching and learning in the generalist public estate regarding Aborigines.

The issue of a particular Indigenous intellectual paradigm, or set of paradigms, bobs up regularly like a cork in a tempest of confusing, conflicting and, frequently, very emotive debate. This debate is premised on the place and tempo of participation of Australian Aborigines in the general Australian and international landscapes, in either an equity or a social justice sense.

Saint or Santa - which?

There are likely to be some colleagues and non-Indigenous academics who will challenge the following working definition. It is important, however, to recognise that such challenges may well stem from the uncomfortable position the challengers find themselves in, because of the implications of the definition in contemporary politics and humanitarianism.

As a logical paradigm shift, many will claim a ‘crusader pose’ that they are ‘different’. From an Indigenous perspective, their position is indeed different. However the difference lies in the fact that they are the beneficiaries of the programs and have as much to ‘shift’ when the paradigm of interface is challenged and alterations to powerlessness and practice are demanded. The working definition is: equity is the goal and social justice is the instrument to achieve that goal. This is problematic, however, in that there is no clear definition of equity, no clear

articulation of inequity and no negotiated level of equity attainment on any agenda. Further, there is no comfortable, practical or appreciable understanding of social justice for Indigenous Australians and even less so among the general Australian populace.

Notions of the meaning and need for the application of equity principles and paradigms to Australian Indigenous peoples, range from short and blunt negative views to the overly emotional and protracted 'warm and fuzzy'.

It seems that these extreme or polarised views are more intent on expunging some guilt and useless political posturing, which is endemic to the 'Aboriginal Industry', and less intent on providing direct and uncomplicated reactive programs to ameliorate the present circumstance of Indigenous peoples in certain, though not all, circumstances. It is these views that need 'reconciling in non-Indigenous Australia'.

What a difference a paradigm makes!

Recognition of the massive public estate struggle to find a workable approach to fundamental issues, such as health, housing, education and employment regarding Indigenous Australians, is complex. However, it is clear that for many, the notion of spending time on developing a research paradigm that facilitates Indigenous participation in the social and scientific intellectualism of Australian's future, is a waste of precious time.

The opposing view is that, without such a paradigm, the relationships will not shift from a 'welfare modus operandi', irrespective of how sophisticated that modus operandi may seem to be. Until there is explicit recognition in the public estate arena by its power mongers of the need to educate for motivational shift, few changes will occur. It is for this and other important reasons that the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm is articulated in a public sense, in the public estate, for the first time.

In a generalist sense: research is meant to **define and quantify via diligent and systematic investigation into a subject, in order to discover facts or principles.** It is particularly important to recognise that this search for principles is what makes the Japanangka so important, especially in relation to the principles of Indigenous Australians' complex operating paradigms.

Consequently, the Japanangka should cause a shift in social and political concepts, in a way that positively impacts on developing the generalist, public estate of Australian Indigenous affairs. In a positive sense, the Japanangka Paradigm contributes significantly to the global research and teaching debate as well.

For many Australian Indigenous people, the political portfolio publicity described as 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs', and previously as 'Aboriginal Affairs', has done little positive work to improve the general well-being and quality of life of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, even over the numerous 'lives' and 'titles' and 'attention' that 'Aboriginal Affairs' has had in the State and Federal political arenas over the past fifty years.

In considering its costly and largely ineffective role over the past four or five decades, it is important to recognise that in the political industry of Aboriginal Affairs, continuous and stable successful management of any of the 'portfolios of the day' with the Indigenous peoples' mandate, has been nonexistent. **Cynics argue that the development of yabby farming in some States and Territories has had a more stable political approach than Indigenous Affairs has.**

Observing the political face of Australia from inside

A political commentary by way of poetry frequently summarises the generalist Indigenous feelings regarding bureaucratic 'managerialism' of Indigenous Affairs in Australia. One such poem²⁹ states:

²⁹ West, E., unpub., 1995

Wreckonciliation Week.

Whitefella song, can't be wrong hey man, it's wreckonciliation week, it's time to make the strong feel weak.

Come on now, pat these poor blacks on the head; make 'em welcome; be sure they're fed, and watered well 'cos it's wreckonciliation week: it's for the best.

- Blokes n women in the park, Ah, don't disturb 'em, it won't hurt; this week. Hey don't get comfy under that bush; 'cos once this week's gone you're in for the push, again. Yep, it's cold, a bit of fire to warm you; Oh hell it's wreckonciliation week, let 'em go; for now.

Wreckonciliation week; it's very hard work, been running around,
'cos they need my help; I'm committed to the cause; to me it's dear.

God I'm tired, thank the government it's only once a year.

The frustration and anger that begets the above poem is fired by the continued absence of a long term plan that moves towards even foreshadowing a treaty, or a significant change, in the poor quality of life experiences of Australian Indigenous peoples. A plan that is orientated towards goals such as such a holistic approach would argue as being at least meaningful to the Indigenous peoples of Australia. What is missing is the opportunity to plan. Indigenous people are forced to accept and react, rather than to behave in an innovative fashion. This also argues for a 'sound', theoretical frame of operation in consultation and decision making, such as the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm offers.

There is little imaginative, anecdotal and even less empirical research required to facilitate the recognition of the compounding effects of the continuing dissonance and dislocation, (anomie) manifest in the lives of Indigenous Australians. These circumstances are a direct and primary cause/effect of **the 1788 violent and illegal invasion by the British colonialists.**

Finding the right lenses — competitive or shared views.

Joshua Fishman states that assimilation certainly transcends the finite context of Indigenous language ‘issues’. Fishman reflects on the direct effects, in a language context, of the globalisation of bureaucratic management in the lives of Indigenous peoples:

The destruction of languages is an abstraction which is concretely mirrored in the concomitant destruction of intimacy, family and community, via national and international involvements and intrusions, the destruction of local life by mass-market hype and fad, of the weak by the strong, of the unique and traditional by the uniforming, purportedly ‘stylish’ and purposely ephemeral³⁰.

To extrapolate the dire effects of the outcomes of Fishman’s analysis, regarding non-Indigenous people’s intrusions into language maintenance, as in Fishman’s model, makes the Japanangka Paradigm and its eight dimensions seem imperative.

What is essential is recognition of the extreme and pervasive effects of such configurations of intrusions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. This is especially true in the areas of equity and social justice. Extending the need to address the issues beyond equity and social justice, as macro- and micro-systems to attain amelioration and to encompass the issues of the need for a pedagogic research paradigm that is Indigenous bound, is not at all difficult; it simply means **the cessation of oppression.**

The Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm, therefore, has particular importance in establishing an original pathway into the public estate research domain. A pathway that has no precursor is always challenging and the Japanangka Research Paradigm is all of that and more. The extension of the overall practices of existing, heritable, spiritual and secular cultures is fundamental to operating within, or applying, the Japanangka Research Paradigm.

³⁰ Paciotto, Carls, in Cantoni Ed., *Stabilising Indigenous Languages, Monograph Series*, Centre for Excellence in Education, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, 1996, p. 174

For decades Indigenous peoples, internationally and in Australia, have reeled from an assumed conciliation practice of one-to-one trade-off as the model of social, religious and political exchanges, and the discourse has been a monologue rather than a dialogue.

The creation of the one-to-one trade model has eliminated the worthiest Indigenous intellectuals from an active role in any aspect of the three-dimensional debate (history, sociology and politics). This exclusion of Indigenous intellectuals is problematic to amelioration of many of the issues and the emergence of new cultures of interaction between Australian Indigenous peoples and the militant society that holds illegal governance of the continent.

To extend the views of Fishman, above, Bratt Paulston³¹ describes North American Aborigines as being in:

a relationship with the majority society of forced assimilation with resistance which tends towards conflict.

In similar circumstance to those of other Indigenous societies then, Australian Indigenous individuals and groups are forced to remain culturally operationally 'purer' the further they are geographically removed from mainstream, white Australia. Groups with minimal contact remain the most culturally intact, in a First Culture sense. This situation, after over two centuries of intense intrusion, is an indictment of the Australian majority society, because the separation introduces and maintains active racism that manifests as the 'real Aborigines' and the 'urban, part or not Aborigines' concept. This creates a schism that has an under-text that smacks of genocide, because 'language' is deemed an icon of authenticity, while 'Aboriginal English' is recognised, reluctantly, as a sub-standard form of English.

All of these facts are vaguely useful to political injunction or mandate in equity or social justice, though less esteemed in pedestrian Australian society. It is these two forms of genocide — language denial and cultural suppression — which also

³¹ Ibid. p. 26

underwrite the absolutism of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm, and the need to expose its actual use and value, in any and all research and academic teaching genre. The Japanangka also exerts influence on the sets of socio-political paradigms of conciliation and attempted rectification of the disfranchisement of Australian Indigenous peoples, that culminates in white society's eagerness to impose these forms of genocide on a group of Indigenous peoples, even more strongly in the context of the technical ambience of the twenty-first century.

From a classic, Indigenous, inter-relational, world perspective, modern Australia needs to invite creations, such as the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm, into the public estate of Australian academia, if it is going to be relevant in the twenty-first century.

While some members of academia may dismiss the above views, it is important to recognise the dilemma faced by academia at the close of the twentieth century; that dilemma is relevance.

The State and Federal bodies politic no longer regard Australian academia either as fundamental to society's development, or as quintessential to Australian society's international public persona. This situation is clearly demonstrated by the forced development of the National Unified System by Dawkins in the nineteen-eighties and early nineteen-nineties and by Vanstone in the lead-up to the twenty-first century.

The need for the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm, among other innovative shifts in the traditional culture of academia, is also manifest in the explicit reduction of importance which funding authorities have given to the disciplines in Humanities. However, any analysis of the funding patterns or government reports during the Dawkins/Vanstone eras demonstrates each Minister's refusal to extinguish emphasis on matters Indigenous within Australian academia. This special attention was/is classic 'mission' style: separate, invisible and oddly resented.

During the discourse of this thesis, an analysis of equity and social justice, based on the referred discussion paper, readily articulates the results of the Australian, general,

unified, system inquiry regarding the place of equity and the role of social justice concepts of overt actions. This inquiry indicated an entrenchment of antipathy regarding these and other human rights issues, either as a corporate body, or as academic research, in application, except for the explicit outcome of adding to one's publications list, or one's recognition in a sense of expertise.

It is clear that academia per se was/is unable or unwilling or both, to come to grips with sub-culture citizens, and is struggling vociferously against 'normalisation and relevance' in matters pertaining to the six equity groups, while simultaneously accepting with alacrity the generous funding for Indigenous peoples' participation, and less enthusiastically (because the pot of gold was smaller), the funding for the development of equity programs for the other five equity groups, through the Higher Education Equity Program (HEEP).

All of these factors indicate a state of semi-acceptance and limited recognition of the very public relationships between Indigenous peoples of Australia and academia, although there is a strong façade of dual commitment to the issues of Indigenous Australians. Again, the struggle academia finds itself in will be significantly shifted once Indigenous peoples have a title deed to a sector of the academia's public estate, and that title deed will be granted by articulating paradigms such as the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm.

In summary, and to confine the issue of the need to articulate a paradigm such as Japanangka, if observable shifts in the intellectual economy of Australian Indigenous peoples is to occur, as a catalyst for something more than being supplementary supposition and authorising ethnic plagiarism, the words of Joshua Fishman become pertinent.

I spend my summer and winter months at Stanford in the Linguistics Department and my fall and spring days in New York on the campus of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University. I told one of my medical colleagues there that I would be talking today on the topic 'What Works? What doesn't?' So my medical colleague, hearing that, said, 'Oh, what works? What doesn't? What disease are you

into?’ So I looked him straight in the eye and I said, ‘Lack of sufficient inter-generational mother-tongue transmission.’ And he said, ‘Oh, you must be in speech pathology.’ He was not too far wrong, except that most of the pathology that I am into is Socio-linguistic in nature.

But his general point was very well taken. Before one can answer the question ‘What Works? What Doesn’t?’ one must specify the disease as precisely as possible. Language endangerment or language destabilisation is not a specific disease entity, is not a specific diagnosis, but rather the name of an entire ‘cluster of diseases’. If you like, we have to get down to the specific diagnosis, rather than to talk about the department as such³².

The generalisation Fishman makes regarding levels of specificity in language, ordinance and management, is applicable to the Japanangka — particularly in the holistic sense — in that each of the eight sub-paradigms represents more direct analytical hypotheses regarding an Indigenous research paradigm than any other research model on offer does. This is particularly in the contemporary genres within the research and development cultures of either private or public sectors and certainly within academia’s research cultures per se.

It is obvious indeed that to extend a set of worldviews, contexts or operational frameworks, that include sufficient elements of Indigenous intellectualism, into the research and teaching cultures of academia is crucial. The acceptance of these additional, Indigenous worldviews will allow for the extension of the existing context of research and teaching parameters. Such an inclusion will facilitate, not impair, the extension of Indigenous nuances. By engaging our operating paradigms within the public estate and the research culture of academia, it is also important to refer at this point to the well-touted concept of holistic practices.

For many years Australian Indigenous educators have espoused two primary solutions to the dilemma faced by Indigenous children, youth, young adults and adults, to assist them in obtaining a level of functional literacy and numeracy, to ‘make’ them competitive in the mainstream employment stakes.

³² Ibid. p. 186

There was always an underlying and unstated assumption that sufficient additional skill in mathematics, science, languages (Indigenous, not foreign), and visual and performing arts would accrue to 'round-out' the Indigenous individual. It was also thought that the pursuit of literacy and numeracy would enable individuals to gain a holistic education, indeed to make them employable. At this point in the experimental activities of 'participation rather than assimilation', it is clear that 'sectional biculturalism' is in operation at a very sophisticated level and the notion of a holistic genre is under direct challenge.

Some Indigenous educators agree that much of the alternative theory propagated to establish a level of functional difference between Indigenous Australians and the rest of Australian Society is based on an immature, though not necessarily inaccurate, perception of difference: that there is a praxis axiom that promotes the belief **that articulation and explanation of difference seems essential before growth by Indigenous Australians can occur in the white education paradigms, and that these differences should be measurable.**

The general term for such differences is 'holistic', in the sense that Indigenous educators tried to fuse pre-contact with sanitised post-contact cultural practices, in an attempt to draw similarities that seem not to imply too much difference. The entire exercise is costly, in that the compromises have been too great and are now considered 'the norm' in terms of Western education paradigms.

The need for, or even the presence of, a holistic approach to public education for Indigenous peoples has remained largely a conceptual paradigm for over twenty years, without definition or challenge. The Japanangka challenges, not the issue of 'presence or need' regarding holistic praxis, but the 'silence' on the concept of holism per se.

As a result of that challenge, the 'taproot' of existing philosophical debate seems to have driven deep into the existing mind-sets and the largely stagnant, non-articulated opinion regarding Indigenous holism. We must surely see this public debate between

Indigenous intellectuals occur. The need for debate is demonstrated by a reference to holistic curriculum development by Clarke, where it is claimed that:

Curriculum needs to be centred around the child and the experiences they bring into the classroom. The curriculum should fit the child rather than *vice versa*.

The curriculum should first bring in the home environment, then the community, and finally the physical environment, which is a holistic approach with the child at the centre³³.

In terms of satisfying Clarke's hypothesis, a realistic notion of child-centred approach should be challenged. This will require a reversal of the current order of the prescriptive, centrally-based, normative, and uninspired systemic — and to a large degree the non-systemic — curriculum model, particularly for children who have 'extremely limited' experiences, even if these experiences run to 'Sesame Street', 'Bananas in Pyjamas' and 'Play School'. Relationships between the above 'experiential turbulence', which is value-laden and assimilationist, and the real world are, in my view, pure fiction, with few benefits derived in the notion of preparation for 'real school experiences'. As a final observation, historically the masters of mass public education systems will not drop the public-political agenda, which makes equity endemic and the Japanangka essential to future education development.

All is well — or is the school hell?

On the surface, Clarke's claims regarding the components of child-focused and holistic education paradigms are easily accepted and concurrence gushes forth. However, something more than the simplistic notion put forward by Clarke is required, because the model contained within Clarke's philosophical perspective has been consciously tried and tested sometimes, inadvertently many times, and there is little more than a limp, irregular debate on the issue.

In the Australian context, there are many educators of different cultural configurations who subscribe to the philosophical views expressed above. It is Clarke's definition that I have extrapolated, since lack of pre-contact with systemic education is at issue

in regard to Aboriginal students, because of the prevailing presumptions of mass educators.

There are several loose premises that drive a child-centred, holistic curriculum. Both history and pragmatism demonstrate un-arguably that such an approach is holistically problematic, rather than impossible intellectually, or impossible in terms of curricula. Several matters need attention for a child who is a member of a majority culture family unit. These matters are almost insurmountable as problems in Clarke's broadly held views regarding holistic, child-centred approaches, because of the social stratification of the majority society as a significant negative impact on the globalisation of almost any holistic theory. If there is challenge to this opinion, opponents might seriously consider the presence of a particularly powerful private schooling system in Australia, from where most senior politicians and many prime ministers have emerged. That private system is bound to the private wealth of Australian society. The network is so strong, that simply attending a preferred private school is an entrance card to opportunity in the ranks of the political, private and public sectors.

To hold on to an expectation that mass public education, as it presently exists, is not anything other than permanent retention of the Australian aristocracy, and to lose the notion of child-centred education, is the worst starting point for education excellence. Should educators continue to subscribe to such simplistic education philosophies as 'good mass education', one may only expect the status quo, not egalitarianism to prevail.

The Japanangka challenges the existing notion of holism, in that it recognises the primary strategy of holism as being 'participation not integration'. Clarke's views are, on the surface, based on an integration philosophy — or at least include that philosophy — whereas the Japanangka permits fluidity of conceptual and actual participation and constitutes the major difference between the passive discourse and any active definition of holism.

³³ Ibid. p. 129

One of the really worrying aspects of Clarke's seemingly well accepted perspectives is the fragile notion that the perpetrators of public mass education are interested in, and have the time, resources and inclination to, and are able to develop, a working curriculum that is child-specific. The elements of the hypothesis on holistic curricula, as proposed by Clarke, are 'the home environment, the community and the physical environment'. That these three elements construe to a holistic approach is absurd, in that each is profoundly different, in secular and spiritual senses, in each child. Mass education is a final and bureaucratic system that begs every conceivable aspect of holism and can never facilitate what the society eliminates from the education diet of the majority of children and adults — the opportunity to shift the aristocracy and to implement egalitarianism as a better, though untried, alternative to the 'mass education' philosophy.

The whimsical nature of education management is also a force of destabilisation. In the most general sense, Australian systemic education providers have a hierarchical infrastructure that is plainly schizophrenic. During the course of one calendar year (1991), the Federal government expended around eighty million dollars directly and indirectly on research projects, in an effort to improve and re-articulate issues in Aboriginal education. There has been an increase in this activity over the past eight years.

The contemporary views and nature of State and Territory systemic-based education is dramatically unstable. The hierarchical structure — from the bottom up — is in general terms affected by the following managerial infrastructure:

- ◆ Teachers and Teacher Unions, including school councils and committees.
- ◆ Ancillary staff and relevant Unions, including teacher aides, school management hierarchies including Principals and Deputy Principals, head teachers and subject masters.
- ◆ Regional directors with both academic and administrative authority over daily school operations.
- ◆ Central office bureaucrats with numerous financial interests competing for priority, including budget appraisal and disbursements.

- ◆ Ministerial Councils and specific expertise and departmental council advisory groups too numerous to list.
- ◆ DETYA Senior Officers.
- ◆ Ministerial offices with advisers and advocates.
- ◆ The Minister of the day.
- ◆ The Cabinet.
- ◆ The party platform policy.

Classroom impact is further defined by the enunciation of fictitious demarcations, such as equity and other socio-cultural, political constructs, by ever-competing interests between all of the above categories and, most importantly, the individual who obtains a position of authority and real power in each hierarchy and who brings a personal connection on how to ‘right the wrongs’ in the system. These imposed views are quite distracting and sometimes, from a front line teacher’s point of view, create uncertain situations, where practice (epistemology) is constantly under re-draft or reviews, where evaluation and benchmark practices are driven not by learning principles, but by the economy, the public, and private business sectors. This is especially so where technology is thrust upon students and schools as an alternative to good teaching practices and is seen as substituting for face-to-face, or human, interaction in the experiential aspects of teaching. All of this rolls along in a converging matrix of madness, of challenge and change, with no element of time to test and re-test the changes. All of this results in Australian educators rushing from one promotion orientation to the next, with seemingly little regard for the purpose of education — the learners and the new societies who will evolve into the next generation of intellectuals.

Holism is sought for Indigenous students, because some in the system believe it is the most profound pedagogy for Indigenous students. Clearer appraisal of the human face of education as a social responsibility must be debated (yet again) in the public estate. This debate must surely be about the provision of holistic pedagogy in systemic and non-systemic paradigms, as vital to all learners, to society generally and to history. ‘Histories’ should be statements of improvement, not records of stagnation, of little shifts or of ignorant stupidity.

A snapshot reflection of some pre-service trainees' views and behaviours.

A snapshot dialogue on issues of Indigenous orientations in developing a Curriculum paradigm and testing Westerners' conceptualisation, grasp, and acceptance of the eight sub-paradigms of the Japanangka Paradigm, on non-Indigenous, pre-service, teacher trainees.

I openly subjected several groups of students, studying a unit with me, known in subsequent semesters as *Indigenous Peoples in Education CU405* at Southern Cross University, to these issues and concepts. I worked in the 'College of Indigenous Australian Peoples' (CIAP) as a senior lecturer and head of the academic programs of the College.

In 1998, the School of Education elected to nominate CU405 as a compulsory unit in their degree course in Primary Teacher Training and I was given the task of teaching a unit to some eighty students, the majority of whom did not want to do it. Many expressed a desire to avoid the unit altogether and many failed to co-operate early in each semester. This situation applied in a more overt manner with the second group. There were audible jibes of a racist nature and consistent mocking of the data I wished to engage the students with.

I decided that the fundamental issue at hand, for some groups, was not a lack of interest per se, it was simply '**racialism**' and its awful partner **racism**.

For the first six to eight weeks of each semester, I engaged in confrontational dialogue on racism and the institutionalisation of racism. I owned my own racism and I declared a firm belief in the existence of deeply ingrained racism within the cohort of students. Students openly shared my views and I had to, in the end, suspend any dialogue with these 'on-side' students, because they were becoming 'story carriers' and I did not think that appropriate, especially as they simply confirmed my previously held views.

Some students openly referred to Aborigines as coons, niggers, Abos and the like.

I re-engaged the students in a situation which I hoped would challenge their perceptions, and hoped that, in the end, they might indeed challenge themselves.

The most challenging task at hand with some groups was the matter of racism. Some of my students urged me to make the last three or four weeks of the semester compulsory for lectures and expressed some disquiet over the way their colleagues had been continuing to express themselves. I suspect the task at hand requires more than four hours a week for some thirteen weeks if we are to make significant changes in attitude.

Regarding the eight sub-paradigms though, I do admit early that I had to modify the language of the text I handed out. The students were not conceptually or linguistically mature enough for anything other than a 'plain English text', with little or no abstract hypothesis interwoven within. Once the engagement began, it seemed completely unproblematic for students to simply accept the eight as being culturally peculiar to Aborigines. Many thought they had a set of 'tricks' they could use to engage Indigenous students in the 'learning process' in the classroom. Students genuinely struggled to articulate the eight sub-paradigms as discrete operations, though when they struggled with detail, they reverted to the 'But you are a different race, and are you really that complicated?' frame of response.

The primary struggle came, when I asked students to identify their own place in each of the eight sub-paradigms. Some relished the opportunity and others resented the imputation of such a close alignment of the races, while others simply had not thought enough about themselves to consider that they, too, might have a set of complex operating paradigms. This exercise took several weeks to complete and in the end, approximately one third of each cohort indicated that they thought they would eventually understand their place within the eight.

It is interesting to note that the second group were more difficult than the first. It seems that the first group passed on to the second some anecdotal evidence on how ‘tuff’ the course was and how ‘tuff’ the senior lecturer was. Some students indicated that they did arrive ‘with attitude’ regarding racism issues and the apparent ‘in your face’ teaching techniques of the lecturers was immediately problematic, as was the persistent nature of that ‘aggression’.

A context for the questions of need — the race to illusion.

The race debate emanating out of the Australian National Parliament in the 1987-1996 period extensively disrupted a global society that had worked quite assiduously to mask the public practice of racism and to brand the act of racism, within the public estate, through legislation loosely referred to as the Racial Discrimination Act.

Without tramping through the boggy and wide marshes of Indigenous Australian history since 1788, it is however necessary to recognise that racism is a foundation stone of modern Australian society and the struggle not to eliminate racism, but to curtail its public face, was and indeed remains a monumental task that will take several generations of elected representation, public education programs and very blatant national curricula to redress.

If one begins from the premise that all members of society exhibit racial preference in many aspects of their life, and if we accept that sometimes positive preferences shift to negative preferences, based on personal interpretations of events (public and private), we may then easily accept that, while governments may desire to legislate for the eradication of private and public racism, the best they may hope for is to outlaw overt racist practices and to insist on citizens exercising personal control in public forums.

One of the more asinine aspects of the anti-vilification legislation is the expectation that the system these very views underpin might effectively and affectively adjudicate in public law and in conflict in these matters. For example the ‘Mabo’ case was supposed to extinguish the doctrine of **terra nullius** and it may well have done so

momentarily, for the ‘Howard Ten-Point Plan’ countered any such perceptions and legal outcomes. In my view, Howard breached the ‘separation of Powers’ ideology by this very act, in a covert sense. To the casual observer, there are some irregularities in the Federal Government’s response to Indigenous issues. While spending many millions of dollars on the **stolen generation** and even more on **reconciliation**, the Federal Government also expends mega millions of dollars fighting against the stolen generations’ appeal for compensation. Witness the most recent events in the Northern Territory for a glimpse of absurdity.

Does identity play a role in the overall debate?

In moving to articulate an appreciation of contemporary Indigenous identity, it is necessary to survey the socio-political landscape to see exactly where the terrain is most rigorous in the matters of racism, modernity and extemporaneous contemporary Indigenous cultural practices of twenty-first century Aborigines. The legality and reality of integrating conflicting political views, and the shift to authentic cultural practices requires serious challenge and introspection by the non-Indigenous people of Australia.

In his chapter titled *Towards a Black Psychology*, Joseph L. White³⁴ (in Jones, 1991) makes certain points in his discourse on racism and the need for a black psychology. I have re-worded, through the drawing of parallels, some of White’s comments. The ‘unadulterated White’ makes broader reading. The following is my hybrid interpretation:

1. From the authentic experience of African Americans (Aboriginal Australians) should emerge an accurate, workable theory of Black psychology. I contend the same for Indigenous Australians.
2. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to understand and explain Aboriginal people’s lifestyles by using traditional methods or theory developed by white psychologists to explain white people.

3. When these theories are applied to Aboriginal peoples and their lives, many incorrect, weakness-dominated, and inferiority-orientated conclusions are drawn.

4. In the United States of America most psychologists and social scientists take a liberal view which, in essence, states that coloured peoples are culturally deprived. The same is true in Australian thinking. If one is too culturally different, one must, by definition, be inferior. Further, one is also considered as being psychologically maladjusted because of the environment in which one was reared. White people, through legislation and bad social practices, have created racism as an Australian experience, though the blame is directed towards Aborigines because of their difference.

In short, White declares that we are treated as being culturally and psychologically deprived because our experiential background provides us with inferior preparation to move effectively within dominant white cultural paradigms. I believe that this treatment of my peoples by white Australians is a pathological aberration in the soul of Australian society. The need to treat some differently is illustrated by the Equity Policies that exist variously throughout both the public and private sectors, with particular application to social justice and economic paradigms.

Different cultures or groups are automatically declared as being disadvantaged, there are six disadvantaged groups in Australian society; these six are **Women, Aborigines, NESB, Low socio-economic, Rural dwellers and Physically divergent people**. There is another group that has remained largely invisible to all of us and this group is the group who defines the other six. Guess what this group constitutes? The bureaucracy and the elected Body Politic: the 'invisible' group we see so much of.

There are certain conceptual absurdities in the notion of these six groups:

³⁴ White, Joseph, L. In Jones, Ed, *Black Psychology*, 3rd. Edition, Cobb and Henry Berkeley, California, 1991

- ◆ The first absurdity is that women, who I understand constitute greater than 50% of the Australian population, are disadvantaged by their gender.
- ◆ The second absurdity is that in a country that is largely unoccupied in terms of total land mass usage, people who do live rurally are disadvantaged. It is true that they do not have all the benefits of city life, like poison in the atmosphere, noise pollution, pressure of crime waves because of a perceived lack of values, high materialism and cultural dissonance.
- ◆ The third is that Aborigines, because of being Aborigines, are disadvantaged. If this is so, it is a blatant expression of this country's overt racism.
- ◆ The fourth is that poverty or the absence of a minimal equivalent income makes one inferior to all others who do not exhibit this level of economic deprivation. This is simply the overt maintenance of the aristocratic hierarchy and oppression of the working class.
- ◆ The fifth absurdity is that if one speaks a language other than English, one is a lesser person: less able, less intelligent, less powerful, less able to contribute to the social development of Australia, its economy, its workforce and its cultural development.
- ◆ The sixth absurdity is that if one is physically divergent or contrary to the 'norm', one is disadvantaged.

Taking away the matters that make one intellectually or emotionally or physically dependent for survival, many divergent people are as able as the 'other'. It is simply that the 'other' pays scant attention to the facilitation of the agility of the divergent.

Those who are dependent should, I believe, be treasured for the duration of their lives. That is merely my view and I do not wish to impose it on anyone else.

Antagonism toward members of a different social group has led to perhaps the most

socially destructive types of behaviour. The Nazis murdered over 6 million Jews in the 1940s, under the guise of 'purifying' the European racial stock. And I understand the number of North American Indians dropped from an estimated 3 million in the seventeenth century to 600, 000 today. The genocide perpetrated on the indigenous peoples of Latin America by the Spanish was and remains even more appalling.

In the USA, social prejudice against blacks by whites has been a tenacious social problem resulting in a catalogue of social ills, ranging from the deterioration and near bankruptcy of large cities to poverty, short life expectancy, high levels of crime and drug abuse, and human misery of all kinds among blacks themselves.

Racism dates back at least as far as the earliest contact between English aristocrat and Africans in the 16th century. They (the British) were struck by the strangeness of the Africans 'especially their blackness', a colour with overwhelming bad connotations for the Englishmen of the day, who perceived Africans as looking like apes, engaging in savage and uncivilised behaviour and as having 'heathen religions'. These earliest white impressions about black Africans contain most of the anti-black stereotypes still common in the twentieth century (and no doubt into the twenty-first century).

- ◆ The importation of Africans to America as slaves codified these negative attitudes and reactions.
- ◆ The Australian experience is a natural extension of that racism.
- ◆ At the beginning of World War II, in the USA, the average black man in his twenties had not gone past the sixth grade in school.
- ◆ Most blacks living in the South (for Aborigines the North and the South) were largely segregated by law. This situation was directly transferred to Australia where curfews applied and where segregated picture theatres, toilets, swimming pools and schools were the norm.

- ◆ Given mandatory sentencing, one might argue that segregation is alive and well in Australia.
- ◆ This legal segregation was not outlawed until 1964. In the USA after WWII lynching came to a nearly complete halt. **Now that's progress!.**

How do we recognise racism? How is it manifest?

This is a 'shorthand' discussion on racism as a specific entity. This entire thesis is about racism. It is generally agreed that racism has generally three components: **Stereotypes, Prejudice and Discrimination.**

- ◆ Stereotyping is the cognitive component of group antagonism. Our beliefs about personal attributes shared by people in a particular group or social category can be thought of as cognitive schemata about particular social groups. Stereotypes are largely a matter of social tradition. Stereotypes, like any schema, distort reality to achieve order and simplicity. In that sense, they are not necessarily bizarre, deviant or pathological. Stereotypes become destructive when they ignore the evidence of reality and are generalised to all 'other' group members.
- ◆ Prejudice is the affective or evaluative component of group antagonism. Prejudice is an evaluation of a group or a single individual based mainly on the person's group membership. Usually it is a negative evaluation, though not necessarily so; some are prejudiced in favour of a group or an individual. In Australia, this is known as positive discrimination.³⁵

In the case of positive discrimination, assimilation drives the outcomes and group homogeneity is the primary target.

One variant of prejudice is Ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own group (in-group) is superior to all other groups (out-groups) and is the centre of everything. Thus the in-group is perceived as superior, the most virtuous, and holding

³⁵ West, E. Lecture notes 1998, Southern Cross University, NSW

the best values; the out-group is contemptible, immoral, inferior, weak, distrusted, and criminal.

* Discrimination is the behavioural component of group antagonism. This is the behavioural concept of acceptance or rejection of a person or group based on (or at least influenced by) his/her group membership. For example, quotas for hiring migrants or allowing migration percentages, based not on factors of humanity, but on 'usefulness' to the economy, are overt traits of discrimination.

Positive discrimination needs explanation. It is compulsory movement out of an in-group and the elimination of your home group's discernible traits. Overstreet's three psychological axioms and the effects of that program's success, illustrates this with: **blame the victim!**

One of the most interesting and alarming phenomena to occupy the time and energy of the numerous political infrastructures, from the States and Territories through to the Federal Senate and the House of Representatives, is the denial process. Denial of guilt and responsibility for the contemporary situation of Australian Indigenous peoples occupies an enormous amount of time and requires excessive expenditures of energy.

Where are we at today?

The present Prime Minister of Australia (John Howard) has made very few statements in the public debate on racism, so even the casual observer must conclude that he is either childlike in his understandings of the society in which he holds the highest political office, or he shares the views of the racist majority, but is afraid to say so. In my view, Howard proves that the lowest common denominator in society, a cringing weak individual whose track record as a loser is almost unparalleled in Australian political history, is in massive denial, and yet is still able to attain the highest office in the land — bar one, the Queen's titular representative. It must be a full 'shame job' for all Australians.

The Prime Minister's constant references to his 'not wanting to dwell on the past' but to 'look to the future', are utterly unrealistic and provide no form of leadership in a debate that will affect the international public image of Australia, in every sense, from trade and export through to immigration. One has to wonder at the status of this country regarding the UN Charters on various matters, particularly those relating to social justice, and to human rights resolutions.

A profile discourse on racism that is four-dimensional from the following perspectives.

Consider the following questions in the context of the application of a fully operational Japanangka, particularly in the context of race and prejudice.

- ◆ Who and what are you?
- ◆ With whom do you dwell?
- ◆ Sociological confusions and contusions and
- ◆ Stratification for satiation of Self!

In their discussion on the colonial infusions of racism that permeate the deep psyche of mega-racial Australia, D'Alton and Bittman pointed out the concomitant results of overt racism in Australia as follows:

At the time of Wilberforce there was no such thing as race prejudice — other races simply were inferior. There was no doubt of this; it was an objective condition of existence. Superiority and inferiority were given, and the proof was in the dominance of one culture over another. That the other cultures provided alternative methods of social organisation was not considered, and superiority was defined in terms of power, both economic and military. Gradually this fact of superiority was eroded, and despite the assumptions and the 'proofs' of early evolutionary anthropologists and social Darwinists, the notion of Western cultural superiority broke down. By the thirties, interest in race prejudice was focused around understanding how people came to hold such irrational beliefs, and why they held them. Race prejudice came to be approached as a psycho-social, pathological problem, as a disease, a malady of

rational man.

... It is obvious that a social reality is not a fixed reality but depends for its existence on the beliefs of the people making up the society, and it is consequently liable to change.

Thus social reality may be seen as a projection; social truth is our own creation, and its existence depends on our affirmation of one state of affairs as truth. The superiority of the west was consequently only a social fact so long as we continued to believe and act on the belief. We believe in our superiority and maintain this belief by organising incoming data in such a way as to prove it. Stokely Carmichael makes this point when he says:

Columbus did not discover America. Columbus may have been the first recorded white man to set foot in America. That is all. There were people there before Columbus. Unfortunately, these people were not white — unfortunately for the white West, fortunately for us, they weren't white. But what happens is that white Western society never recognises the existence of non-white people, either consciously or sub-consciously. So that all around the world, the peoples of the Third World never did anything until some white man came along...' (10)

From the point of view of social reality, there is not a prior intrinsic meaning in the world outside us. It is ourselves who order our sensory input in such a way as to give it meaning to us. We then act on the basis of our own construction of the world, in effect ordering our actions in terms of our attributed meaning. Therefore, in one moment, we project meaning and interject that meaning as the reality in which we act. However, our society provides the context in which we act and Erich Fromm gives an analysis of the individual and the individual's crisis of identity within a particular social context.

Central to Erich Fromm's concept of the 'self' is that this amorphous and elusive concrete reality is, in effect, a process and not a static thing (11). The effort to capture

'self', to isolate it as object, is doomed to failure because of the very nature of the process. Consequently, identity as a stable reality is flux, being generated and regenerated. In other words individual identity is constantly being created. This identity so created, is the individual's ongoing answer to the question 'Who am I, what am I like?' With each new act, the individual may either confirm his own stereotypical self, or reveal some new facet which may alter his conception of his total identity. This viewpoint sees Man's identity as a dynamic product which exists only through action. Therefore, the maintenance of a particular identity is an active, not a passive process.

In conjunction with this view of 'self', Fromm emphasises the aspect of aloneness that is a condition of the becoming self. He states:

'the other aspect of individualism is growing aloneness. The primary ties offer security and basic unity with the world outside oneself. To the extent to which the child emerges from that world, it becomes aware of being alone, of being an entity separate from all others'. (12)

In order to achieve an individual identity in the face of a high data input from the environment and to affirm, or be conscious of, a self as agent of action, the creation self must be distanced from the creator. The individual must project an image of self to be contemplated in conscientiousness in order that he be conscious of his self. He exists, for himself, therefore, as an alienated projection, a concretisation of a particular set of variables, which he has himself ordered so that he may be conscious of a self. This act of conceptualisation provides the individual with an identity for himself, ordered as a stereotypical self beyond his unrealised self, the self of these possibilities. It is this basic alienation, the crisis of identity formation that faces the human race as a condition of its existence.

Both the creation of a self and the aloneness of the self are unavoidably linked in the process of creating an individual identity. The individual among which he must

choose alternative identities. From this formless jumble he is forced to select and arrange the constituents, thus creating a form out of the formlessness, meaning out of meaninglessness. The particular form that each individual creates is the expression of his own individuality and affirms his self.

There are two implications from this; first, that the individual creates himself as a matter of free choice and is therefore responsible for the creation, and second, that the individual is alone, since his creation is uniquely his own.

This results in the possibility of being overcome by the vast range of alternatives, of being overpowered by the responsibility of actually making the decision and of being frozen into indecision about the consequences of the choice. Under these conditions the individual's emotional response may be one of anxiety and fear. In order to allay this anxiety and to avoid the responsibility, the individual may abrogate his freedom to choose and, in effect, deny the responsibility for his own actions. This can be done in one of three ways:

1. Authoritarianism — ‘a tendency to give up one’s own individual self and to fuse oneself with somebody or something outside oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking’.
2. Destructiveness — ‘I can escape the feeling of my own powerlessness in comparison with the world outside myself by destroying it’.
3. Automaton conformity — ‘The person who gives up his individual self and becomes an automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around him, need not feel alone and anxious any more. But the price that he pays, however, is high; it is the loss of his self’.

Responsibility and aloneness induce the need for these mechanisms of escape; they are ways of achieving an identity in the face of unbearable external pressures. It is this situation that provides the underlying condition for race prejudice.

In an individual, race prejudice can be regarded as an attempt to create an identity through negative identification. That is, the individual identifies and stereotypes a

group to which he does **not** belong, and by implication, a residual group to which he **does belong**. In identifying a group to which he does not belong, the individual attributes negative characteristics to the group members. The negative content of this attribution is not inherent in the qualities themselves but is provided by the in-group. Merton gives a good example of this process when he compares beliefs about Jews and Japanese in the United States with those about Abraham Lincoln. He states:

“Did Lincoln work far into the night? This testifies that he was industrious, resolute, perseverant and eager to realise his capacities to the full. Do the out-group Jews or Japanese keep these same hours? This only bears witness to their sweatshop mentality, their ruthless undercutting of American standards, their unfair competitive practices. Is the in-group hero frugal, thrifty and sparing? Then the out-group villain is stingy, miserly and penny-grinding etc’.

This example indicates the extent to which it is possible to attribute meaning and to order responses in terms of the attributed meaning, as the individual expresses his construction of reality. This stereotyping, however, goes beyond just the attribution of meaning, and refines both the other and the self. Stereotyping is a formulation of reality that is particularly rigid. In the process of stereotyping, particularly in relation to race prejudice, the individual defines himself through membership of a residual grouping. In the individual's effort to gain identity for himself, he effectively confers it on the other and his own becomes mere reflection. This gives the other a direct, positive identity while his own identity is indirect, negative, consisting merely of those attributes not possessed by the other. Paradoxically, the individual's effort to affirm his identity through group membership only succeeds in giving a positive identity to the out-group.

As the definition of the in-group exists only through the identification of the out-group, the result is a particular configuration of negative inter-relations which Sartre calls ‘seriality’. A good illustration of the relations that hold in a situation of seriality is to be found in a formal examination. In the examination situation, each examinee is in a series defined by the examination, the external reason for their being identified as

a group. However, although they are identified as a group, the nature of the reciprocity between each is such that they regard one another as one too many. Each sees every other examinee through his/her stereotype and each is uniquely alone and makes a project of his solitude. The way in which reality is constructed by each, reduces all others to objects of competition. The examination orders the internal reciprocal relations of the examinees so that positive human interaction is denied and negative object relations prevail; each becomes an object for the other and is, in turn, an object himself.³⁶

While the above is an extensive quotation, it is quite definitive in contemporary terms, not only for matters of race but for many social issues. However, from an Indigenous perspective it is interesting to observe that progress for Indigenous peoples of Australia is extremely difficult while there is a constant refusal to allow for a public ceremony of grieving, because general denial of the need to grieve for any other political position would wreck the above comfort zones. It is equally debilitating on the rest of Australian society for them to deny, or to deny through the above processes their own history, perpetrated at their own hand and written by their own sages.

The situation we face as a whole human society is that the two most important though conflicting public emotions (conflict and denial) are constantly denied healing and are treated separately (if at all) as being in conflict where, from any sociological perspective, the two are in fact one and the same.

The constant effect to deny the relationship between the two issues of grieving and denial extends to the upper echelons in the bureaucracy of social justice practices. The second extensive effect permeates to extremely important socio-enculturation artefacts like, for example, schooling, curricula, dress codes, linguistic differentiation, religious freedoms, economic designations and, in the case of the entirety of the problem, self-perceptions and the continuing fluid interface between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia.

³⁶ D'Alton, S. O., Bittman, M., *Sociology of race prejudice in Racism: The Australian Experience, Volume 1, Prejudice and Xenophobia*, Stevens, F., S., Ed. Australian and New Zealand Book Company, Sydney, Australia

The fragile political posture of the Howard government on the future of the entire global Australian Society is one of the most difficult factors to deal with, because the fabric of their social policies is punctuated with flaws regarding knowledge and consciousness of the racial under-classes. The public estate allows for 'diversity' through dubious multi-cultural determinants.

However, the situation remains problematic because it seems that without exception all Federal ministers in the Howard government have a super-simplistic perception of multiculturalism. Since they attained office their political expression on the function, importance, finding and politics of multiculturalism has been extremely perfunctory.

Citizens may well be forgiven for interpreting the severe reduction of public reference to multiculturalism by the present Federal government as being simply this: multiculturalism means that there are many different languages spoken in Australia but for the government it also means not a multitude of precious and rich humanity and experiences, but, sadly, 'the British, white European stock, all the Asians and wogs'.

It is extremely difficult to judge the level of personal and professional commitment of any member of society. For example a non-Indigenous academic worked for over seven years in an exclusive Indigenous Student Support Program in an Australian University. During that time this individual went from casual (one year at a time) employment at the lowest level of academic teaching to tenure, level B academic, took a PhD with extensive support from Indigenous people and the program and kept the PhD thesis on a work computer under the title of 'Coon Doc'. Face-to-face interactions produced lavish statements of support and commitment, but one might be forgiven for believing that the title 'Coon Doc' implied a very difficult set of private feelings.

Judgments may be made against individual views or class perspective, and space must be given to allow for reconciliation where non-Indigenous peoples are concerned. The blinding racism that is covertly and overtly practised against Indigenous Australians is

not being properly addressed because of the public policy of denial. It seems that denial is the sub-text of the Reconciliation Council mandate. During the last ten years the Council has been politically manipulated by both Federal Governments (first Labor then the Coalition) from being in control of their agenda (see the discussion on Reconciliation at the end of this thesis). The subversion of the Council by these 'democratically' elected representatives manifests itself through diversionary tactics. Labor used the concept of 'national disgrace' and the over-legislation for racial vilification (political correctness) and equity as its 'blocking tactic'. Each of these worked because each of these raised a level of ire and outrage in the noisy minority of the 'mass ignorant' voting public. It was this 'noise' that gave forth sets of misgivings that stalled the resolution of the Council's outcomes, simply because Governments must be re-elected.

The sad note in history about this period is being written by the Howard Coalition Government, where they have utterly abused their parliamentary prerogative and privilege by breaching the separation of powers and scare-mongering against the positivist notions for peace put by the Reconciliation Council. It is a marvellous though dreadful demonstration of 'politically motivated racial vilification', promulgated through the massaging of the deep level of selfish ignorance so ably demonstrated by the Australian nation at the behest of their political representatives. There is absolutely no aspect of any Aboriginal life-cycle or Japanangka that is sacred, including the 'right to self'.

Contemporary Indigeneity is a complex and contentious cultural premise, not because of the usual multi-layered configurations of agreeable and disagreeable behaviours that constitute a human society of the same origins. Nor are the various theological and secular explanations and governances that exist within a given human society the primary factors of complexity.

Further is it not a very human tendency to retain and mix 'clean' historical, heritable cultural practices that have appeared to have a series of dynamic and challenging roles to play in a futuristic sense, especially when they are coupled to and regulated by modernity. Historically it is none of these human behaviours and traits that make

contemporary Indigeneity a complex and conspicuous socio-political issue. Unfortunately the complexity and conflict emerge from deep within the public estate of global Australian society; and that issue is membership — race-based membership defined in the contemporary context of terra nullius.

Membership of Australia's first cultural group/s, of the first tenants and spiritual caretakers of the continent and of Tasmania, is without question the most antagonistic of all issues facing Australian global society today. The crux of the matter, in non-Indigenous terms, is identity based on appearance.

Appearance is defined oddly in social and political Australia as a form of racial purity. The history of this phenomenon is easily described because right from the first generic policies of segregation any new (since 1788) or subsequent generation of Indigenous people were legally defined under a not quite, but close to, quantum law of mixed heritage. Political records of colonial parliaments and, since Federation, State and Territory participants, are replete with references to 'coloured, half-caste, quarter-caste, full-blood and octoroon Aborigines'. Religious and other historical records frequently and consistently refer to the redeemable nature of mixed-breed Aborigines and the curse of full-blood Aborigines. Oddly though, in recent years (twenty or so), it has seen a shift to denigrating the mixed-heritage Aborigines, shifting their personal and political status to that previously held by full-bloods and elevating the full-bloods to icon status as the only 'real Aborigines'. With such flexible designated powers in the hands of Australian parliamentarians, is there any wonder that there is a high level of anxiety amongst the majority of non-Indigenous peoples over who is 'real' and who is not? Of course these shifting practices of racial prejudice have taken their toll on Aboriginal Australia, though not to the same schizophrenic extent.

While it may seem odd to insert a working definition of holistic education, once read the case of the definition fits correctly into this particular discourse and in fact opens the field of debate by adding some new and arduous intellectual terrain upon which the populace may dubiously flex its grasp and responses in terms of the status debate and the very immoral discourse on the politico-humanity of Indigenous Australians.

The following definition is not paradigm exhaustive, though it focuses on some of the issues primary in the thinking of some Indigenous intellectuals:

Holistic education is a set of experiential paradigms that drive society to change by insisting that the first cultural persona of the learner defines the learning infrastructure, ensuring **that** the relevance of the experiences pervade society generally as well as building on the learner's life experience. For Indigenous peoples, and disfranchised peoples, the first experiential paradigm is a political paradigm. History shows that one's status in any society is largely defined externally by three primary factors: race, wealth and religion. The state and national polity controls these defining agenda and consequently Indigenous first nation or disfranchised peoples are defined and redefined, externally, by that political process.

Holistic education has an obligation to place the learner in a position of power, integrity and freedom as well as to nurture the values of these ethics in society generally and it is society's frames of reference that are the guardians of each learner's place in that society.³⁷

This definition refers to egalitarian positivism that emboldens societies and their theoretical and political tenets, in practice, to establish the truth of the above definition's core premise by admitting failure, through developing high profile social justice programs in equity, reconciliation and self-management and self-determination bureaucracies to no avail.

So extreme is the mixed race prejudice of the general population of Australia, and particularly that society's political and intellectual aristocracy, that even work produced in the contemporary high culture genres of literature, art, and music is denigrated and differentiated by pedestrian and critic alike if the contemporary work tries to typify pre-contact artistic icon writing. Further, contemporary Indigenous high culture expression in these arenas is invariably interpreted as expressions of the artist's struggle for identity, not for what the works really are: confident expressions of the artist's public and private political pasture and confidence in their collective

³⁷ West, E., unpublished paper Lecture Tour 1995.

and individual identity, the Japanangka of themselves in whole or in part. Whatever is disclosed may be controlled either consciously or spiritually or by both dimensions.

It is reasonable to assume that some Indigenous artists manifest the compressing of all of these competing paradigms. Sometimes acts of abstract violence against oppressive colonialism may indeed drive the genius of an Indigenous artist. This assumption seems to be automatically evident in the responses to the 'Indigenous works' that pervade the thinking and public estate caretakers, resulting in acts of contrition or attrition by global Australian Society against or to Indigenous Australians.

To shed the obvious and inevitable criticism such views attract from various quarters of society, it is a simple task to recognise the elemental truth of these views by simply scanning the three major media cultures that inform Australian societies many times each day. Such a review, if conducted over a two-week period at any given time, will find that, for a group of people who constitute around 1.8% of over eighteen million people who reside on this continent, no other group receives as much media attention, none is as often the focus of media-induced anxiety and none is portrayed as perpetrators of criminal and uncivilised behaviour.

While there are positive media reports from time to time, it is almost without exception that situations involving violence, land rights protest and death attract explicit, recurrent multi-media reporting, often with misleading and provocative banners or headlines.

In seeking an appreciation of contemporary Indigeneity, it is impossible to ignore the numerous factors that preside over the 'atmosphere' of contemporary citizenship in Australia. While some presiding factors are somewhat malleable, in that Indigenous persons are able to have a more determined influence on these elements and therefore the outcomes, there are very few occasions where Indigenous-presiding factors come into play for positive public estate outcomes. I want to make the following point:

For most Indigenous peoples the act of saying 'sorry' is the beginning of healing whereas for non-Indigenous Australian groups and individuals 'sorry' is often the end

of the matter³⁸.

As in most societies, there are some categories of functional participation that are welcomed and one's race, religion or economic status becomes less relevant. In Australian society, like most other societies based on illegal occupation and repression, Indigenous people who 'excel' — in sport for instance — receive excessive attention from the media and from politicians. Particularly when these sportspersons involve themselves in trying to ameliorate complex and unstable circumstances other Indigenous peoples find themselves in. Of course the accolades only pour in if the sports stars are willing to publicly condone the hierarchy's agenda. For instance in the last week of January 1997 two young, vibrant and very successful Indigenous sports stars received wide publicity for presenting for a few hours at an Aboriginal community in an inner city precinct (Sydney). Redfern has been a suburb that for twenty years has been a 'no go' area for non-Aborigines and, depending on their politics, family connections and personal attitudes, for many Aborigines as well.

Redfern fits the public estate definition of a ghetto in every sense. Crime, drugs, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, poverty: all of the blatant social 'disorders' are present in Redfern. Redfern is the site of numerous exposé films and a site of such conflict that some Indigenous people refer to Redfern as 'the zone' (war zone). In January 1997 conflict peaked between the community and the police and a summit meeting was called to try to resolve the issues. However, as part of the process of stemming the pitch of the conflict, authorities drew the athletes into the scene and provided a face-to-face experience for those of the Redfern community who wished to participate.

The drama as reported by the **Weekend Australian (pages 25/6 J - Refer Library)** omitted a number of matters pertaining to the situations and circumstances of the residents of Redfern. There was no reference to **(extrapolate article - I still have to do this it will only be direct quotes anyway)** It certainly seems that the event was about a current affairs program's investigative journalism or 'a scoop'. Social observers may be forgiven for thinking the disadvantage, oppression, racism, poverty

³⁸ West, E., Speech at a protest rally in Townsville, June, 1995

and the absence of good health did not matter and is not a matter for public discourse and international shame but a convenient mix of human circumstance that hosted perfectly a convenient television ratings pursuit exercise. The two young athletes were given considerable coverage in terms of autograph-signing and ‘Oh, isn’t she (or he) lovely!’ coverage. There is no record of any meaningful discourse between these two Indigenous stars, the community or the relevant authorities on matters that, for whatever reason, have in many ways made Redfern an end of the twentieth century concentration camp based on race.

The media reported exclusively on the very superficial exchanges between the Redfern community and the ‘famous visitors’, and the visitors conformed to the expectations. One wonders what would have happened had one or both of the Indigenous stars stood up and made a public statement of a political nature where they condemned the governments, the police, the public, the welfare bureaucracy and the other agencies of the political regime that has locked the Redfern community into its present culture for decades.

Even a simplistic approach to social reform must test the underlying hypothesis of drawing national media attention to Redfern through what may best be described as a publicity stunt for a TV show by involving two reasonably high profile Indigenous people in such a cursory activity as signing autographs as part of devising some form of resolution or establishing an improved public image and actual situation for Aborigines who make up the Redfern Community.

Publicly defining oneself through certification is also a stringent requirement of the body politic through every forum of the national public estate when Indigeneity is a factor of one’s behaviour, presence, ownership of one’s cultural self as an active ingredient in qualifying for one of the few social justice programs. In another place in this discourse the claim was made that to be Indigenous is to be political and the public certification of oneself is primary evidence of that claim’s accuracy.

Public estate certification is a complex yet casual event in the Australian public service culture, in that the authorising or certifying statement is not a statutory

declaration, that is, the declaration has no legislation requirement and therefore no punitive action is guaranteed should the declaration be abused. One form of abuse that is not uncommon is that some non-Indigenous people complete the form and in the case of **Abstudy** for instance, prosecution for claiming education benefits targeted for only Aborigines through that program never seems to occur. The benefits are simply stopped and half-hearted attempts to reclaim cash payments sometimes occur. There is a clear message that, odd as it may seem, **it is not illegal to impersonate an Indigenous Australian to gain personal benefits from the Federal government.** Aborigines, however, are tracked down, and enforced repayments of over-payments or other financial errors that might occur are almost invariably recouped. This is the only scheme through which one's race is a primary factor in eligibility, so we have nowhere else to go, so we get caught, even if the error is not our own.

The public certification of Indigeneity as a credential of one's public, cultural persona is bizarre in that during the days of the segregation policy a similar public estate certification for Aborigines existed that authorised them as 'honorary white citizens'. The granting of such a certificate was done at law through a judge or magistrate's court where the criteria were attested to as having been met by several white authority or institution representatives and, upon obtaining said certificate, the Aborigine accessed almost all of the opportunities available to white Australians. The principal caveat was that the certificated individual had to abandon their Aboriginal ways, including associating with their extended family. The granting of an honorary white certificate required the abandoning of filial-culture in all but the narrowest, literal application. There are numerous other issues pertaining to the acquisition of an 'honorary white certificate' that are dealt with variously throughout this thesis, 'if you can see'.

As if to covertly legitimise the practice of issuing honorary white certificates, the practice of governments insisted on authorising contemporary Indigeneity via a similar public estate mechanism, though surprisingly the practice is neither questioned nor rejected by Indigenous Australians, for it is the identity papers that divide not join our peoples much the same as the honorary white certificate did.

The primary public reasoning for the presence and need of certification of one's Indigeneity, proffered by bureaucrats when a minor challenge to the practice occurs, is invariably 'it is to stop non-Indigenous people or Indigenous people who only identify for the money, getting the benefits!' While this 'high moral ground' explanation certainly deserves challenge, at this point its mention is explanatory enough and is the limit of the discourse on this point in this thesis.

A discussion on the perpetuation of Australia's political, social and economic caste system for Australian Aborigines.

To begin this discussion I believe that one has to recognise the somewhat cautiously espoused caste system that has been endemically applied to Aborigines since the first steps of the invasion.

I want to expand on some of my views regarding the following three aspects of the caste system:

- ◆ The need for such a system
- ◆ The indemnification of the system, including the pathological reinforcement of the belief in the need for such a system, and
- ◆ The semi-hysterical nature of the political denial and some reasons as to why denial is also pathological.

To consider the need for a caste system requires a lengthy historical and psychological analysis of British history in particular concerning their cross-ethnic relationships. The libraries of the world, as the custodians of historic records, bulge with examples of the brutalisation of 'lesser ethnic groups' by the British Empire. These records are immutable evidence of two human phenomena. The first is 'human arrogance' and the other is 'no shame'.

The arrogance is closely aligned with the concept of denial, because the need to boast about one's conquests, however bloody or imbalanced they may have been, is a manifestation of the 'short man syndrome' so often displayed by bullies and thugs, many of whom wrote history through their deeds and greed. And this is where the 'arrogance' emerges. It seems to me that the capacity to invoke the universal rule that 'the end justifies the means' re-creates itself each time the constituents of various histories of 'conquests various' simply reference these events with no moral comment at all included, at least to invoke some sense of outrage regarding the inhumanity of the events so 'proudly espoused' by mini-despots such as John Howard and various historians who obfuscate the true histories by sanitising each recorded event through the repetition of the histories as scholarly works. By this means they effectively shift the reality of the events from the victims' perspective to a newer reality that effectively defuses the horror of these events for the perpetrators and their descendants.

To sum up the application of the three points above consider the following:

The continent that is best known internationally as Australia (though to Aborigines 'home' has always done as a name — home by language and by iconic and totemic systems of demarcation) was subjugated to the military jackboot of the British Empire in a few short years. The denial of what my friend John McBeath describes as 'a dishonourable military engagement and an even more dishonourable military victory' is in my view at the heart of the three phenomena I identify above.

It is almost beyond argument that the greatest military regime in the world 'beat up a bunch of blacks and brutalised the women, the children and the very aged of Aboriginal Australia to take illegal possession of their home'. This in itself must be a matter of deep psychological shame. That this shame must by human nature be inculcated deep into the Australian psyche is, from my perspective, inevitable and at the core of the need for a caste system to hold the living reminders of this painful memory at bay. After all, it is White Australia that holds a public holiday annually 'to celebrate its greatest military defeat'. The concept of the 'old diggers' is also part of the deification of war, irrespective of the outcome. I question why there is no

evidence of denial regarding the ANZAC Day celebrations. Is it because a nation can lie to itself so convincingly that the truth becomes fiction? If so, then the presence of the caste system I am about to demonstrate should be easily understood.³⁹

The contemporary caste system is manifest through a simple but insidious form of 'de-naturalisation' of Aborigines as rank and file members of Australian citizenry. The effective nature of 'wogging' Aborigines through certification is best understood in the context of the 'Naturalisation Ceremony' that is the official 'de-wogging rite de passage' required for 'ostensible ordinary citizenship' within Australian society. However, what follows is a series of extracts and examples of the historical and contemporary*****

At this point I have included a copy of an early Honorary White Certificate (H.W.C.). This copy demonstrates the depth of self-denial required for my parents and grandparents to obtain a limited level of safety (including the retention of their children), so that a comparison may be made with the concepts attached to the contemporary 'honorary black certificate' that will be reviewed immediately following the H.W.C.

PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER

In pursuance of the powers conferred by section 11a of the Aborigines Act, 1934-1939, the Aborigines Protection Board being

of the opinion that.....

of.....

by reason of his standard of intelligence and development, should be exempted from the provisions of the Aborigines Act, 1934-1939, does hereby unconditionally declare that that said

³⁹ West, E., Race and Racism Lecture notes handout march 2000, Southern Cross University.

.....

shall cease to be an aborigine for the purposes of the said Act.

Signature of Bearer.....

The Seal of the Aborigines Protection Board was hereto affixed on the

.....

day of.....19...

in the presence of

.....

Chairman

.....

Member

.....

Secretary

The contemporary public declaration of Indigeneity

The contemporary public declaration of Indigeneity in the case of Abstudy, the most broadly used Indigenous welfare program, reads as follows:

Declaration 84. You must read and sign this declaration.

I declare that the student:

Is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent and

Identifies as an Australian Aborigine or Torres Strait Islander and

Is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives or has lived.

This declaration is attested to by up to four signatures in various combinations depending on the age and circumstance of the person the Abstudy application is being made for. It is mildly interesting to note that the terminology used in reference to the one seeking desecration that the term student rather than applicant is used.

The propensity to single out Aborigines for continuing certification is perhaps more Freudian and retentive than conspiratorial. For it would require a form of continuity of intellect and long-range planning to make a connection that is deliberate. The public reaction often manifest following each census (since the 1967 referendum) when the numbers of Aborigines increase rather than decrease, supports the reasoning behind this theory. A tenuous claim of evidence by this journey is a venture into the Japanangka and Western heuristics.

Finally the most degrading aspect of the declaration is contained in point three where the Indigenous person is instructed to declare their acceptability to their own race: 'is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives or has lived'.

However the caveats do not stop there. The following is the punitive aspect to stop Aborigines from falsely declaring group membership

Under 'Declarations' the final section states:

Declarations

It is important to read the declarations carefully before you sign it. Everyone who provides personal information on the form must sign the declaration. When you sign

it, you are declaring that the information you have provided is true and correct. You are also agreeing to the conditions of the declaration.

If the declaration is not signed, the form will be sent back to you and payments will not start.

To confuse the already dubious status of the student (applicant), the above three terms of definition and the effectiveness of the application, the 'declarations' statement is adamant that if the declaration is not signed the form will not be processed yet there is no declaration of the authority of 'the declaration'. Irrespective of how any social analysis approaches the issue of the place, first, of the demand of racial confession and its practice, in any personal or public estate sense, and finally in terms of an external (past or present) public authorising of the first two tiers.

Why do we do it?

Previous views expressed in this thesis argue strongly that there is a living conceptualisation and operating paradigm (at least one) that a separate curriculum (holistic in nature) is critical to the set of successful education experiences for Aborigines, irrespective of the educational strata they may momentarily reside within. The pursuit of an improved Western formal education is a clear goal. Underpinning that conceptualisation is a broadly held view on the issues of relevance, applicability, methodology and, unfortunately, a very diverse set of practices and opinions regarding measurement and critical evaluation within the parameters of rigour, consistency and applicability of the epistemologies in place. These diverse opinions are profoundly important issues and are largely driven by agenda dominated by uncertainty and vengeful politics rather than purely epistemological principles. This situation, as a global practice, remains the most limiting and tedious existential practice in Australian Indigenous education.

These circumstances exist in part because of the absence of quality teaching practices and some very important though finite cultural observances essential to complete and open communication between the teacher and the student. Admittedly the vista of the learning landscape shifts when multi-lingual first-culture adults present in a classroom

situation. Changes must occur and form the strategies and requirements and explanations of the learner regarding the learning landscape, as in the case of primary or secondary systemic or non-systemic participants.

After more than a double decade of perusing and participating in every aspect of education option available in a systemic paradigm(s) it is still bewildering to note that the universal approach to providing education experiences to Indigenous Australians, either as groups or as individuals, is masked by the student's ethnicity and public designation within the social justice paradigm. Of course it is not impossible to develop an a-political prosaic curriculum, while the public estate effectively disqualifies Indigenous Australians who refuse or fail to manifest the public estate's dominant human face of Indigeneity.

The public human face is creased with cultural and social inimicality that so permanently disfigures that a common public face equates with the constant interrogation of one's Indigenous self, not membership of non-Indigenous groups' commonalities of life and the practice of life presence through non-Indigenous behaviour. However, the real question should be perhaps on how to develop a fair, just and embracing curriculum and leave the rest of the political agenda behind. The Japanangka sees its way clear to do just that.

These are some of the absolutely fundamental issues Australia's educationalists must not only debate but embrace, if they wish to embark on development of curriculum relevant in any form at all to Australian Indigenous peoples. While these options certainly challenge the existing body of some Indigenous and non-Indigenous opinion, they are not meant to deny the obvious, that internal and external learning practices are indeed different between Australian Indigenous peoples and the rest of Australia's global society. The most public problematic issue is the facilitating of Australia's public and private estate education technicians' recognition of issues, practices, aspirations, policies and equity differences, based on those factors being derived from alternative cultural mores. It is clear from a variety of sources that concentration on sameness rather than on difference is the key to devising the most effective and efficient curriculum paradigms for Indigenous Australians. There is, however, a sub-text to the public estate's dominant public Indigenous face, and this

sub-text has been, and remains, very personal in terms of non-Indigenous systemic and non-systemic bureaucrats, politicians and educationists.

The sub-text focuses on the innate belief in the aristocratic cultural practices of Indigenous Australians as stone-age paradigms: the ‘grunt but no think’ perception that was and remains the most damaging public estate opinion. There is little wonder at the strength of such views given that those opinions are based on Social Darwinism. The ethic of Social Darwinism pervades the public intellect like a cancer that is not containable. The merge-shifts in practice and public expression that authorise very temporary positivist practices, that are driven rather than nurtured, are ‘breach birth’ intellectualisms rather than nurturing, natural, positive events that result in a ‘welcoming coddling’ rather than a ‘resentful bothering’ between black and white Australians.

The continuing though largely publicly hidden agenda of stone-ageism is so deeply inculcated into the interactive relationship between the general populace and Aborigines that there are times when Indigenous Australians seem unwilling ‘to cross the line’ of that agenda. In fact, there is a serious body of associated information that supports this hypothesis.

Attitudes in the schooling system — ignorance, compassion, fatigue or just plain racism

To open the debate on this matter, a very common example of the duality of stone-ageism is that in contemporary Australia the strongly-held views on why Indigenous parents or guardians do not engage in either primary or secondary schooling ‘parent culture’ activities. The simplistic and public explanation is timidity. Indigenous parents are generally too timid to venture past the school gate. This explanation is frequently disgorged by public educators and ancillary school staff when Indigenous students begin assuming very public personae in the recalcitrant student stakes. The explanation then shifts to one of a number of public estate accusations. Some of these accusations function as licence for a series of prejudices common to the culture of the Australian public education paradigm. Teachers and ancillary staff in particular are able to hold racial and other personal prejudices in a context that is entrenched in the

moral rectitude of acceptable standards of behaviour and apparent reasonable expectations of academic or scholarly performance, authorised by the monitoring of performance expectations in the public estate. Particularly prominent is that element of the public estate that represents acceptable levels of compliance with Western global behavioural standards, such as civics.

Expressions such as: ‘What do you expect? The parents are always drunk’, or alternatively ‘You know she’s not the real mother, don’t you? What do you expect?’, or perhaps ‘They’re all the same when the kids have got problems. She’ll never turn up, it doesn’t matter how many notes you send home.’ While some teachers, other parents and some Indigenous education workers may argue non-prejudicial practices and exceptions, it requires a less-than-thorough investigation to recognise that when Indigenous parents or guardians are the targets of such statements or opinions, there are additional elements of vitriol. The acrimony in these exchanges is so powerful that it causes dramatic hardening of facial expressions and definite shifts to non-positive general body language.

Usually such expressions are excused during utterance by the accuser by prefix statements such as ‘I’ve tried, you know, I’ve tried really hard to get her to come to school to talk about Judy’s problem’ or ‘Look, I treat all my kids the same, but when it comes to Mary, I have to be harder because her guardians will not come to see me. I send a note home every day, just to keep the pressure on though.’ Teachers seem to operate in a paradigm relationship that is somewhere between Adolf Hitler on one hand and Mother Teresa on the other. There is a culture of extremely personalised authority, especially when the student seems problematic to the system’s smooth operation.

The following extract from Merridy Malin’s chapter titled *Mrs Eyers is no ogre*:⁴⁰ is a micro-study of behaviours and attitudes of Aboriginal children in the classroom, and of the resultant reactions to those behaviours by their teacher. Experience supports

⁴⁰ Malin, Merridy, *Race Matters, Indigenous Australians and ‘Our’ Society*. Gillian Cowlishaw and Barry Morris, Editors. Aboriginal Studies Press, 1997. Chapter 7

the ‘normalcy’ of the set of behaviours depicted — the only set that remains sacrosanct against criticism is that of the teacher.

A micro-study in the exercise of power. Merridy Malin

Naomi, Jason and Terry were three physically attractive, energetic, bright and curious Aboriginal five-year-olds. Outside the classroom in this Adelaide urban school, they were articulate and confident but inside the classroom, by the end of the year, they were in the lowest academic group for their age, considered troublesome by their teacher and were largely ostracised by their non-Aboriginal peers. Naomi, Jason and Terry typify, I believe, the experiences of very many Aboriginal children in urban classrooms in Australia (Harris and Malin 1984, Christie 1985, Folds 1987; Hudspith, in press). While there are many different kinds of Aboriginal communities, schools across the country have considerable homogeneity. Thus, certain elements of the processes described in this chapter may be expressions of fundamental cultural discontinuities experienced by children from many cultural minorities. In addition, this ethnography shows the cultural basis of much dissatisfaction with schooling often expressed by Aboriginal people. (Poulson 1988; Ngarritjan-Kessarlis 1994)

The major findings of my research were that the skills and characteristics of the Aboriginal students which were positively valued, or simply considered normal, at home became irrelevant or disabling in school because of the contrasting cultural practices embedded in the way the classroom was organised as well as in the values of the teacher and, with the teacher’s unconscious low expectations of the Aboriginal students’ academic and social potential, created serious conflict between the students and teacher. This conflict gradually developed into a vicious cycle where the students became marginalised both socially and academically. The non-Aboriginal students tended to follow the teacher's lead in attitudes expressed towards Naomi, Jason and Terry. The skills and ability of these three students were not only unrewarded, they were also deemed deviant and, often in subtle ways, punished. The teacher only noticed and responded to what she saw to be their ‘problem behaviour’. She was unable to recognise or respond to their zest for learning, their resourcefulness and ingenuity, and their awareness of and concern for the needs of other students.

In so far as such experience mirrors that of Aboriginal children elsewhere, it sheds some light on the statistics showing their poor academic records and high dropout rates. However, much of this could be avoided if teachers were to understand two major points. First, as my study shows, there are important and systematic cultural characteristics among Aboriginal children to be taken into account if professional educators are to succeed in their task. Second, the behaviour in question is neither intended as a challenge to the teacher's authority, nor does it in fact pose a threat. On the contrary, as has been shown in some innovative classrooms, more responsive teaching techniques lead to remarkably successful Aboriginal students. (Hudspith, in press)

This chapter presents a quantitative analysis of long-term observations in a number of classrooms, and also describes and analyses details of the experiences of three students in a Reception/Year One classroom, in order to interpret the statistical evidence and to show its consequences. Equivalent experiences of other Aboriginal students were observed in another classroom, which was closely studied, and in classrooms whose teachers I interviewed and observed. I will argue, **firstly**, that certain culturally-based differences led the teacher to misinterpret the motivations and responses of the Aboriginal students. And **secondly**, that this eventually resulted in a situation which seriously disadvantaged the Aboriginal students both academically and in terms of their status within the student hierarchy. The overwhelming power that the classroom teacher wields, in the context of the benign and valued institution of the infant school, can be seen here as an expression of certain authoritarian stereotypes which circulate in society and are given expression in a form which is destructive of the lives of small children.

Differences in home socialisation.

The two most prominent differences in cultural orientation in the Aboriginal families valued, and worked to develop in their children, an autonomous or independent, self-sufficient bearing on life. In contrast, the Anglo families invested considerable time and energy in developing in their children particular correctness concerning dress,

manners, bearing, health and hygiene, in keeping with a set of clearly stated expectations. In the Aboriginal families, the major restriction on a child's individual autonomy was the adults' expectation that children modify their independent drive with a nurturing and socially considerate orientation. In other words, it was hoped that the child would become self-reliant and self-regulating while also being always aware of others' needs, and be able to help out when needed. In the Anglo families, the young children sought their parents' attention a great deal. Although the Anglo children were often asking questions and seeking assistance from their parents, the self-sufficiency of the Aboriginal children meant that they relied on their own observations to learn new things. If they needed assistance in doing something, they were more likely to seek it from their older brothers and sisters than from the adults. In addition, they were encouraged not to dwell on their own minor injuries or upsets and to resolve their own disputes.

Several Aboriginal parents stated that such characteristics as these were necessary, if their children were to survive in a world which was largely hostile to their Aboriginality. Hence, the Aboriginal children of this study were skilled observers and possessed a good deal of practical competence at a relatively early age, compared with their Anglo counterparts. As well, they were used either to helping those younger than themselves or to relying on the help of children older than themselves. Those people who were admired tended to be emotionally stoic, to be assertive in conflict with their peers and to be able to laugh at themselves. The autonomous bearing of the Aboriginal children of this study meant that, given an unfamiliar situation, they would expect to be allowed the time and space to sit back and examine the whole situation from afar before having to plunge into it and try to be competent. If that time and space were not given, the child might experience shame or embarrassment. This is consistent with Coombs, Brandl and Snowdon's (1983, p.102) statement that the Aboriginal people of their focus felt that making a mistake while performing a deed in the public eye was a more serious failing than admitting ignorance and not attempting to do the deed in the first place.

The importance of autonomy for both the Aboriginal children and adults of this study meant that direct, obvious control of children by adults towards their particular

desired goals was considerably less than that exerted in the Anglo families. In fact there were more than twice the number of directives, reprimands, rationalisations, monitoring questions and punishments in the Anglo families. (see Table 1)

In sum, the important aspects of child-rearing in the Aboriginal families of this study included encouraging autonomy by expecting that children would be self-sufficient, able to make decisions for themselves regarding their basic needs, naturally observant, practically competent, and prepared to seek help and attention from their peers as much as adults. Parents would allow their children both time and space to tackle new tasks and situations cautiously as to avoid making mistakes, and they would expect them to be both emotionally and physically resilient. To balance this individual independence, the parents encouraged their children to be ‘affiliate’ — that is, to be affectionate and ‘nurturing’ with those younger than themselves, to maintain an awareness of the whereabouts of everyone, to help those needing it and to trust that their peers will be similarly dependable.

Table 1: Frequencies of overt and direct social controlling acts by parents over child cross-group comparisons.

	Aboriginal	Anglo
Directives	236	359
Reprimands	124	350
Monitoring questions	90	270
Rationalisations	89	335
Teasing and scaring	22	0
Punishments	4	9
Total	565	1,323

*Counted across four families for six recorded hours of daily activity for each group. (Malin 1989,169)

Autonomy in the classroom.

The Anglo children were much more dependent upon and accustomed to parental guidance and obvious monitoring than the Aboriginal children and so in the classroom they expected, and in fact depended upon, constant teacher supervision and direction as they grappled with the new tasks of classroom life. They continually adjusted their actions in accordance with what they thought the teacher's expectations were, from moment to moment. If they were being inattentive when they knew they should be attentive, they would watch the teacher's line of vision in order not to be caught not attending. Many of the Aboriginal students appeared to be oblivious to this need to continually monitor the teacher and to adjust to behaviour according to her expectations, even when she appeared to be attending to something else. They tended to monitor their entire social, physical and academic environment and regulate themselves accordingly, apparently having the expectation that they needed to be self-sufficient and attentive to everyone in the room, not only to the teacher.

Of the eight Aboriginal students in this particular classroom, Naomi, Jason and Terry were the most culturally and physically distinguishable as they alone had parents who were Aboriginal. The other five Aboriginal students were from more obviously

bicultural homes, each having an Aboriginal and an Anglo parent. These students demonstrated that they were aware of the need to monitor adult whereabouts and obey adult directives with relative swiftness. In many regards, they displayed the same tendencies towards self-regulation and self-reliance as, for example, Naomi did but they adjusted them to some extent to fit with the teacher's expectations. Hence they often 'infringed' the classroom norms in the ways that Naomi did. Observations in, and interviews with teachers of, other classrooms at all the primary school year levels found similar tendencies among many Aboriginal students, although not all.

An analysis of the long-term observations which were recorded on videotape showed that Aboriginal children were far more likely to perform acts which were autonomous, practical and helpful in the classroom than were Anglo children (see Table 2). Of all the acts that were called 'voluntary demonstrations of autonomy and competence', 79% were performed by the Aboriginal children who comprised only 21% of the class. A more close-grained description of what was going on here allows us to analyse the consequences of such differences.

The following anecdote (Malin 1989) from one videotaped classroom encapsulates many of these principles:

Table 2: Voluntary demonstrations of autonomy and practical competence.

	Aboriginal	Anglo
Proportion of student population	21%	79%
Tying up others' shoelaces	5	3
Miscellaneous offers of assistance	15	0
Organising classroom material	10	5
Opening pyramid carton on own	3	1
Total	33	9
Percentage	79	21

Counted across 21 videotaped hours of classroom life. (Malin 1989, p.472)

The Tracing Lesson.

Fifteen minutes into the lesson, when all of the students except Naomi and Tran, who is Vietnamese, have begun colouring in their traced balloons, Naomi is still in the process of tracing the outline. She has spent a great deal of time talking to Ronald and Gaye who are sitting opposite her, and also much time watching those around her. Her teacher, Mrs Evers, sees her, sitting rolling three coloured pencils back and forth on her desk top while watching the children around her. Mrs Evers reprimands her, telling her to hurry as they have plasticine work and a story still to do before recess. Naomi colours for several seconds then begins to survey the class again, watching Bruce who has finished and is on the carpet playing with plasticine. She then watches Mrs Evers come over and write Gaye's name for her on the back of her sheet.

Although Mrs Evers has told her to hurry, Naomi does not see the necessity to immediately obey even when the teacher is standing less than a metre from her.

Naomi receives another reprimand four minutes later, after she has leaned over to show Gaye where she has made a 'mistake'. She obeys the directive to work by colouring for a few more seconds, but then she fixes her gaze on Gaye who has walked over to the teacher on the other side of the room to seek final evaluation of her finished work. When Gaye indicates to Mrs Evers that she doesn't know what to do with her finished worksheet, Naomi calls out across the room to her to 'put it on the chair!'

So, although Naomi appears to be 'in a dream' (a common quote of Mrs Evers), she is in fact monitoring very closely her friend's activity. Even the 'top' student of this class did not know that finished work-sheets go on the chair, so Naomi's knowledge of such a routine is not common knowledge at this stage.

Naomi does no colouring now for four minutes until she is reprimanded yet again, this time for being out of her chair watching in fascination the automatic focusing mechanism on the video camera. She obeys Mrs Evers for a second with a brief colour-in and then resumes her surveying of the room and the students.

Two minutes later when Mrs Evers walks over towards Naomi's desk, Naomi resumes her colouring but stops after about thirty seconds, being distracted by the teacher's telling Bruce to play with his plasticine 'nicely'. At this stage, Jane, Ronald and Tran have also not finished. Mrs Evers walks over to Ronald who is at Naomi's group of tables and urges him to hurry. She then sits down in Gaye's chair, directly opposite Naomi, and supervises Ronald closely. Naomi sits motionless and gazes at the children on the carpet and only resumes colouring when Bruce is punished for 'being silly' by having to sit on his own at the art table.

So, all this while, Naomi has not felt impelled to hurry on with completing her work even when under the watchful eye of the teacher, and even after receiving several directives from her. Instead, a greater requirement for her is to survey what is going on, to sit back and watch the whole situation, this first lesson for such a large tracing work-sheet. This characteristic of not wanting to plunge into a relatively unfamiliar situation reflects both the autonomy Naomi would be granted at home and the importance for her not risking being shamed for doing her assignment incorrectly in front of her peers. It is also evident that Naomi's strategy is most effective from the point of view of learning classroom routines. She knows more than even the 'top' student in this regard. It is not useful, though, from the point of view of pleasing the teacher. It is possibly contributing to the Teacher's belief, which she expressed some weeks later, that this child does not accept her authority.

What is also apparent in this situation is how the Anglo children have plunged into the activities, making blunders, colouring all the balloons, not tracing all the strings, not knowing where to put their pencils and work-sheet when they'd finished and so on, implicitly trusting the teacher to guide them as to the correct procedures when they made a mistake. This is not the case for Naomi, who seemed more to orient to her peers for guidance than to the adult, in this case the teacher. To return to the lesson:

'Now Ronald has finished, Mrs Evers stands and looks directly at Naomi and says to her in an exasperated tone, 'C'mon, Naomi! (pause) You're so slow! (pause) And I've got to do something with the plasticine!' Naomi glances up and then looks down towards her lap unsmiling, her hands motionless. Mrs Evers continues 'Hurry up!'

Her tone of voice now sounds impatient and she is looking down at Naomi very intensely. Naomi sits frozen with her chin against her chest, fiddling with her pencil in her lap. It is not until Mrs Evers moves back to the carpet and begins talking to the rest of the class that Naomi resumes her colouring, which she does with some urgency. Almost a minute later Mrs Evers directs another reprimand to Naomi and also to Tran who is sitting at his desk refusing to colour. She says to them both emphatically, 'Come on, you two. Hurry up!' Naomi sits back in her chair and stares into space. Tran starts to pack away his coloured pencils into a box. Shortly after this, Tran is exonerated of his obligation to finish his colouring and Mrs Evers fetches him a plasticine mat and he begins to make a snake on the carpet.

Thus, we see Naomi still taking her time, not immediately obeying the command to hurry. Mrs Evers describes this behaviour of Naomi's as being 'typically Aboriginal', of 'going walkabout in the head'. She explains to me that Tran is just plain immature, possibly being only four years old. She is therefore more tolerant of his refusal to finish than of Naomi's slowness at complying with her directives.

Naomi's behaviour is consistent with that of a child accustomed to self-regulation, having been encouraged to act independently and to make her own decisions as to when and whether she obeys another's commands. She finishes off the lesson in the following way:

As Naomi is putting her pencils carefully into their box, Mrs Evers calls over to her, 'Come on, Naomi!' Forty seconds later Naomi walks over to her drawer and puts her pencils away. She then shows her sheet to Mrs Evers. Mrs Evers says that she must colour in *all* the balloons, '*Quickly!*' she says. After some colouring, some watching of the children, two more reprimands and seven minutes, Naomi finishes and takes it to Mrs Evers for evaluation. Clearly Mrs Evers is pleased with its quality. 'Beautiful colouring-in, but why did you take so long?'

Naomi made the same procedural mistake that many of the children had done, in seeking evaluation before her work was completed; but in other regards, she did not make the same blunders such as colouring over the edges of her tracing, leaving white

spaces or not knowing where to put her completed sheet. She avoided these mistakes probably as a result of her intensive surveying of what everybody else was doing. Naomi's biggest 'mistake' was a result of her lack of awareness of the tendency socialised into Anglo children of deferring without delay to the authority of an adult. Such a deferral on Naomi's part would mean abandoning a considerable degree of her autonomy.

It would seem that Naomi, through her astute observation skills, has picked up the observable, explicit expectations and routines of classroom life while the subtle ones which go against her early socialisation, and which constitute her mistakes, have not been picked up by her at this early stage of school life. She continues to operate under the assumption from home, that she has the right to thoroughly size up this new and unfamiliar situation before being expected to plunge in and risk failure. These characteristics of Aboriginal Student autonomy in this classroom corresponded closely with those evident at home. The children are expected to regulate themselves with regard to doing things in their own time, not always obeying directives the first time round and sometimes delaying compliance indefinitely if the issue were not considered important. They often did not respond to teacher reprimand with obvious contrition particularly over what they considered were minor issues. They demonstrated that they needed time to size up new situations before acting upon them, which included the answering of questions in front of the class.

The self-reliance of the Aboriginal students in this class was evident in the practical ability that they demonstrated and which was greatly appreciated and capitalised upon by other members of the class. They were dependable helpers for those unable to tie their shoelaces, for opening cardboard drink containers, opening the handbag in the home corner and numerous other forms of assistance. Self-reliance was also at the heart of their verbal and physical assertiveness. They expressed needs and desires as declaratives and directives, for example saying, 'Pass me that bag,' instead of 'Please would you pass me that bag', which was the teacher's preferred mode. With regard to tangible classroom resources such as having a turn with the class puppet, they might edge their way into its possession, simultaneously edging all competitors out of the way. Apart from the acute observation skills demonstrated by Naomi above, they also

generally had the ability and tendency to orient themselves successfully within a wider geographic area than the other students. These five-year-olds were often admonished for playing in the senior school yard instead of staying within the restricted area of junior primary. In a variety of ways, they demonstrated ingenuity, astuteness and initiative, but usually in time and space outside of Mrs Eyers' awareness.

Affiliation in the classroom.

Naomi and her 'countrymen' also differed from the Anglo students in the degree to which they paid attention to their peers. This reflected the systematic difference that was quantified from the video recordings of classroom interaction: table 3

Shows that, of all the nurturing and collaborative acts observed in the classroom, 62 per cent were performed by Aboriginal children although they made up only 21 per cent of the class. To explore this systematic difference, I will examine what this means for relationships in the classroom.

In their initial weeks at school, the Aboriginal children took fellow students into consideration as much as they did both their teacher and the academic task at hand. There were many expressions of this orientation of affiliation. For example, compared with the Anglo students in the class, the Aboriginal students were more likely to know the whereabouts and activities of students not present. They expressed knowledge of other students' wellbeing, academic activity, personal appearance, friends, relatives and interests more often than other students did. They were more likely to assist other students, both Aboriginal and Anglo, who were in more difficulty, whether academically or practically. They were more likely to act as interpreters for students who had misunderstood, or who had been misunderstood by, the teacher.

Table 3: ‘Nurturing’ and collaborative acts between students.

	Aboriginal	Anglo
Proportion of student population	21%	79%
Affirmation from one student to another:		
Physical expression	30+	22
Verbal expression	6	4
Explanations offered by a student on behalf of another student	19	10
Explanations from student to student	29	16
Total	84	52
Percentage	62	38

Counted across 21 videotaped hours of classroom life (Malin 1989,510)

On Anglo student Adrian’s first day at school, when Mrs Evers reached his name on the roll and said ‘Good morning, Adrian’, he just sat staring at her. Naomi, who was sitting next to him, leaned over so her face was close to his and directed him, smiling, ‘Say it. “Good morning Mrs Evers”.’ Adrian, remaining mute, sat looking at Mrs Evers.

The Aboriginal students were also more likely to send positive messages to other students during the course of the day, either through silent smiles, stroking of the hair or face, or leaning on a neighbour in an unobtrusive way. They tended to express spontaneous joy at another student's achievement, such as when Naomi exclaimed with amazement, ‘He beat us!’ when Anglo student Bruce finished his academic assignment before her and the others at her table. This was after she had echoed Anglo student Gaye’s declaration, ‘I’m beating you!’ earlier in the lesson. For many of the Aboriginal students in the class, despite declaring that they were entering into a competition with their neighbours over finishing a task, they tended not to follow through with the resolve; and they displayed no envy at another’s successes. In fact, often they would express pleasure. The only exception to this was one incident towards the end of the year when Naomi’s despair at the implacably negative

response from the teacher drove her to declaring to her Anglo friend, who had just received elaborate praise from the teacher, that she hated her.

The world of the Aboriginal children and students of this study was a very social one. At home, they were encouraged to play with other children rather than with things. This contrasts with the materialism of the middle-class Anglo world where children are encouraged to amuse themselves on their own, or, when with peers, with toys, books, television, drawing and construction activities, and the like. It was therefore not surprising to find that the Aboriginal students often indicated that they perceived themselves as collaborating with others and of achieving collectively, even when the class task had not been organised in that way. This was evident linguistically in subtle ways:

Tuyen, a five-year-old Vietnamese boy from the classroom next door, came into the room during the morning session with a message for Mrs Eyers. The class was seated on the carpet, with Tran directly in front of Mrs Eyers, and Naomi, next to Jane also in the front row, to the side of Mrs Eyers. As Tuyen was standing beside Mrs Eyers waiting for her response, he noticed the paper flowers pinned to the back wall, and the following conversation ensued:

Tuyen: Who done them? (pointing to the back wall)

Mrs Eyers: My children. Aren't they clever!

Tran: I done two!

Naomi: Me and Jane done it! (Naomi was stroking Jane's hair while saying this.)

In fact, Jane, who was also Aboriginal, and Naomi had made a flower each, independent of each other. On another occasion, the children were individually making Chinese lanterns:

The class was seated in a circle with Cindy, an Aboriginal student, seated between Naomi and Rebecca who was Anglo. Cindy and Rebecca had both finished the next step and Rebecca called out to Mrs Harry, who was moving around the circle monitoring their work, 'I done it, Mrs Harry!' Cindy then called out immediately after this, 'Me and Rebecca done it!'

Communication difficulties.

Certain culturally-based differences in language use also increased the teacher's misunderstanding of many of the Aboriginal students. For example, differences in the forms of questions and answers led to the teacher's often not recognising correct answers which the Aboriginal students gave to academic questions or to her asking them in a social context which embarrassed the students. Specifically, on several occasions when the teacher asked a question, and compulsorily selected an Aboriginal student (including some of the confidently bi-cultural students) to answer, the student either did not answer and the teacher answered for them, or else the student's answer came several seconds later, after the teacher had addressed the question to somebody else. In this way, many correct answers from the Aboriginal students were never recognised. I believe that, apart from dialect differences, which meant that some answers were not comprehended, there were two other tendencies involved here. Firstly, for many Aboriginal people in Adelaide, there is a longer pause between questions and answers than in Anglo-Australian talk (see also Harris 1980/1984 and Eades 1982). In addition, for many urban Aboriginal students, being spotlighted to answer a question when they have not volunteered to answer can cause considerable shame or embarrassment. Making a mistake or being seen to be vulnerable in public is potentially far more demoralising than it is for the majority of middle-class Anglo-Australians. Mrs Eyers, as most teachers did, often used public questions to informally evaluate what a student knew and her missing many correct answers led to her misunderstanding the Aboriginal students' knowledge.

Another difference in communication style was in the Aboriginal students' non-verbal response to reprimand. They would respond to the teacher with expressionless faces, head erect, looking directly at her or glancing periodically between her and to the side of her. This reaction differed from how the Anglo children characteristically responded, with their blushing, their often slightly deferential, self-conscious smiles or, in serious situations, their downward-looking, often pouting expression. Mrs Eyers said of Naomi and Terry in particular that they were not vulnerable to reprimand: 'When I get angry with Naomi it doesn't affect her emotionally': and 'She (isn't)

sorry for being naughty'. The emotional stoicism valued at home was considered illegitimate defiance in the classroom.

In sum then, many of the actions resulting from the Aboriginal students' autonomous orientation and their social awareness and skill contributed to the smooth running of classroom life. Some of the Anglo students were aware of the valuable resource in the Aboriginal students' inclinations to help, and their practical competence and sense of responsibility. Unfortunately, however, the only acts which the teacher seemed to notice were the Aboriginal students' frequent slowness or occasional stoicism in response to reprimand, and their tendency to orient less to the teacher than the non-Aboriginal students. These latter acts she interpreted as their lack of respect for her authority, not needing her and their poorness as students. This set into motion the micro-political situation described below.

Micro-political processes in the classroom.

In one of the classrooms studied, a lack of rapport developed between the three most culturally distinctive Aboriginal students — Naomi, Jason and Terry — and their teacher. Simultaneously, a state of 'co-membership' (Erickson and Shultz 1982) or special rapport developed between the teacher and particular other students. This co-membership involved the granting of special favours — some very subtle and others quite blatant — by the teacher to these few students. The nature of these favours included the teacher joking with them and entering into personal conversations with them about her out-of-school experiences. For these favoured students she clothed reprimands in humour; she let pass infringements which, in other students, would be censured; she chose then to go on errands more often; and she greeted their quality work with, 'Good, as always'. The students with whom the teacher felt co-membership were those she found to be especially appealing because of particular physical and personality characteristics, mannerisms and grooming. In addition, it appears that she expected them to 'do well' or, if they did not, she perceived there to be underlying special reasons which were out of her control, such as their coming from a 'difficult home background'. For example, of her 'favourite boy' who was one

‘who did not get many cuddles at home’, and who was often ‘in trouble’ for vandal-type acts in the school, she said, ‘I just know I relate to Ronald and him to me’.

The fact that Naomi, Jason and Terry did not share co-membership with the teacher was evident in her private use to me and other teachers of such expressions as ‘sod, dead-shit, pain, aggravating, off this planet’, when referring to them. Over the entire year, she did not make one unambiguously positive statement about Naomi or Jason. I believe that this indicated not merely a lack of rapport, but actively negative feelings verging on dislike. Once, she stated that Terry was attractive with his ‘coffee-coloured skin’; and she expressed regret that he did not seem to need her; so her relationship with him was more one of puzzlement and dismay than dislike. The negative relationship which developed between her and these three students had repercussions for their relationships with their non-Aboriginal peers as well as for their schooling success. These repercussions underlie the use of the term ‘micro-politics’ to represent such situation in classrooms. ‘Politics’, here, refers to the allocation of precious resources, by a person in authority with power and influence, among the members of a community who possess less influence and power (Kuper and Kuper 1985). The classroom is a micro-culture and the teacher, the authority. The precious resources, which the teacher has to allocate among the student, will become apparent as the discussion continues.

Among the social repercussions, more reprimands and punishments were directed towards these students than to the others, and on many occasions for actions which, when performed by others, were not censured. In addition, the punishments were often more severe than those given to other students. The teacher rarely acknowledged their jokes or their attempts to initiate conversation with her. On many occasions also, she would double-check the validity of their statements:

One day Naomi read her news story to Mrs Evers. It read: ‘I went to the Show with Sally’. Mrs Evers looked at Sally (Anglo) who was sitting listening on the carpet, and she asked, ‘Did she, Sally?’ Sally nodded to Mrs Evers, smiling.

As to the academic repercussions, it seemed that Naomi, Jason and Terry lacked legitimacy as students in the eyes of their teacher. Mrs Evers seemed to not quite believe that they were capable of high quality academic work. Invariably, when they handed in such work and she acknowledged it, it was with surprise. 'Oh, you wrote that all by yourself, Naomi?' The rising intonation at the end of the sentence indicating that this was a question. Naomi was also told that she was a 'good girl' on this occasion. This was rare, being recorded six times across the year. When such praise was forthcoming, albeit with surprise, Naomi would be delighted and would sit smiling shyly, or on occasion would exclaim proudly as she returned to her table: 'Mrs Evers said mine was good. She said "Good girl!" to me.' As a further indication of her lack of rapport or identification with Naomi, Mrs Evers stated to me, shortly after this latter incident, that it annoyed her when Naomi 'bragged' in this way. This irritation that she felt towards Naomi, Jason and Terry led her to ignore them much of the time. Naomi and Jason responded to her frequent censure by pleading with her for acceptance and by often asking her if she liked their work. This irritated Mrs Evers further and she ignored them even more. Terry responded by totally withdrawing from interactions with her, giving her the same invisibility that she gave Naomi and Jason. This led her to believe that Terry was mentally disabled and she invited a psychologist to test his intelligence. She also felt hurt by his detached demeanour, stating: 'It was a real blow to the ego him not wanting or needing to get close to me.'

Mrs Evers perceived all three of these Aboriginal students to be behaviour problems. As a means of controlling them, Mrs Evers consistently reached these students last with their workbooks. By having them sit beside her while she handed out the books to the rest of the class, she was keeping them within her radius of control for a greater length of time. In addition, her most common form of punishment for them was 'time-out', when they were placed in 'Coventry' with their face to the wall, or at the back of the room, or by being sent outside. In these and other ways, these students had less time 'on task' in each lesson for a major part of the year than the other students in the class.

Mrs Evers forbade Naomi to take her reading book home for the final seven months of the year, as punishment for not bringing her first book back to school. Hence, the

only practice Naomi received in reading aloud to someone was during the two or three occasions that she read to Mrs Eyers each week, for less than three minutes each time. (Of those reading lessons videotaped, the ratio of time that Naomi spent reading to the teacher, compared with the 'top' student, Sarah, was 1:6.) Another punishment for Naomi, for not returning her reader, was to be demoted to the flashcard reading group below the one to which she had originally been assigned. Mrs Eyers stated to me:

'I'm putting her back; she's not coping enough so I said I'd demote her. She's not practising enough. I want her to realise that it's a demotion...I think they're lazy. There's no reason in the world why she can't bring her reader back.'

Naomi had just that day, before her demotion, been commended by Mrs Eyers for her success in identifying the flashcard words, so that the above assertion contradicts that commendation. Naomi's subsequent comments to her peers indicated that she was most distressed about the demotion, understanding fully its implications, its lowering of her status in the eyes of her peers. The pedagogic error of this move was evident in that, for several weeks, Naomi was deprived of precious instructional time as she could identify every word in her new group. These punishments imposed on Naomi indicate a failure on the teacher's part to reflect on the best solutions for advancing her learning. Jason and Terry received similar treatment but the other students did not.

For five-year-olds, it appears that, if the teacher laughs at your jokes, if she confides in you and shares her jokes with you, you acquire status in the eyes of your peers. Partly in this way, a few privileged students came to acquire status within the student hierarchy of the class. Conversely, Naomi, Jason and Terry came to be ostracised by their peers, particularly their non-Aboriginal peers, who at times highlighted their differences in derogatory ways. On a number of occasions, immediately after one of these students had been punished or severely reprimanded, other students would make faces at them or move away from them or say that they would not play with them. On none of these occasions had the infringement that led to the censure by the teacher affected the students who performed the ostracism.

The Aboriginal students responded to their peers' ostracism with initial begging for acceptance, offerings of food or money, resorting to angry outbursts, and then finally

social withdrawal from those doing the taunting. They sought refuge in the company of other Aboriginal students, and with 'emotionally disturbed', Anglo student Bruce. Although receiving many reprimands and punishments, he was rarely invisible to the teacher in the way that Naomi, Jason and Terry were. In fact, he was undergoing a behaviour-modification program under the guidance of a visiting social worker, and Mrs Evers would give him reward tokens for 'good behaviour'. He also was the recipient of much physical affection from his teacher, which was not available to Naomi, Jason and Terry.

Conclusions

It is apparent that culturally-based differences initially led Mrs Evers to mistakenly believe that Naomi, Jason and Terry were not accepting of her. Their different dialects and ways of using language meant that she missed many of their correct academic responses to her questions. Her initially low expectations of their academic abilities were therefore not challenged. Her irritation with their appeals for clemency caused her to ignore them when they were most in need of support, as well as clouding further her perception of their academic progress. Their appeals to her and, on rare occasions, their anger at their peers and at her increased her negative feelings towards them to the extent that she resorted to simplistic, racist stereotyping in her efforts to rationalise what was happening and retaliated with indiscriminately harsh censure. The students were thus caught in a vicious cycle, which must have considerably obstructed their opportunity for learning. During that year, Jason and Terry left to attend other schools. Over the following three years, Naomi withdrew into passivity during lesson time and, when she no longer had other Aboriginal students in her class, she took refuge in a friendship with an Anglo girl who was herself ostracised by her peers.

It can be seen, therefore, that the quality of life for the three most culturally different Aboriginal students in Mrs Evers' class was considerably less than for all the other students. They received far less of the precious resources of teaching. It was evident that Mrs Evers had initially low expectations of these students; that she held negative stereotypes of their home backgrounds; and that she had no knowledge of the richness

of their cultural background. But Mrs Eyers was no ogre. Rather, she was an experienced teacher who enjoyed teaching and was considered by education department officials to be a good teacher. Perhaps contemporary teacher training would make a younger teacher more sensitive to cultural differences, but the more general condition is that Mrs Eyers' judgments and responses are simply an expression of her cultural priorities, both as a member of Anglo society and as a member of a common classroom culture. Whether the latter is changing in this post-modern world where difference is supposedly celebrated is too large a question to discuss here.

More relevant is that this teacher unquestioningly accepted many of the stereotypical views of Aboriginality which abound in the larger society. Mrs Eyers' attitudes and understandings are far from unique among teachers in Australian urban schools. The provision of more Aboriginal teachers in urban schools would not only help defuse racist stereotypes, but would provide interpreters and guardians for Aboriginal students like Naomi, Jason and Terry. In addition, better pre- and in-service education is needed for teachers emphasising the issues raised by this research.

I know this quotation is quite long but I have learnt over the years that white people only believe their own and as such I state that aspect of any Western reader fully. When the education public estate managers are presented with the above as anecdotal information — which incidentally has become a very powerful feature of contemporary oral history in the area of Aboriginal education — they, like the teachers and ancillary staff of schools rush to well-worn responses of denial with responses such as: “But these attitudes exist for a great many children,” or “While I do not condone such prejudicial and petty statements you need to realise that all kids suffer from such teacher prejudice. The system is not isolating Koori kids you know!”

While such expressions are cosmetically easy pathways of explanation for passing off the hidden agenda of anti-Aboriginal sentiment, they are also statements that are uttered by people who are comfortably middle working class. These people are in power positions, either as educators or bureaucrats, working in some equity-orientated program that has globalised humanitarianism as its aim and non-systemic funding

(soft funding) as its instrument of achievement. This scenario has, within its own lifestyle, numerous competing agendas, not the least being the maintenance of such individuals, their power base and their salaries.

All of these factors and many more interact, sometimes very clumsily, every day, and Indigenous students, parents or guardians are expected to present in a confident, balanced way to represent their and their children's interests. Those who fail to do so are frequently labelled as 'lacking self-esteem' or, as referred to earlier, have alternative interests that keep them out of the school situation, except when 'bad behaviour' prevails in their children's schooling experiences.

Obtaining a voice through employment in the systems.

For over two decades almost every public sector vacancy that has occurred in the Aboriginal industry — for surely that is what the Indigenous Australian public estate equity program has nurtured to a comprehensive extent — has had a caveat attached to the selection criteria as either 'desirable' or as 'essential'. That caveat has been worded variously as 'an appreciation of Aboriginal culture and an ability to communicate with Aborigines' or 'the ability to communicate with and an understanding of Aboriginal culture'. While the sentiment of such a caveat or context was or may have been altruistic, the actual application and interpretation of one's claim to be an expert in Aboriginal Affairs has provided high levels of anxiety and conflict.

One of the primary reasons for anxiety on the part of Indigenous Australians, that became evident once they were elevated to positions of authority, was the qualification measurement of an aspirant's claim to satisfy these criteria based on the meritocratic paradigms of white Australians. The extra requirement 'to have a knowledge of and be able to communicate with' was originally designed to introduce more Aborigines into positions of authority and responsibility in the industry's bureaucracy. This failed dismally, because one simply and completely unquantifiable criteria for senior public service positions was a mismatch. Ministers needed high-level experienced 'Sir Humphreys' to 'carry on' the policy of terra nullius under the

guise of welfare programs for Aborigines. The 'context caveat', when applied in a competitive forum such as employment or promotion, actually served to cloak the reappointment of bad managers, racist and direct agents of genocide, and to put them in control of 'all things new'.

In an historical sense, the original context of this caveat was and remains the total property of the white Australia public estate in the context of the three phenomena above. The advent of this covert technique in employment saw the opening up of the Aboriginal industry, particularly at the most senior levels in the Federal and State polity, to non-Indigenous professionals who had a history of inter-professional and inter-personal relationships with certain groups, which provided a façade of direct experience equating particularly to experiences in either education or management in Papua New Guinea. Both non-Indigenous and some Indigenous Australians traded in this type of experience as being a legitimate equation when first shifting into the Aboriginal industry. What it boiled down to was this: 'all blacks are alike when under the jackboot of colonialism and the instruments of all forms of oppression are the same, irrespective of the perpetrator or the victim'.

There is another cohort whose experiences are seen as more troubling and they are the groups that paved the 'Christian way' into Aboriginal communities, usually as classroom teachers or prematurely promoted principals and senior teachers. This group also moved laterally in the Aboriginal industry and frequently, in the early stages at least, occupied positions they were completely unsuitable for, except for their apparent 'ability to communicate with and understanding of'. However there were few if any references called for this criteria; after all, who would lie about their success in these areas?

So dangerous and treacherous was the manipulation and application of this covert behaviour and the caveat, that in the first years of its constant presence in public sector advertisements for positions in the Aboriginal industry its application actually requested Aborigines applying for advanced management positions to actively prove this criterion, whereas non-Indigenous peoples who could demonstrate (or claim) a background that could be trusted invariably won the positions. This is in itself further

evidence of the maintenance of the caste system.

At various points of conflict over this criterion of what was ostensibly an Aboriginalisation clause, it was not uncommon for the process to 'dismantle' an Indigenous Australian applicant in favour of a non-Indigenous applicant on the grounds that, in 'this' position, an Indigenous Australian would become too personally involved and would face 'conflict of interest' because they would be 'too close' to the issues and might perhaps even be confronted with the issue of having to deal with their own clan or family and might submit to those protocols, and in fact abort the concept of Government business of a particular policy.

PART TWO

Speaking towards an Aboriginal philosophy

For many years we have spoken about Aboriginal ways of thinking, Aboriginal worldviews, and Aboriginal lore and Law. In more recent times we have spoken more often of Aboriginal philosophy, though not with a lot of detail or focus on what we mean by philosophy.

As we often do in times of reconstruction, we revert to known understandings. This I have also done in the context of my unfortunate first language — English.

I went to a set of encyclopaedias and a dictionary and found that the fundamental meaning of the word Philosophy is:

Philosophy: 1) the love of wisdom as leading to the search for it; hence, knowledge of general principles — elements, powers, or causes and laws — as exploring facts and existences. (There are six definitions or meanings in this one reference.)

I believe a strong Aboriginal cultural behaviour or trait is the love of wisdom; and those who demonstrate the love of wisdom lead us in the search for our Philosophy.

Our philosophy remains unrecognised by Westerners/white people because it is more complex than at first recognised by us. They do not recognise our philosophies in an equal sense. This complexity resides in a framework of an Australian Indigenous ontology (the science of being, as the branch of metaphysics that investigates the nature of being and of the first principles or categories involved) that treasures the Mother Earth beyond human life itself. Therefore our ontology, as I understand it, is the reverential connections between the spiritual realms of operations of the universe and the material operating platform or the physical earth, of the treasured Mother, acting in accord beyond peaceful co-existence.

This ‘beyond’ is, I believe, the inalienable tenure of relevance to life, birth, and death that engulfs the spiritual and the material Mother in a cyclic pattern of perpetuity.

The context of Australian Indigenous philosophy is manifest in many moods and circumstances. I believe that the philosophy is indeed US. Our philosophy is why we are and what we do as Aborigines who live within the nexus of the philosophy that is defined via our continuing contacts to and with our ancestral spirits and the Mother Earth. It is in an important sense, our well-being.

In Western terms, philosophy has many schools. The three main provinces of Western philosophy are: Methodology, Metaphysics and Theory of Value.

Methodology: Since in Western terms or understandings, philosophy is a search for the ultimate knowledge, and given that one of the main interests of philosophy has been the examination of the nature of knowledge itself, four main questions emerge from the Western paradigm or model of philosophy:

- 1) What is the source of knowledge?
- 2) What is the nature and criteria of truth?
- 3) What is the relationship between precepts and events or outcomes?
- 4) What are the forms of valid reasoning?

The first of these three questions relate to what psychologists, educators and others in humanities call epistemology. **Epistemology** is a branch of philosophy itself that investigates the origin, nature, methods and limits of human knowledge. The fourth question relates to metaphysics.

I believe that Western epistemology differs from Koori epistemology in that because we, as Aborigines, the traditional ‘owners’ and ‘first owned’ of this continent already know the origin, nature, methods and limits of our knowledge systems — what we, unlike Westerners, seem to lack is the capacity to flaunt that knowledge as a badge of our intellect and cultural integrity, in a very public sense. The secret of our knowledge is the unbreakable connection between the spiritual realm and the physical Earth Mother.

Metaphysics: This is essentially the theory of the nature and structure of reality. For Koori people, I believe our ontology is the inherent meshing of the spiritual events

and the material world, including literal geographical connections and related events that occur regularly in our lives.

Our ontology explains **how** things are so and **why** they are so. It is in the concept of Metaphysics that I propose that our philosophy is based on the matters outlined in the Japanangka Paradigm.

The eight sub-sets of Japanangka are the **spiritual**, the **personal**, the **cultural**, the **intellectual**, the **public**, the **secular**, the **political** and the **practical** dimensions that construct or build to a metaphysics formula. I will return to these eight dimensions shortly.

The philosophical notion of metaphysics is often concerned with time, space and with causality (cause). One important question: **are** time and space infinite, or are they limited? As for causality, what do we mean when we say, ‘A causes B?’ and are there limits to the notion of causality?

There is compelling evidence that we Aborigines are metaphysical in our use of totems, symbolism and interpretative events. We see symbolic signs or omens, then, at a later time, upon the occasion of a certain event, we recognise the sub-conscious or obvious expectations of the event, through the omen previously observed.

I believe Aborigines have very clear sets of understandings about time in both contexts of finite and infinite — ancestral explanations for and of events regarding the nature of time, creation, the continuum of life-cycles and the spatial time relationships. I understand that these explanations also introduce cause and effect.

Metaphysics neatly embraces the Japanangka Paradigm of eight.

To describe my views on speaking towards an Aboriginal Philosophy, I have used the idea of research methodology to ground the idea in an intellectually tangible sense. This research methodology I have called, on the direction of a *Walpiri* Elder, Japanangka Granites and **The Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm**.

The following definition is intended to lead researchers to test the general hypothesis regarding Australian Indigenous peoples' philosophical and learning paradigms. The major assumption is that:

A primary key to effective and affective learning for Indigenous Australians requires educators to penetrate the essential factors of a person's cultural self. That construct is essential, in a holistic learning sense, for each individual.

For Indigenous peoples there are at least eight important dimensions that construe as critical to a holistic learning environment.

The following definition of research is included, to give shape to the importance of this search for: *Speaking Towards an Aboriginal Philosophy* — in a focused sense. However in terms of outcomes and strategies:

Research is taken to mean systematic and rigorous investigation aimed at the discovery of previously unknown phenomena, the development of explanatory theory and its application to new situations or problems, and the construction of original works of significant intellectual merit. (Commonwealth Government's ⁴¹White Paper: Higher Education: A Policy Statement, 1988)

The Core Hypothesis.

⁴¹ White Paper: *Higher Education: A Policy Statement*, 1988, AGPS

The **eight** following **sub-paradigms** or **dimensions** are crucial to the holistic philosophy or in this case, a teaching and research environment:

- i) **Cultural dimensions**
- ii) **Spiritual dimensions**
- iii) **Secular (bureaucratic or quality of life) dimensions**
- iv) **Intellectual dimensions**
- v) **Political dimensions**
- vi) **Practical dimensions**
- vii) **Personal dimensions**
- viii) **Public dimensions**

Basically the art of teaching is, in my view, a set of skills one acquires over a period of years working in any activity that involves sharing knowledge or information or wisdom that one is deemed to hold a level of expertise in, perhaps at a level slightly above the average. Of course there are some that will tell you they are experts in teaching because they have ‘worked’ as a teacher for many years. In my view, if one is not constantly self-reflective and critically analytical of one’s actions **one may simply have had one year’s experience twenty times!** It is possible to improve one’s teaching skills by being a better listener than talker and a better observer than actor.

Our Elders and leaders are consummate teachers because they never teach without purpose, they teach within the confines of the Japanangka.

Teaching is about communication: communication of interesting and useful information, knowledge or wisdom; and delivering it in interesting ways is part of the art of pedagogy. It is as much what you say, as it is how you say it. Communication skills and high expectations are critical factors in approaching the path of teaching and for making it an interesting and worthwhile journey for all.

In the beginning, there were only words — Or was there more? Or less?

For well over twenty years Indigenous Australians have struggled to negotiate a series of learning pathways, political and pedagogical, through the emerging and often tenacious systemic and non-systemic education systems at both Federal and individual State and Territory government levels, with very little success. There has been no burgeoning renaissance in the white man's thinking regarding the presence of Indigenous paradigms that operate as discrete sets of schemata, as enunciated in the Japanangka model. Nor has there been a re-emergence of the protocols or the infrastructure of 'First Knowledge' as a pathway. What the struggle has brought us to has been simply a fight to lessen the dramatic negativity racism begets in the entire schooling cultures of Australian societies.

One of the most important gaps in the intellectual enculturation process is the absence of a practical and culturally sound set of Indigenous epistemological/pedagogic paradigms. The continuous conceptual application of non-Indigenous intuitive, though largely unformulated, 'sound' theoretical extrapolations of Western theory and pedagogy across 'cultural boundaries', in an attempt to include Australian Indigenous peoples, has failed.

In Australia over the past century, the failure to repress totally the inappropriate learning infrastructures and broad poor practices of educators in the general systematic approach to education of the common masses generally, and to Australian Indigenous education in particular, has resulted in an 'industry' commonly called 'Aboriginal Education'.

One of the primary weaknesses of this set of 'sound theoretical infrastructures' is the absence of at least one research and epistemological/pedagogic paradigm that is considered satisfactory by Indigenous Australian educators for Australian Indigenous peoples to enhance their participation in the general education systems in Australia. As a result a state of dubious educational functionalism has motivated and predicated the identification of some very doubtful 'cultural traits' that pass as explanatory or

causal factors in the totality of poor learning outcomes for the majority of Australian Indigenous students. These dubious ‘cultural traits’ include: a presumed lower order of general intelligence; poor cognition; poor social skills; linguistic retardation; poor span of attention and ‘the sixty-four dollar one’, poor behaviour and lack of co-operation on the part of the Indigenous students.

Historically, the racist ‘blood mathematics’⁴² formula has so deeply underwritten the public and individual race relationship estates that, as Indigenous peoples recognise the ‘blood mathematics’ formula is still used to facilitate the destruction of Australian Aborigines, by dividing our peoples into ‘real Aborigines and not quite Aborigine’ categories and is still used to quantify culture in a manner offensive to all thinking people. This racist and rancid paradigm is indeed a core issue in unravelling the key issues of teaching and learning in the generalist public estate regarding Aborigines.

The issue of a particular Indigenous intellectual paradigm or set of paradigms bobs up regularly like a cork in a tempest of confusing, conflicting and frequently, very emotive debate on the place and tempo of participation of Australian Aborigines in the general Australian and international landscapes in either an equity or in a social justice sense.

At this point it is essential to establish a conceptual difference between the appreciation of equity and the application of social justice in Indigenous Australian Japanangka Paradigms, or its equivalent. Even though these matters are crucial to obtaining an appreciation of the need for and fact of a particular Indigenous research paradigm if Australian Indigenous peoples are going to make a positive contribution to the set of Australianised notions that constitute Australian societies generally it is also important to recognise the continuous absolute politicising of all complementary activities of Australian Indigenous peoples and that that politicising is publicly manifest through equity and social justice programming.

Notions of the meaning and need for the application of equity principles and

⁴² this term was coined by Professor Colin Tatz in the 1970s to the Racialisation of Aborigines into full-bloods, quarter-castes etc. The best term to use is simply Indigenous or Aborigine or Koori, Palawa etc.

paradigms to Australian Indigenous peoples ranges from short and blunt negative views, to overly emotional and protracted 'warm fuzzy' views that are more intent on expunging some guilt and useless political posturing and less intent on providing direct and uncomplicated reactive programs to ameliorate the present circumstance of Indigenous peoples in certain, though not all, circumstances.

In recognising the massive public estate struggle to find a workable approach to fundamental issues such as health, housing, education and employment regarding Indigenous Australian citizens, it is clear that for many citizens the notion of spending time on developing a research paradigm that facilitates Indigenous participation in the social and scientific intellectualism of Australian's future, is a waste of precious time. However, the opposing view is that without such a paradigm the relationships will not shift from a welfare modus operandi, irrespective of how sophisticated that modus operandi may be. Until there is explicit cause in the public estate arena to educate for motivational shift, little changes will occur. It is for this and other important reasons that the Japanangka Research Paradigm is articulated in a public sense for the first time.

In a generalist sense research is meant to define and quantify particular aspects of the research topic or program evaluation, and, as a result, shift social and political concepts in a way that positively impacts on developing the generalist public estate of Australian Indigenous affairs.

Where to from here?

Obviously there must be a consideration of the 'where to?' from here: both in this thesis and in the real world of inter-racial dynamics, in the context of the Japanangka.

What follows is a set of three papers⁴³ that illustrate the tenacity of Aboriginal scholars, leaders and elders. The first paper was presented at various conferences. The second and third papers as discourse were presented separately to what is now known

⁴³ **The three following papers were independently written and the proposals independently negotiated by this thesis author..**

as DEETYA's Higher Education Division when Mr David Phillips was the senior officer, in the mid-nineties and with his support, and that of The Honourable Mr Simon Crean, the then Minister for Education, Employment and Training and Youth Affairs. I have left the university from which the initiative was driven. While the concept of an Aboriginal University College posed as a beautiful photographic opportunity, when it came to the crunch most of the senior academics — once the photographer had left campus — opposed the evolution of the project. The single most committed non-Indigenous supporter was and remains Professor Ray Golding, the then Vice-Chancellor.

PART THREE

What is the journey story?

For over fifteen years, Aborigines who are conscious of the importance of education have been discussing the establishment of an Aboriginal University. The Interest Group accepts that attainment of Western education is very important to Aborigines, but it is essential to combine Aboriginal cultural knowledge and mores with such education.

The Interest Group members were Professors Errol West, Tracy Bunda, Colin Bourke, Bob Morgan and Eleanor Bourke. This small group of people, all of whom are Aborigines with many years experience in general education, Aboriginal education and the politics of Aboriginal education, now desire to open a public debate, not on the need for an Aboriginal University, but on the model and the administrative operations required to achieve the Australian First Nations University (AFNU).

Given that our last meeting was in the early 1990s, still I honour their contributions to the process that has evolved and to papers I have written since then.

The socio-cultural and political prospects of establishing an Australian Indigenous University College (AIUC) for Indigenous Australians by 1999.

I do not subscribe to the belief that it is only outside Indigenous groups that fine intellects exist and abound. However I refuse to accept, as we approach the twenty-first century, that Aborigines have yet again to serve the usually long political apprenticeship before we achieve what others seem to want for us!

For decades Aborigines have recognised the importance of education and have discussed variously the establishment of an Aboriginal education system in some type of mainstream, contemporary model, including the establishment of an Aboriginal University in one form or another. Many of us accept that attainment of Western

education is very important, but it is essential to combine Aboriginal cultural knowledge and mores with such education pedagogy and managerial infrastructures.

Many people will oppose the notion of the University because of the connotations of 'Aboriginal' or 'Black' inferring a ghetto settlement.

I am conscious of the likely difficulties we face in raising the matter of a separate University for Aborigines in Australia (or fish and chip shop for that matter). However, there are matters more pressing than negative responses.

At the outset, I want to discuss several likely negative responses I identified and some of these are:

- ◆ Is an Aboriginal University likely to be a ghetto?
- ◆ Does every Aborigine want an Aboriginal University?
- ◆ Are the standards going to be lower?
- ◆ Will the graduates be accepted and recognised by mainstream institutions?
- ◆ Is the establishment of an Aboriginal University racist?
- ◆ Are they (Aborigines) qualified enough to run a 'real' University?

Clearly there are additional negative responses though these generally relate to two matters:

- ◆ Money. Power.

For over two hundred years Aboriginal people have been in oppressive situations established by governments, government agencies and church groups. Aborigines have had their circumstances 'handled' by various policies, programs, and legislation,

and non-Aborigines have managed most of the practices resulting.

Coincidentally the same practices and circumstances are managed largely by the same group at the end of this century. Many people have spoken to me recently regarding the AIUC. Almost without exception, I have been cautioned to ensure that the discourse and negotiations are 'non-threatening'.

Some of the wisest counsellors from within the Aboriginal education movement have also cautioned me. However, I am conscious that the establishment of the AIUC is the next logical step in higher education attainment for Australian Aborigines.

Now don't be fooled - I recognise that a seemingly powerless and absolute minority group, seeking equity and freedom of education, is threatening to the principal society.

Before proceeding to discuss a model that is very likely to work, I will address the six negative responses mentioned above.

Is an Aboriginal University likely to be a ghetto?

For many years we have discussed the various options regarding the 'ghetto' question. It is interesting that the enclave program (which isolated the entire group of Aboriginal students) was generally acceptable; is this because the enclaves were not 'run' by Aborigines but rather by non-Aborigines? A ghetto in higher education (or any other area) established by Aborigines is the furthest thing from our minds.

It is important to remember that while we want Western education, we do not want it at the expense of our identity or our culture.

Does every Aborigine want a University?

There is an interesting phenomenon in the politics of the 'Aboriginal Industry'. The bureaucrats (almost all non-Aborigines) insist on what they call 'the community

opinion' or 'view' on almost every matter prior to them acting with regard to a program or a policy.

In fact, almost every government 'equity' program is predicated upon the notion of 'uniformity of opinion'. There is no social group in the world of humankind that is unanimous in their views or opinions on every matter put before them. Such unanimity is a dangerous fiction.

However, in Australia, a great many bureaucrats retard the chances of development for Aborigines by insisting on a single, or a preferred opinion before they act. The real tragedy is that some of the Aboriginal leadership also subscribes to this phenomenon.

For some reason diverse opinion amongst Aborigines is considered a 'bad thing' because such diversity is interpreted as us 'not being able to get our act together' (worrying, isn't it?).

It is important to recognise that in Aboriginal Australia it is not only reasonable to have differing views, if we are to grow and develop, it is imperative. What is important is that we do not lose sight of the greater good of the greater number.

The major problem we face is that when Aborigines seek something that is, in our view, a 'next logical step', the powers that be find other Aborigines who disagree with us and as a result, Governments refuse to permit us to proceed because of the absence of the 'unified view'.

Are the standards going to be lower?

To aim for an institution that is not able to successfully compete with its contemporaries is to 'sell out' on the intellectual excellence and spiritual capabilities of Aborigines. If there is a minority group in Australia that deserves commendation for wanting and working for excellence it is Aborigines. Imagine the conflicts that assume permanent residence in the psyche of Aborigines, given the historic records of

white Australia regarding the treatment of Aborigines since the invasion, yet seeing that same group negotiate (in education at least) out of the ghetto.

Australian Aborigines are among the most sophisticated thinkers in the Universe; do not be fooled by the symptoms of oppression. To look for the quality of life in Aboriginal Australia one must look past the 'symptom phenomenon'. The quality of life we have is not free from the trappings of the troubles and ascription of the social hierarchy that constructs Australian society as we know it.

Will the graduates be accepted and recognised by mainstream institutions?

Any institution that is recognised under the Federal Higher Education Act must meet the unified systems standards. Why would we want anything less? The advantage to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students resides in the acceptability of the conferred degrees and the standards of research and teaching. There is no suggestion that the AIUC would not develop relationships with other universities and enter into the usual cross-articulation of degrees as well as develop its own degrees. There is no suggestion that the AIUC would be exclusively enrolled from Aboriginal Australia or from the people from the Torres Strait Islands. What will occur is that there will be a majority of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders while the need lasts. There is considerable benefit for all Australians in establishing the AIUC. In the first instance one could conceivably learn what one wanted from the owners of the culture rather than what happens at present: non-Indigenous people teach Aboriginal cultural and esoteric knowledge without reference to the traditional owners other than to claim a 'skin name'. The opportunity to learn directly from the historian is too good an opportunity to pass up.

In fact the general thrust of all policies regarding the teaching of Aboriginal studies for the past two decades has been to ensure that just that orientation occurs. The AIUC is able to ensure this result.

In the end the declaration of the AIUC under the Act will ensure standards are no lower than at any other university in the country.

Is the establishment of an Aboriginal University racist?

The view of the Interest Group is that it is racist *not* to establish an Aboriginal University, and we are not alone in holding those views.

The reality is this: if one decides to undertake a set of specific humanitarian actions, to relieve oppression, on behalf of or towards another group of people, and those actions are motivated because of the racial origins of the target group, is it then not called (among other things) affirmative action? It is the Interest Group's view that if something is to be done based on the recipients' racial origins, then so be it. When the group does it to itself, should not this action be called Self-Determination? And, when the group decides to control the administration of those actions is this not called Self-Management? Are not the Federal Government's and the Federal Opposition's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policies premised upon Self-Management and Self-Determination?

Recognise that there is considerable discourse yet to be undertaken before the AFNU becomes a reality. There will be many forums available to permit broad and frank debate. The important matter that is not up for debate is the need for such an institution.

Are they (Aborigines) qualified enough to run a 'real' University?

The question of our qualifications is always one of the first asked. It is as though non-Indigenous societies believe they have a monopoly on intellectual excellence and administrative competence. The Interest Group, like many of our supporters (Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal), recognises that while there is a level of knowledge in the cultures of management at the most senior levels of universities, we believe that, with support from the current national unified systems managers, we will succeed.

For decades Aborigines have been excluded from participating at the highest levels of administration (generally, though certainly in universities) and we have hardly, if ever, been included by any systems in the pursuit of excellence. We believe there are a number of Aborigines who are and continue to prove themselves as successful managers, often against all the odds. Many of these people work at various levels in universities at present.

One of the strongest traits we have is the ability to recognise what we do not know; as a consequence we are seeking advice and input from a number of sources. These groups are amongst the most aware in terms of university structures and operations and we expect that many of the potential pitfalls will be avoided. Again it must be remembered that simply because one has never tried or undertaken an action previously, is not a reason why one should not try and that one will not succeed.

Finally, the Aborigines who are likely to be involved with the administration and the teaching in the AIUC will all have been trained from within our own cultures and many, especially the teachers of the bicultural courses (Aboriginal and Western pedagogy), will also be graduates from the Western education system. It is merely a case of applying the quality and excellence of a dual educational experience.

Discussions on a possible or an illustrative model.

One of the most perplexing issues we have debated over the years is in regard to the actual model for an Aboriginal university. While there are a number of models that will be canvassed I would like to discuss one model and ask readers to remember that it is only ONE model. We have not canvassed widely to date on alternative views. The Interest Group's view is that we need to undertake our usual processes in consultation prior to settling on a particular model. I think it is important to recognise that we will always retain the flexibility to modify and improve whatever model we begin with.

There is probably little flexibility in the actual management infrastructure as there are particular matters that are set down in the Act that prescribe and describe the

management processes. The principle efficacy of the AFNU lies in its being an alternative that does not yet exist. Another strength resides in the capacity for the AFNU to be truly bicultural. It is important to recognise that, irrespective of the final model agreed upon, the AFNU will not be outside the national unified system.

The best conceptualisation of the illustrative model is that of a multi-campus operation. At present we have Aboriginal Education units/centres/enclaves on most university campuses across Australia. Each of these units usually operates in isolation from their counterparts based in other universities. This situation presents a number of significant difficulties, some of which are:

- ◆ Duplication of basic planning and management strategies.
- ◆ Duplication of basic access programs and courses such as Aboriginal studies.
- ◆ Lack of access to innovative programs (some units have very innovative programs that should be available to all Aborigines and communities).
- ◆ Lack of a cohesive national approach to higher education. The NAEP is a funding mechanism, not an education policy.
- ◆ Maximisation of funding usage. Most of the funding is not delivered to the units. Over \$70m is expended by the Federal government this year (1999) but we understand that most of this is not reaching the units.
- ◆ Partition of Aboriginal expertise and the creation of a culture of competition between units and between States. This phenomenon results in envy and unhealthy division.
- ◆ The denial of the opportunity to concentrate our elders, our thinkers, our planners and our communities in the context of higher education maximisation nationally.
- ◆ The present situation does not allow Aborigines to readily develop a contemporary and functional national perspective and to be able to identify with that posture, while at the same time permitting the retention of the traditional independence that groups require to operate as a cultural entity (in the context of clans, families, groups). The present circumstances do not permit the development of a First Nation's profile on matters of national, generic importance, for example an AIUC.

The possible or illustrative model must be a model that proposes a structure that answers all of the matters discussed in the preceding discourse as well as the immediate matters raised above. The 'possible' or 'illustrative model', as outlined below, is clearly not comprehensive. It is, however, a base from which to begin consultation and planning.

Essentially a possible or illustrative model proposes the following:

- ◆ Amalgamation of all the existing Aboriginal education units/centres on all campuses across Australia. There are 37 higher education institutions in Australia receiving Aboriginal Participation funding from DEET.
- ◆ Appropriate State legislation to recognise the AIUC as a bona fide university under the Federal Higher Education Funding Act.
- ◆ Centralisation of all funding presently distributed to all of the universities across Australia.
- ◆ Establishment of a standard university management infrastructure and the establishment of an appropriate administrative and academic staff structure.
- ◆ Retention of all existing community-based consultative relationships (management/advisory committees or councils).
- ◆ Establishing for the first time in the history of Australian higher education a true and sustainable act of self-management and self-determination.

The Australian Indigenous University College is achievable because the blueprint is in place. The existing operators in Aboriginal higher education will not lose any of their daily operating autonomy. In fact that autonomy will increase as each operation is likely to be designated at a faculty level and the success of the faculty will depend upon the on-site managers and their community advisory committee or council.

The cross-articulation of degrees, diplomas and certificates with other universities will demonstrate that the AIUC's contribution to the national higher education sector is one of quality and excellence. The existence of University College degrees, diplomas and certificates will also assist in the reconciliation process by informing all students of the complex cultures and aspirations of Australian indigenous peoples.

It is my view, and I believe many people share it, that the only reason we will not achieve the establishment of the Australian Indigenous University College will be because we fail to see the effort as being for the greater good of the greater number.

The illustrative model is not being espoused as the only model, nor is the debate on the model closed. We need to have serious discourse and significant negotiations as well as achieve the recognition under the Federal Government's *Higher Education Funding Act*. Once that is achieved the only way to go is forward.

The education experiences of our Indigenous brothers and sisters in Canada and the United States have proved that a dominant society is unable either consciously or unconsciously to successfully accommodate the very particular educational orientations, values, and purposes of Indigenous peoples. Australian Indigenous peoples have, albeit over a shorter time span, experienced identical feelings of alienation, welfare-orientated access programs, conflict on personal and cultural levels and finally, acceptance that the majority society is unable to accommodate our unique demands.

Indigenous Australians do not want to wait another two hundred years before we have our own higher education institution.

We are certain that the reasons for seeking our own University are well known to the thinking public, bureaucrats and politicians alike. Further, we believe that the standard arguments against an Indigenous University are fully replied to on the basis of statistics and the overwhelming evidence that living conditions across the board are marginally better than twenty years ago. **We believe it is time that we really tried some direct action, under the umbrella of self-management in education.**

While I do not wish to raise the overt racist reasons and experiences expressed to me as to why an Aboriginal University College is dangerous, I do wish to elucidate the positive generic reasons. Some of these positives are:

- ◆ Better utilisation of funding.
- ◆ Better co-ordination of degrees, diplomas, associate diplomas and certificates.
- ◆ Establishment of a stable management infrastructure.
- ◆ Standardised cross-articulation of individual and joint degrees.
- ◆ Unified approach to education at tertiary level for Aborigines and about Aborigines.
- ◆ Better industrial, professional and social opportunities for all staff working in Aboriginal Higher Education.
- ◆ Removal of the ‘helping hand’ syndrome, allowing advancements to occur on a basis other than ‘good will’.

These generic reasons alone are sufficient for us to seriously consider establishing our own university College.

Our societies are spread across the Australian continent and cluster in clan/family groups. The affinity urban people feel for their land is not diminished by the Diaspora; in fact, the majority of us have broken the chains of the dispersal and are now functionally cultural in our traditions. All cultures are fluid, however accommodating our progress has been halted by a ‘snapshot of history’ (pre- and immediate post-Cook) focused by a worrying notion functioning under an illegal application of terra nullius.

The ‘snapshot of history’ defines Aborigines and our cultures in the context and physical time of the beginning of the conquest. We cannot be held to ransom by the snapshot or the descendants of the ‘photographer’ any longer. It is OK for us to practise a modified culture and our treasure within that culture must reflect the time of our present history (even though there is a new history every second). It is in these

contrasts of present continuing past, and prescribed future spiritually, physically and intellectually that the following illustrative model is devised.

What gets in the way?

There is still little opportunity for us to function independently within our constitutional rights, as free citizens, to acquire a process of educating our societies that does not essentially assimilate us. Many of us have come to recognise and resent this fact.

I have recognised a process I call the ‘first base’ phenomenon. One of the most difficult factors we face is the need for us to regulate our pace and focus to stay in ‘tune’ with our non-Indigenous supporters. We seem to be the first point of reference for most matters to do with Aboriginal education though, more often than not, with regard to ‘Aboriginal’ studies within the Western curricula. Yet it seems that when tough issues such as defining or redefining pedagogical practices or sociological configurations regarding curriculum construction or reconstruction are required we are not included. When an Aborigine or a person from the Torres Strait Islands is asked to advise, it is only on our cultural matters. There seems to be little recognition of the skills and experiences we accumulate in taking a Western education because we are called upon only to respond or react to matters about which ‘we, as Aborigines, know best’.

Aborigines who are professional educators are treated as though they do not have cognitive skills, apart from boomerangs or spear-throwing (and even those things are denied to many of us who live in proximity to white Australia).

The philosophical and political principles that manifested themselves in the days of the National Aboriginal Education Committee, in the form of numerous reports and papers, are gone and there is little leadership at present to focus the national debate in education for and about Aborigines and peoples of the Torres Strait Islands. The absence of such leadership ascribes to Aborigines who are professional educators a role significantly lower than the role they are able to take.

The philosophies that construct our thinking are not altogether unlike those of the majority society in that we want the best that is attainable for our people. Often the best is not ideologically different, merely attained differently with a different set of socio-spiritual tenets. The difference, for Aboriginal professionals, is predicated upon the "how to" rather than the 'why'. However, when we are dealing with non-Indigenous peoples we must always revisit the 'why' and the 'how' and **as a result, the collective Indigenous genius never enters the 'grand parade'**.

The opportunity for Aborigines to 'advance' is constructed in the minds of Aborigines; the reality is that the opportunity must be grasped firmly and pursued apace. In an attempt to 'strike out' on the exploratory pathway towards the realisation of the dream in Aborigines of having our own University, there were several steps to be taken to get the issue on the Federal and State Government's agenda. The following was the first step. I made a proposal to DEETYA, calling for the recognition of the need for accelerated movement within the unified system. This led to the establishment of some seven centres under Amanda Vanstone's ministerial leadership, which built on Simon Crean's previously expressed commitment.

The following two papers are self-explanatory and require nothing more than recognition of the place in these innovations of the Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm.

Yet another attempt to be heard. Paper B — A proposal to establish a Centre of Cultural Oration⁴⁴ and Research Excellence — general historical overview.

This proposal to create a Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence is verified by a fact and a realisation. The fact emerged as a focused admission of disadvantage for Indigenous Australians, and five other target groups, within the Federal Government's Discussion Paper: *A Fair Chance for All: Higher Education That's Within Everyone's Reach* (DEET 1990). The Discussion Paper also set in place a number of strategies for reporting on progress and activities in the designated areas

⁴⁴ Oration means in this context 'the academic delivery of information in a special manner or context

of disadvantage through evaluation and monitoring of institutional and target group member participation.

A Fair Chance clearly stated the **fact** of disadvantage by identifying a detailed equity profile of objectives, strategies and desired outcomes for Indigenous Australians' effective participation in tertiary education, and delineated the reporting methodologies required of universities in responding to that challenge. The Indigenous equity profile consisted of:

- ◆ Two ubiquitous objectives for universities with two specific orientations.
- ◆ One target statement with three outcomes statements.
- ◆ Seven strategies/indicators for universities in response to the objectives and target statements.
- ◆ Seven detailed strategic statements.
- ◆ Eight specific strategic sub-set requirements.
- ◆ Three particular target cohort profiles of disadvantage.
- ◆ Four specific, Federally-funded strategies.
- ◆ Six obligatory institutional performance-evaluation reporting strategies.
- ◆ One statement of intent on equity.
- ◆ Five participation and support statements.
- ◆ Two performance evaluation measures.
- ◆ Seven specific reporting and special data collection measures.

- ◆ Twenty successful strategies options with
- ◆ nine specifically identified successful strategies (within the twenty) with the following as sub-sets of this nine:
- ◆ Three deemed as essential strategies,
- ◆ Three deemed as valuable strategies and
- ◆ Three deemed as useful second-level strategies.

The **realisation** emerged in the Higher Education Council's *Equity, Diversity and Excellence, Discussion Paper* November 1995 when it stated:

Subsequent analysis of general student profile since the White paper (C of A 1988) has shown that the majority of the growth places have been taken by undergraduate students who have already taken some higher education study or by past graduate students ...

Therefore any broadening of the commencing student profile by equity group which may have occurred since 1989 has been achieved **in spite** of the selection of an increasing number of students who are upgrading their qualifications or students who are transferring from one course to another⁴⁵, (*emphasis mine*)

Further, when the results of a Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) review of Higher Education Equity Program (general equity program 1992) were compared to the objectives and targets set in *A Fair Chance* (1990) the DEET review reported that:

⁴⁵ Higher Education Council's *Equity, Diversity and Excellence Discussion Paper* . AGPS, 1995, p.8, para. 2

Higher education institutions had shown **increased** commitment to equity through the development of **improved** equity plans and the implementation of a number of special programs.⁴⁶

In spite of the extraordinarily informed profile of objectives, strategies and desired outcomes and detailed requirements of universities for Indigenous Australians laid out in the *A Fair Chance* Discussion Paper (some **80** references, options, statements, and strategies) and the above admission of somewhat **under-emphasising** (increased, improved) equity, commitment and initiative, this proposal to establish a Centre of Cultural Orator and Research Excellence is a **viable and essential** innovation for Indigenous Australians in the higher education sector.

On any evaluation or benchmark criteria, nationally or internationally it must be acknowledged that the track record for innovation of universities participating in Indigenous education is remarkable for the conspicuous absence of significant and consistent positive outcomes. This is particularly worrying given that CAEs and universities have received targeted funding for Indigenous people's participation **since around 1975**.

Participating universities conducting Indigenous education equity programs received a dramatic upward shift in funding levels in the Aboriginal Participation Initiative (API) in 1984/5, and a move from financial year funding to triennial funding in the early nineties. Universities were finally drawn by the Federal government to evidence sets of specific criteria for equity programming that included direct involvement of Indigenous peoples and appropriate use of target funding from 1990 onward.

The fact, referred to earlier, is that universities which have had the opportunity to help resolve the complex and stressful circumstances of Indigenous people, as well as allowing them to contribute to the general Australian society in a manner that would significantly reduce the bitterness and militant relationships that presently exist Australia wide, **have failed in the attempt**.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 8.

The fact is that there has been more than two decades of substantial remuneration (Abstudy Special Course Funding, API and National Aboriginal Education Policy funding) and specific advice from Indigenous people and Federal governments to universities regarding Indigenous higher education, with little profound change.

The realisation referred to above is that to achieve any real growth and extensive social or educational change or cessation of conflict between Indigenous and general Australian societies over fundamental treatment and access to social justice and human rights, Indigenous people must be given the authority to attempt their own solutions.

This proposal admits that there exists a body of knowledge that addresses many of the matters proffered herein as justification to establish a new Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence for Australian Indigenous peoples. However, because of the domain in which this knowledge resides, it is already beyond the reach of Indigenous Australians, intellectually and heritably; it is therefore a body of knowledge that is largely miscellaneous, abstract, deemed antipathetic and, therefore, largely useless in any but a discipline or narrow issue sense.

The Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence is vital because it will, **for the first time**, congregate and recognise the best and broadest Indigenous intellects in Australia. For Indigenous intelligentsia to finally begin to regularly and productively seek appropriate responses, offer research reports and project results to Indigenous communities and when appropriate, to the wider Australian community, would be indeed an innovation.

Such an innovative strategy **should not** remove the continuing responsibility of participating universities to acknowledge their areas of strength to alleviate Indigenous disadvantage. Universities should still have a public and moral responsibility to effect positive changes in general society in every possible way.

This innovation will result in research methodologies, hypotheses and contexts generally receiving a response that is not one of rejection, or complaint from

Indigenous communities regarding the process, consultation and data interpretation, and will bring with the work the onus to use the results effectively.

The outcomes proffered by the Centre from its research will be legitimate and earnest in terms of attribute and credential. These qualities are, almost without exception, present in the current body of research data that drives the effort of amelioration and reconciliation in the higher education sector. This situation exists because academia traditionally treats Indigenous Australians as subjects of research rather than partners in research.

PART FOUR

Establishing a Network of Participating Universities.

To maximise the effects of the centre, participating universities will each seek the involvement of eight other institutions including six universities, and at least two TAFE institutions and two or three multilingual, traditional Aboriginal, registered, non-systemic primary or secondary schools.

It is necessary to conduct an informal national survey to identify institutions that could contribute to the global aims of the Centre and which presently offer unique and quality programs.

The qualities sought of participating institutions relate to nationally or internationally recognised expertise in the areas of teaching, research, and community development as well as well-supported Indigenous education programs.

Other important criteria are the current academic standards, flexibility of offerings and peer perceptions of their mainstream degrees, because overall perceptions of the network are critical and must be positive.

The Minister's Indigenous Higher Education reference, under *Commitment to Equity* in the DEETYA *Higher Education Budget Statement*, p17, 9 August, 1996, which stated the Federal Government's positive and decisive commitment to support quantitative and qualitative innovation in Australian Indigenous tertiary education is the perfect environment in which to establish a Centre of Cultural Orator and Research Excellence.

The pursuit of the six specific objectives, in the context of the new approach to quality through the four primary features enunciated in the budget statement, (p4) also underwrites the new Centre initiative.

The notion of excellence per se in the national and international Indigenous tertiary sector is a political and social innovation in itself. Therefore, this notion,

coupled with commitment to Indigenous management, is critical given the current high levels of uncertainty regarding the future of Indigenous Australians in their continuing struggle against inequity in the Australian mainstream university sector.

Over a long period, many universities have established a seemingly strong commitment to Indigenous people's education. More recently, some of them have focused intensely on Indigenous education in recognition of issues beyond the level of equity programs. In fact certain universities in particular enjoy considerable Indigenous support over a broad cross-section of communities because of the presence of Indigenous leadership in their programs. In a largely unco-operative and sometimes very hostile university community, these positive relationships provide a welcoming context for the Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence.

As a result of the supportive infrastructure at these universities, the Indigenous proposers of the Centre are confident that the presence of a Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence will clearly meet the innovative and empowering intent of the Minister's budget statement. These Centres will further enhance Indigenous people's general social and educational profile.

Through the existence of positive support infrastructures, the extension of pertinent initiatives in the four principal areas of research, teaching, community development and social justice/reconciliation are very real options. Each of these principal areas is extrapolated in text as **Global Objectives** of the Centre.

The opportunity to provide many positive and comprehensive research activities will massage deliberation on racist and ignorant practices and discourse within academia. Further, through extending inter-university and industrial research and liaison networks to support various Indigenous community aspirations and Federal and State/Territory government policies regarding employment, community-based interactive reconciliation and matters of social justice, the university sector will make a serious contribution to the advancement of Australia as a total society.

Key Operational Ethics.

Historically there are three key operational ethics that seem to ensure successful Indigenous education programs in Australian universities. The first Key Operational Ethic is **commitment**. Commitment by a university to support Indigenous people's initiatives at maximum capacity in financial, pedagogic and moral terms is crucial.

The second Key Operational Ethic is guaranteeing an effective, vital and efficient **consultation** arrangement. Proper consultative arrangements that facilitate complete involvement of Indigenous peoples beyond simply engaging them in limited managerial decision making, is a sure, effective practice that underwrites the success of Indigenous equity programs to the greatest possible degree.

Further, a holistic consultation infrastructure that nurtures Indigenous participation in debate on matters apart from only Indigenous business will evolve a true multicultural interface and close the racial gap that presently impedes black/white relationships on almost every pertinent issue within academia.

The third Key Operational Ethic is **action**. There is little use in commitment and collaboration without product. Product consistency and results or outcomes define the quality of any enterprise and the Centre will recognise that quality outcomes are an area of Indigenous higher education that requires significant and consistent attention.

The Centre will, within the four principal areas of research, teaching, community development and social justice/reconciliation, concentrate on social justice, equity and education innovation as a positive response to the views expressed in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commission's First Report, 1993*, where it states:

The objectives of the Commonwealth's Social Justice Strategy include reference to the enhancement of 'individual rights'. And, with particular reference to indigenous people it is stated that, the 'Government's long-term objective is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have sufficient economic and social independence to enjoy to the full their rights as Australian citizens and opportunities to participate in Australian society.

Nevertheless, the present Commonwealth approach still constructs the notion of social justice for indigenous Australians primarily on the basis of our needs and disadvantages rather than our entitlements.

Paragraph 2.1 of *Social justice for Indigenous Australians* is entitled *Past dispossession and present disadvantages*. It states that the 'poverty and relative powerlessness of Australia's indigenous people are illustrated by the following indicators.' There follows a litany of social injustices which are the common experience of Indigenous Australians in areas of employment and income, education, health, housing, infrastructure and law.

This approach confuses the facts of injustice with the reason to remedy them. It does not expressly identify that mortality rates at least two and a half times those of the national rates, life expectancies some 15 to 17 years less than those of non-Indigenous Australians and infant and peri-natal mortality rates approximately three times the national rates constitute an abuse of the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A decent standard of health and a life expectancy equivalent to others is entitlement. Social justice is not primarily a matter of relief of suffering. It is a matter of the fulfilment of a responsibility. To draw this distinction is not to deny that the facts by themselves speak out for a remedy. Nor is it to deny that compassion is a proper response. But compassion is an insufficient foundation for delivery of rights. Government policies that are based on feelings or particular value judgments are subject to the political vagaries of political movements. Social justice should provide a constant basis for social policy rather than be a creature of such policy.

The Centre of Cultural Orator and Research Excellence is therefore a timely and vital positive strategy in response to the spirit of the Indigenous references in the August 9 Budget Statement, recent national reviews of equity and evaluations of Indigenous education and the Social Justice Commission's assessment of the contemporary circumstances of Indigenous Australians.

Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence: Mission Statement.

The Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence will operate under a decade-adjusted time-line within the public obligation enunciated in the theme: **From Inequity to Equality — Australian Indigenous Higher Education to the End of the Twenty-First Century.**

The Centre will network with other Indigenous Centres of Excellence as they emerge and collaborate with individual Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, research funding agencies and public tender consultancy agencies.

The Centre will enable Indigenous Australians to establish an infrastructure that addresses the four primary objectives referred to in the *Equity Discussion Paper* (p. 29) and the *DEET Higher Education 1996 Budget Statements*, 9 August. (Indigenous reference at p. 17)

Mission Statement.

The Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence has the primary task of re-shaping national options for tertiary education for Australian Indigenous peoples through extensive debate on the principles and practices of vital functions such as consultation, research and teaching and community development.

The Centre will establish new intervention paradigms and create new knowledge paradigms by leading the national and international debate on issues of fundamental importance such as challenging the existing concepts and relativities between successful tertiary study outcomes and cultural diversity regarding Indigenous Australians.

The Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence will focus on researching and articulating the thus-far-untapped capacity of Australian Indigenous peoples as sophisticated practitioners in multicultural, social, political, historical and contemporary paradigms. Further analysis of the impact of these skills in a tertiary

environment, to establish new taxonomies in pedagogy and classroom practice and offer the results to the broad education community of Australia will establish a renaissance of positive, functional interactions and effectively reduce the impact of the seemingly extreme levels of educational dysfunction that pervade contemporary thinking regarding Indigenous Australians.

And finally, the Centre will subscribe to the aim and intent of shared effective Indigenous community participation and global Indigenous ownership.

It is evident from recent reports and events in Indigenous education that the whole of academia is struggling with the whole notion of equity and social justice. As a result the attainment of consonant and poignant knowledge, and the establishment of an infrastructure to grant general Australian societies and academia access to the powerful intellectualism of Indigenous philosophers, mathematicians, other scientists, medical experts, traditional and contemporary legal practitioners, parents, Elders, politicians and the like is at present out of the question.

Centre of Excellence: A General Statement on the Objectives and Strategies.

The strategic statements on the four principal objectives establish operating paradigms for the Centre to advocate. However, at this point they are simply global **leading** or **mandate** statements. The operational paradigms will assume a more precise form with greater detail through undertaking a series of specific research projects and activities, which will largely depend on the priorities and orientations set by the Centre's Management Board and on the advice of the various steering committees.

Objectives: Teaching.

The following objectives are set in universal contexts that establish broad operating paradigms. In the broad area of teaching there are at least two crucial and recurring areas of need in the general Australian education fraternity when it comes to

interactive education experiences and pathway definitions for Indigenous peoples.

These are **how** to teach in terms of:

- ◆ The meaning and place of Indigenous protocols in threading general education pathways with multiculturalism and social and political pluralities, consultation experiences, and cultural osmosis.
- ◆ The importance and place of Indigenous and non-Indigenous verbal and non-verbal communications in formal and informal learning experiences.
- ◆ The use and sanctity of personal space as an Indigenous cultural tradition in important areas such as general personal interrelationships; this issue pervades every aspect of interface between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and student/teacher relationships.
- ◆ Establishing the authority to teach and the obligation to learn in a multicultural society.

and **what** to teach in terms of:

- ◆ Dealing respectfully and ethically with competing First Culture histories as well as contiguous non-Indigenous histories.
- ◆ Establishing a knowledge base to enhance and posit existing and historical legislative infrastructures in terms of validating Indigeneity and extending the impact of such political structures in a generational sense, on Indigenous Australians.
- ◆ Effective use and mandatory ‘integrity’ of genealogical data and its place in locating Indigenous peoples in their own and global societies.
- ◆ The definitions, place and implications of multiculturalism and its implications on racial dichotomies and socio-political pluralities.

- ◆ Extending the instruments of academia and systemic and non-systemic schooling providers to balance perceptions of Indigenous peoples in multi-disciplinary education.
- ◆ Influencing mainstream education to ‘deconstruct’ the conflicts and imbalances in the treatment of relationships between Indigenous Australians and the rest of Australian society and the subsequently entrenched inimical social, religious, political and economic infrastructures of general contemporary Australian society.
- ◆ Broadly and specifically challenging the historical and contemporary **public narrative** regarding pedagogy and cross-culturalism that is rampant in the ‘flavour of the month’ Australian Indigenous education discourse.
- ◆ Challenging erroneous knowledge and perceptions of Indigenous peoples through constructing debate and resetting political protocols that presently circumscribe this area in Academia.

Strategic Statement

The Centre’s primary innovation will actuate relevant discourse on the objectives because the locus of accuracy and info-distribution has for decades surrounded Indigenous people but never substantially included us.

For twenty-five years or more the demand from Indigenous educators and other community people for reinforcing and enlightened advice on these two very important epistemological matters (how and what to teach) by the systemic providers has been relentless though unengaged. This strategy, however, concentrates on immediate Indigenous involvement from the beginning of any research project relevant to teaching Indigenous matters or interests, including First Knowledge papers and statements on issues of pedagogy.

Further, apart from schooling sector requirements, the tertiary teaching sector generally, and undergraduate teacher training in particular, require significant and rational debate on matters of educational import to Indigenous peoples and to

mainstream Australia. This debate is necessary because many of the current Indigenous subjects in education degrees are loaded with emotive and mythological explanation and reasoning.

Research conducted by the Centre will inform these debates and refocus possession and distribution of Indigenous intellectual property and cultural and political rationality to begin resolving some of the matters extant in contemporary Indigenous educational evolutionary paradigms in both the academic and the general education industry.

There is overwhelming evidence that the most effective changes in diverse areas of Indigenous people's mainstream education, especially the K-12 education pathways, have resulted from consistent and positive exchanges between teachers and Indigenous educators and other leaders and Elders.

Through research and consultations the Centre will ensure that Indigenous focuses, entwined in mainstream K-12 education pathways and infrastructure, particularly Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness Program (ASSPA) Committees, will evolve and establish important strategic and pedagogic knowledge-bases and begin evoking the various levels of change required to resolve the basic flaws in the K-12 education experiences of Indigenous students.

The Centre of Cultural Orator and Research Excellence will operate a continuing series of seminars regarding teaching **about** Indigenous peoples and the teaching **of** Indigenous peoples, as part of a broader range of strategies to address this important area.

While this decisive activity has, for many years, reiterated points of contention regarding Indigenous education at the professional development level, it has also depended to a significant degree on the goodwill of systemic professional development officers and individual interested teachers. It has also been spasmodic and isolated.

The Centre will not only pursue the continuing debate on black/white authority issues but on effective and innovative discourse that will provide an extensive knowledge-base from which new epistemology will stem. Over an extended period the results will inform Australian society in a very general sense on Indigenous matters and in a very specific sense on resolution infrastructure. The key to success lies in empowering Indigenous people in the pursuit of enlightenment and dissertation at an intellectual, collegial and practical level.

Objectives: Research.

The Centre will undertake research that is:

- ◆ Discipline-based though culturally consistent.
- ◆ Performed within established Indigenous ethics and protocol guidelines and practice.
- ◆ Intellectual and practical in establishing new paradigms of import to unification and easing of tensions and stress that plague Indigenous Australians.
- ◆ Theoretical, empirical, qualitative and quantitative.
- ◆ Driven by immediate issues and opportunity as well as generational imperatives.
- ◆ Intent on investigating and synthesising data from a broad spectrum of issues relating to intellectual, social, cultural, economic and political circumstance of Indigenous peoples.
- ◆ Prepared to admit the value of research knowledge and information based on oral histories including anecdotal and historical testimony.
- ◆ Collaborative research, both intra-Indigenous and inter-non-Indigenous.
- ◆ Multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral.

- ◆ Mega-racial and multicultural rather than mono-ethnic.
- ◆ Practical and theoretical in transparent methodologies that enunciate Indigenous cultural and intellectual paradigms.

Strategic Statement: Research.

One important immediate mandate inherent in the Centre's public operational theme above regarding research activities is **immediate outcome; long-term implication.**

Positioning research activity within this mandate will confine the level of tangential action and reaction, yet allow the extrapolation of central issues in the context of education to the end of the twenty-first century. All research will be published and will embellish the national and international debate in profoundly important ways because Indigenous Australia will own the research. **The ethic of this Research Strategy is interwoven throughout the other Strategic Statements in this proposal.**

Objectives: Community Development.

The Centre will articulate and begin to ameliorate the current circumstances of Indigenous peoples that plagues the entire Australian community through:

- ◆ Opening and engaging in national and international dialogue through conference papers, publications of research project data and remaining in close contact and involved with numerous community groups and individuals whose interests are integral to Centre objectives and operations.
- ◆ Developing challenging and rigorous debate on issues pertaining to the general well-being of Indigenous Australians.
- ◆ Producing occasional papers, conducting seminars, articulating and evaluating policy relevant to community development.
- ◆ Establishing universal criteria for creating effective consultation models in all areas of holistic community development.

- ◆ Confronting the affective value of various community-based education service providers' efforts and establishing in situ debate on epistemology relevant to community development projects and programs.

- ◆ Drawing academia into a positive though diminishing debate regarding social justice matters and presenting empirical research data to enhance outcomes relating to Indigenous community development well into the twenty-first century.

Strategic Statement.

The Centre will, in the conceptual frameworks that construct the geographical, social and political paradigms of community development, shift the focus of research project subject identification and research project funding of the four tiers of the body politic to a more relevant holistic public operating domain.

A number of the above objectives are unique considering that to this point in history most of the research and strategies proposed herein have been considered frivolous and casual when compared to the extreme oppression and overwhelming depression experienced by Indigenous peoples on a daily basis.

This proposal however elevates the pursuit of excellence, intellectualism and hard academic discipline studies as essential to effective holistic change in community development areas.

Over the years it has become evident that when each government (Federal, Territory and sovereign State) chooses to embark on Indigenous development enterprises, they offer similar options, fund similarly and insist that the projects remain non-mainstream in every configuration of practice and management.

This posturing has led to severe depression in terms of continuing and innovative activities. As a result, few positive, permanent or startling outcomes have occurred across the entire spectrum of Indigenous community development in Australia. The

Centre's objectives and strategies will significantly redress that situation over the next two decades.

Objectives: Emancipatory Social Justice and Reconciliation.

This aspect of the Centre's operations intends to actively draw the academic community into initiatives that capture the agenda of mitigation of Indigenous disadvantage and are constructed around the following objectives by:

- ◆ Engaging in positive dialogue that enhances the Centre's public theme of *From Inequity to Equality: Australian Indigenous Higher Education to the End of the Twenty-First Century*. These debates and research activities will focus on all matters pertinent to tertiary education in a holistic sense.
- ◆ Conducting seminars and conferences that focus on matters of concern within community aspirations and the higher education sector, and will include Federal and State programming and policy issues.
- ◆ Supporting research, teaching and community extension and interactive exchanges through various public forums, occasional papers, policy reviews and monitoring Indigenous focuses regarding policy and programming matters in universities in particular.
- ◆ Providing or initiating regular policy analysis and research statements on the implications of national or important State/Territory Indigenous education reviews, conferences and policy statements to the AVCC, DEET, individual Vice-Chancellors, the National Tertiary Education Union, EEO Officers and student union and staff associations.
- ◆ Constantly interrelating with all appropriate universities and government agencies to ensure a continuity of perspective and inclinations of socio-cultural matters of national importance in areas of policy development and implementation.

- ◆ Articulating discipline-specific ethics, methodologies, and analytical research including author bias, in the context of delivering accurate and pertinent data to appropriate forums and agencies.
- ◆ Establishing ownership of research knowledge-bases (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal knowledge) and analysing and declaring the place of self-determination in both the extension of the knowledge-base and debate-extrapolated hypotheses, along with prophetic analysis.

Strategic Statement.

Because of the nature and cultures of academia it is clear that matters of emancipatory social justice and multiculturalism are usually subjects for discipline-based research. As a result it is **not unusual** that the info-base of such research remains the domain of the academics who conduct the research. It **is usual** however, that research that may either loosely or specifically fall into an Australian Indigenous socio-cultural paradigm will be undertaken by non-Indigenous researchers, and most likely be thesis, project-research or research-consultancy/review-based.

This situation is problematic because the opportunity for Indigenous peoples to own and extrapolate the research data is frequently severely constricted because of research results being either inaccessible or limited through copyright and limited publication and distribution.

The Centre of Cultural Orator and Research Excellence's public theme, *From Inequity to Equality: Australian Indigenous Higher Education to the End of the Twenty First Century* recognises and advances the notion that socio-cultural and multi-social reconciliation exchanges and public dialogue are two profoundly important instruments of emancipatory social justice.

These two 'voices' are also at the heart of the Centre's ethical commitment to continuing positive public discourse on matters of general social justice as the Centre begins a serious attempt to reduce the effects of racism and ignorance in academia and consequently within global Australian society.

Summary

As noted several times above, the Centre of Cultural Oration and Research Excellence will operate under the public theme of: *From Inequity to Equality: Australian Indigenous Higher Education to the End of the Twenty-First Century*. Under this theme the Centre will undertake direct research that embraces the four principal areas of research, teaching, community development and the articulation of social justice/reconciliation by establishing a forum for each that critically evaluates existing practice, supports all agencies with appropriate mandates in these areas and extends the discourse in an enlightened manner. Each forum will pursue different levels of articulation through constructing a hierarchy of priorities and addressing these thematically through various public forums.

Each forum will issue various original papers aimed at extending the matters under discussion and these will be distributed to various local, university-specific and national publications, including broadsheet journals. The most important advice however will be to the public estate and academia.

One of the principal reasons why there has been little mobility of Indigenous peoples in academia is the utterly diverse, though somewhat self-imposed, repressed nature of critical pathways to change, common in universities. Social justice, equity and cultural flexibility in academia are essential if it is to provide a welcoming context for such important change and maturation.

Clearly the work relating to improving teaching, research, community development and social justice and reconciliation must continue. However, it is the socio-cultural research and debate along with continuing multi-social exchanges that will carry the authority to consider and evaluate all tertiary sector social justice and culturalism practices, objectives and strategies.

Further, these activities will support idealistic and other political and humanitarian agencies such as the Reconciliation Council and non-Indigenous groups such as national parent organisations, various ethnic advisory committees, welfare agencies

and student associations. The research profiles that occur as a result of this support will focus on extensive developments in these areas and allied fields and disciplines.

The socio-cultural debate and multi-social exchanges that engage social justice and reconciliation matters are for many reasons **absolutely critical** to all future development of Indigenous peoples on various education pathways. One of the most important strategies to achieve these outcomes is the **entrusting** to Indigenous peoples, for the very first time, primary responsibility for **articulating** employment, community development, and systemic education issues and consequential changes in the three tiers of the general Australian education community. The delegation of authority and responsibility for such articulations to Indigenous peoples of Australia is a **profound innovation**.

The third and finally, almost successful, Proposal C.

The following is the actual submission I wrote and had validated by Professor Ray Golding and the JCU Council, so let us look at the presentation of the Japanangka Paradigm concealed in a very white model. To finish my comments on this matter I think the reader should know that **the Government gave JCU over \$700,000 to start the project**.

PART FIVE

Concept of an Australian Indigenous University College of Northern Australia.

1. Rationale and Background.

The Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation, Research and Development was established at James Cook University of North Queensland in 1992. In the initial stages the Centre will provide the basic infrastructure of the Indigenous University College of Northern Australia. The University College is an extension of the concept and operation of the existing enterprise, which presently offers programs which are diverse and which focus on access to education, employment, and cultural and social development, in the context of Australian Indigenous communities and their diverse cultures as well as the University communities and their cultures. Apart from these important options a new paradigm for Indigenous Australians, as high priority, is research.

The Centre also provides academic and employment-orientated courses and programs, as well as promoting various options relating to access to tertiary education for Aborigines and the peoples of the Torres Strait Islands at community level.

It is the development of community-based tertiary and pre-tertiary programs that is the principal objective of the new University College. The opportunity to establish programs on communities is also a primary strategy to facilitate the long-term development of Australian Indigenous peoples in the context of useful and relevant educational social and economic development. The high levels of success of community-based programs resides in the fact that all the Centre's programs are negotiated directly between the Professor/Director of the Centre and participating communities.

Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders have a legitimate moral and intellectual claim to a systemic tertiary education that meets their desires, needs and

aspirations and encourages the broader Australian society to admit the pride and value of their rich and diverse cultural heritage. It is in the best interests of Australian society in general, politically, socially and economically, to establish just, equitable and far-sighted education and training programs which will lead eventually to Indigenous empowerment through self-management and determination.

It is well documented that, in the main, Indigenous Australians, particularly in remote area communities, are not well served by non-Indigenous education and training programs. Essentially, the existing non-Indigenous university and college systems do not attend appropriately to, or reflect and recognise, the cultural needs and interests of Indigenous students. Overall it has been problematic, conceptually and operationally, for education and training embracing an unambiguous Indigenous perspective to be delivered directly in community and organisation contexts.

Lack of appropriate education and training opportunity has had widespread ramifications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in respect of access to gainful employment, economic independence and the right to determine other quality-of-life and opportunity factors. The Indigenous University College at James Cook University, founded as proposed on the existing Centre, will be well placed geographically and strategically to continue addressing these and other related educational and social issues.

According to any principles of Social Justice, Australian Aborigines and the peoples of the Torres Strait Islands have a legitimate moral and intellectual claim to a systemic tertiary education that meets their desires, needs and aspirations, and encourages the broader Australian society to admit the pride and value of their rich and diverse cultural heritage. It is in the best interests of Australian society in general, and politically, socially and economically, to establish just, equitable and far-sighted education and training programs which will lead eventually to Indigenous empowerment through self-management and self-determination.

Overall it has been problematic for education and training programs that are theoretically intended to reflect Indigenous perspectives and pedagogical techniques,

to deliver education and training programs directly to communities in organisational contexts appropriate to the specifics of those communities, because of the absence of Indigenous control and appropriate consultation mechanisms coupled with a completely wrong set of paradigms.

James Cook University, through the Centre, has successfully undertaken such a program at Yarrabah and is negotiating with Elders and the Torres Strait Regional Authority to establish a suite of courses in the context of multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary courses in relevant pedagogical practices, on Horn Island and, by mid-year (1996), a similar program in Alice Springs directly connected to Yippirinya School.

In summary, if the continuing **absence of appropriate education and training programs (except in exceptional circumstances) continues**, the widespread negative ramifications for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Australians, especially in terms of access to gainful employment, economic independence, and the right to determine other quality of life and opportunity factors will never be alleviated.

The Indigenous University College hosted by James Cook University and founded in the existing Centre, is culturally, spiritually, geographically and strategically well placed to continue addressing educational and social issues in the context of existing programs and strategies.

It is important to note that all discourse on all matters of importance and subsequently, success, are constructed around the views and driving forces of Elders and leaders both within the CMAC and in the participating communities.

2. Mission Statement of the University College.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander University College of Northern Australia will be dedicated to recognising and promoting Indigenous Australian Cultures and enhancing intellectual and cultural understanding between Indigenous and non-

Indigenous Australians.

3. Goals.

These goals are proposed through establishment of the Indigenous University College:

- ◆ To further increase the successful participation of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in a wide range of cultural, educational and training activities.
- ◆ To increase levels of participation of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in research and development projects conducted within James Cook University, other universities and colleges, and Indigenous communities and organisations.
- ◆ To consult and collaborate with community Elders to develop in association with the University a wide range of appropriate cultural programs.

4. Objectives.

The following objectives are driven by the above goals:

Objective 1.

- ◆ To vigorously promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student recruitment, enrolment, support and, where appropriate, preparation for entry to university and other post-secondary education and training through an Associate Diploma in Pre-Tertiary Studies.
- ◆ To provide specifically designed and named undergraduate and postgraduate academic programs at James Cook University in and through the Indigenous University College.
- ◆ To continue to provide the present range of named University programs offered outside the Indigenous University College.

Objective 2.

- ◆ To develop research skills and opportunities in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations and, where appropriate, through collaboration with subject and disciplinary specialists in other academic programs in James Cook University and beyond.
- ◆ To design and establish both internal and external research and development programs administered by the Indigenous University College.
- ◆ To continue to seek substantial recurrent and other forms of funding to support the University College's research and development programs.

Objective 3.

- ◆ To further expand consultations with community Elders to identify specific areas of need and interest in the recognition, preservation, continuation and extension of cultural knowledge, for example in language, story, healing, survival skills, law, performing and expressive arts, and in the collection of oral histories.
- ◆ To continue to relate closely to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in order to ensure that an appropriate spirituality and cultural relevance pervades all activities of the Indigenous University College.
- ◆ To undertake specific programs and projects identified in collaboration with particular communities and Indigenous organisations.
- ◆ To ensure that an increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness becomes embedded in programs both inside and outside the Indigenous University College.

Strategies.

In order to implement the spirit and intention of all of the goals and objectives outlined above, the central strategy will be to establish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander University College of Northern Australia. To this end, key components of the strategy will be to:

- ◆ Consolidate existing academic programs at Townsville, Cairns, Yarrabah, Lotus Glen and Stuart, and extend these offerings to form an integrated network of teaching, research and development operations across Cape York, the Gulf of Carpentaria, Alice Springs, the islands of the Torres Strait, and other regions of Northern Australia.
- ◆ Provide for capital works expansion of the current Centre facility on Townsville campus of James Cook University and construct new teaching and research facilities at Yarrabah, Horn Island and Alice Springs.
- ◆ Continue to develop and refine Tertiary Access Courses (TACs I and II) and consolidate these into an Associate Diploma of Pre-Tertiary Studies.
- ◆ Expand the range of education, training and specific purpose community-based courses, interacting with community Elders, regional Councils and Indigenous organisation representatives in the development, delivery, and evaluation of outcomes.
- ◆ Extend the current offering of Centre-managed courses to include open enrolment undergraduate degrees in Indigenous Psychology, Land, Resource and Environmental Management, Media and Communication Studies, Aboriginal Studies, Torres Strait Islander Studies, Visual and Performing Arts and Community Development.
- ◆ Extend current opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander postgraduate studies and research.
- ◆ Establish within the University College an Indigenous Research and Development Institute which will develop and implement culturally and ethically sound procedures for research and development, particularly in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

- ◆ Design and deliver in community settings various programs which will meet the aspirations of those communities in terms of melding needs and desires for non-Indigenous education and training with the cultural requirements of community life, traditions, values and expectations.

The following Mission Statement of James Cook University reflects the global goals of the University College and ensures optimum support in both the social and political development on the Indigenous College as enunciated in following excerpts:

James Cook University of North Queensland will achieve and maintain excellence in the discovery, integration, dissemination and application of knowledge and in the fostering of creativity. It will actively seek to inform and enrich the communities it serves.

In recognition of the cultural diversity of the regions it serves, the university aims to make a special contribution to the development of northern and Indigenous Australia, our near neighbours and the tropics. (unpublished document 1995)

The Executive of James Cook University, the Director and staff of the Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation, Research and Development, and all members of the current Centre Community Management Advisory Committee (CMAC), have strongly endorsed the proposal to begin an Indigenous University College in Northern Australia. There is also widespread support for an Indigenous University College comprising networked northern campuses among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations of the region. Interest in the concept stretches from Townsville and Cairns through to Cape York, the Torres Straits, Gulf of Carpentaria and Alice Springs.

5. The Proposal.

James Cook University of Northern Queensland seeks direct funding to establish a Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander University College of Northern Australia; funding to significantly extend the existing Centre management infrastructure and to

establish a clearly defined capital facility to house community-based operations in remote area, rural and urban networked settings.

The intention is to develop the proposal submitted earlier to DEET by James Cook University in 1994 (copy attached). We have prioritised particular sites to be developed for community-based education and training programs. The University College management infrastructure is included as a priority development.

The priority activities for 1995 to 1997 are to:

- (i) Extend the existing Yarrabah program by developing a general teaching and research facility, and student and staff accommodation \$1.75m 1995/6
- (ii) Negotiate and design a teaching and research building at the existing Horn Island facility at approximately \$1.5m 1996/7
- (iii) Immediately expand the current Centre facility at Townsville in 2 phases, 1995/6 and 1996/7, at an estimated cost of \$1.75m over two financial years.
- (iv) Negotiate, design and build a teaching and research facility in Alice Springs \$1.5m during 1996/7
- (v) Immediate expansion of staff to undertake the development of the University College at a cost of \$600,000 pa.

The University recognises the need to negotiate the development of the University College of Northern Australia over the next three to five years on targeted communities. Further, the University recognises the need to establish a secretariat to undertake the detailed work required to actually establishing such a University College and this is recognised (in point 5 above). James Cook University will facilitate 'point 5' over 1995/6.

The funding sought in the original proposal (attached) is estimated on the basis of points 1 to 5 above. Anticipated development would not see those figures shifting

dramatically, either way, until the end of the fourth triennium. At that point we recognise the need to evaluate the funding pattern, the development of the capital structures and the academic development of the University College. We have chosen to remain within that budget estimate because the student load will likely fluctuate for the first five years.

6. Proposed University College Community Network Structure.

The end of this matter is simple - **the university kept the money and starved the Indigenous programs almost to death.** The independent program is back in a safe white operating paradigm.

The End of the Journey — Reconciliation — from what to what and why?

The concept of reconciliation is as illusory as the proverbial ‘rabbit out of a hat’ trick. The inspiration that begat reconciliation occurred around the same time that voting was made compulsory for Aborigines in Australia, in the mid-eighties. In my view the lack of success of the entire ‘reconciliation process’ (RP) is perhaps cynically put. But to me the RP is not unlike creating snow with a machine to satisfy the instant gratification clause of our membership contract as ‘Australian citizens’.

Reconciliation is defined as follows:

Reconciliation: noun:

1. the act of reconciling.
2. the state of being reconciled.
3. the process of making consistent or compatible .
4. *Roman Catholic:* a sacramental rite involving a declaration of sins in order to obtain absolution, usually on condition of an act of penance.⁴⁷

Now while the first two definitions are a little abstract, in fact both 1 and 2 are perfect political strategies in that each is difficult to define tangibly, though not useless tangentially.

Indigenous people of this continent are in a quandary over the actuality of the whole concept and the attendant associated activities, while others keep requesting a more focused understanding. Upon the presentation of these types of questions the socio-political replies vary of course, but invariably the underlying meaning of the answer seems to be for Indigenous people to ‘kiss and make up’, to reconcile our fate to subjugation and all of the other matters addressed in this thesis AND more. To ‘allow’ white folks to say sorry and re-elect another Howard or Beazley Government.

⁴⁷ *The Macquarie Dictionary*, Macquarie Library, NSW, 1997.

It is clear to social scientists and the social and political laity that the entire sub-set of policies put in place beyond segregation have not only been piecemeal but have shifted the paradigms so cautiously and carefully that Edward De Bono could write another book and the entire subject could be titled *Paradigm Pioneers part Two — The Political Paradigm Pioneers*. And what a read that would make!

It is clear from the sociological and political/historical analysis within the information on offer in this treatise that the ‘real’ agenda is definition number 4 above inasmuch as the absolution without the penance is the objective. ‘Sorry’ for the callous directness of these observations; however, as an Aborigine I am forced to consider these matters in the full context of my Japanangka Paradigm. As a social observer I have adduced several points of departure from where one might adjudge motivation ‘intelligence’ of both the Australian Body Politic and its constituents.

One of the first ‘launching platforms’ I have identified is a complete and unequivocal conspiracy to retain monarchical rule and that this conspiracy is deliberate and deeply embedded in the politicians’ personal consciousness, as it is in the national psyche, was evidenced by the recent referendum. However upon reflection, I am almost ready to accept that the entire catastrophe is simply a set of stumbling and anxious bureaucrats and their political ‘masters’ cutting and pasting the next set of ‘good ideas’ to the proven, failed set of previous ‘good ideas’ to the power of five.

As with grieving, reconciliation must be firmly placed in the deeply personal space we occupy completely alone. That space where there is no ‘we’, there is only ‘me’ and the ‘we’ is not Aborigines, previously referred to as the only human product this continent, our Mother has ever directly produced. That space is for those who require absolution.

There seems to be some currency attached to the excuse theoretically contained in the utterance: ‘I wasn’t even born when all these things happened, why should I feel guilty or sorry?’ Quickly followed by: ‘I’ve never murdered or poisoned any blacks, in fact some of my friends are black.’ From my perspective those who think and say

these types of utterances need to 'GET REAL'. **Receiving and profiting from stolen goods carries a penalty in your legal system!**

At what point will the debate move beyond that to which these views confine all of us? At what point will the fourth point in the above definition become the opening statement of purpose in all reconciliation? I have decided to remove the 'con' from reconciliation and create a 'nearer to nature conceptual term' that may indeed demonstrate the inane stupidity of the pursuit of reconciliation, as do the extracts that follow from the 'Reconciliation Council's' first, unrequested report to the Federal Parliament

The word '**reciliate**' is partitioned as follows:

're' (1) a prefix indicating repetition, as in reprint, rebirth; when we add the word ciliate, which is defined as follows: noun 1. One of the Ciliata, a class of protozoa distinguished by retaining cilia (hair-like cells) on part or all of the body, among the most common of microscopic animals. Moving then to the new word re-ciliate it seems less problematic and difficult to conceptualise 're-ing' as a group of the most common animals albeit microscopic.⁴⁸

This is not entirely inconceivable given the 'place' humans seem to hold on this planet, our Mother. Is it not the Indigenous peoples of the USA and Canada who argue, quite rightly, that it is the majority of 'two-legs' that present all the danger to the balance of nature because they see her as a resource to be exploited for personal and corporate profit?

At the beginning of this thesis, the following reference to the thoughts of Edward De Bono was proffered as an instrument to facilitate a Western paradigm for the changes that are required to ensure the heuristic journey into a contemporary form of 'traditional Australian expression'. For, if nothing else, by the time the reader has arrived at this point of the journey their entire set of post-reading knowledge bases regarding Australian Aborigines should have lifted and shifted beyond marginality.

Given this enormous expectation of the text and even greater expectation of the reader I wish to close the Japanangka discourse at this point by a simple analysis of the concept of a less formless, but not necessarily progressed, concept of Reconciliation at the point of writing. Having demonstrated the level of abstruse writing one may go to in the above development of 'reconciliation' by removing the 'con' from the original word, I felt that in many ways the exercise above clearly demonstrates how far one may go in terms of De Bono's theory of language and conceptual development. This 'play' allows us to truly appreciate the integrity and 'cleverness' of the very first Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation because they did a 'De Bono' on the Federal Parliament by traversing the terrain required for one to actually shift a sociological, economic and political framework that has been deliberately staged by the reigning powers of the national body politic since before Federation. The De Bono reference is:

In order to see a new idea there is a need to create it first in the brain as a possibility, a speculation, an hypothesis or a construct.

In all creative thinking 'concepts' play a key role. There is a need to design concepts, there is a need to generate alternative concepts. ... There are those who believe that the analysis of data will produce new ideas. This is extremely unlikely, since the brain can only see what it is prepared to see. The existing brain patterns (and their catchment area) will ensure that the data are seen from the terms of existing ideas. In order to see a new idea there is a need to create it first in the brain as a possibility, a speculation, an hypothesis or a construct. This needs creativity, design and imagination. ...⁴⁹

Having established a basis for the progression from 'new idea' De Bono then connects the initial idea with a systematic pathway 'new idea' from speculation to a 'construct' requiring the advent of creativity and design. Concluding in this extract with the concept of 'imagination', he then continues under a separate though immutably related theme of:

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ De Bono, Edward. *New Thinking for the New Millennium* Penguin Books, Ltd, London 2000, p. 76

You may discover the truth but you need to design value

... we forget how powerful perception can be. ... people are upset because they are vague and intangible. How do you know you have the right concept? Then there are several levels of concepts: from very broad to the more specific to the specific... what level should you be at?

Once you have identified the concept you can modify it, improve it or change it. If you only have a vague idea of the concept you cannot do anything with the 'vague idea'. So it helps to verbalise or spell out the concept.⁵⁰

De Bono then connects the need to create a concept and the selling of its possibility or probability, in the absence of any concrete opposition, and moves quickly to, for me, the most salient points of designing value and articulating benefits.

In the context of the above quote from the opening of this thesis, consider the pathways embarked upon by the Reconciliation council in giving form to the political concept of Reconciliation and the drawing into the discourse of the necessary levels of developing produced out of reconciliation from hypothesis to concept to designing and defining value and benefits derived directly from the collective working towards agreed outcomes.

This eventful manipulation of a very obscure concept to a measurable activity was done in the face of centuries of well proven and obviously preferred activities that predicated a direct opposite result. Consider the following reference from Stephen Castles⁵¹ and the sub-text:

Systematic ideas of racial hierarchy appear to be connected to European colonialism: from the fifteenth century onwards, religiously inspired views on the barbarity and inferiority of the indigenous (sic) peoples of Africa, Asia and America were used to legitimate invasion, genocide, slavery and exploitation. (Cohen 1987; Potts 1990.) In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, attempts were made to justify racism on the basis of scientific theory. Races were seen as biologically distinct entities, made up

⁵⁰ Ibid. ⁵⁰2000, Chap. 8

of people with different phenotypical characteristics. They were thought to form an unchanging hierarchy, in which the capacities and achievements of the members of each race were fixed by natural determinants. Domination by the 'superior races' was inevitable and desirable, because it was thought to lead to human progress. (Husband 1982: Miles 1989.) Goldberg (1993, pp. 41-43) argues that racism is itself a discourse which 'emerges with modernity and comes to colonise modernity's continually reinvented common sense'.

I turn now to the several extracts from the First Reconciliation Council's Unsolicited report delivered to the Australian Parliament as an initiative, for the establishing legislation of the Reconciliation Council required NO REPORT and did not seem to have any such notion on the horizon. The voluminous report that certainly took Australia into the 'Depths of De Bonoism' contained the following telling references:

The process of reconciliation in the first three years has provided to the nation both the notion of 'reconciliation' and the Council's vision. These elements have allowed Australians to come together, no matter what their starting points, and begin to take stock of where as a people we have developed our relationships and our perceptions of each other, and what we can do now and in the future to mutually improve them. (p. ix)

... put simply, reconciliation is an agreement to agree rather than an agreement to disagree and walk away from the discussion.... 91;4 table... (p. ix)

... and after of a ...90;1 challenge to establish a process of reconciliation. This process would help to heal the wounds of our past and build the foundations upon which the rights of Indigenous Australians may be dealt with in a manner that gives respect and pride to all of us as Australians. (p. vii)

... we responded to the reality that the Federal parliament was serious about finding multi-party approaches to the ongoing questions of disadvantage and discord that

⁵¹ Castles, Stephen, *The racisms of globalisation*, in *The teeth are smiling*, Ed. Vasta, Ellie and Stephan Castles, Allen and Unwin PTY. LTD. P. 21

have their source in the denied rights and inadequacies of program delivery and policy initiatives to Indigenous Australians. The process of reconciliation is seen to give us a chance to find justice and equality that has so long evaded us as a nation. (p. vii)

... Reconciliation is about constructive co-operation and improvements in cross-cultural Indigenous relationships that may lead to a formal expression of that achievement through some document or documents of reconciliation. (p. vii)

... the challenge of reconciliation: to construct meaningful and worthwhile race relations in this country.... Reconciliation needs to translate into deeds as well as words, especially at the local and regional levels. Governments also needed to manifest their commitment especially in the practical responses to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.some of these projects are agreed symbolic statements and others involve co-operation to address common concerns. (p. viii)

...come to terms with the injustices of the past and a preparedness to lay the foundations of how we might live together in a just and equitable society by the Century of Federation in 2001.⁵²

Clearly the agenda of the Reconciliation Council had, within three years, focused and framed a multi-dimensional mosaic of action and amelioration. Why then should we not see any attainment of the profoundly important outcomes prophesied by the Council as being directly requisite for peace and harmony within Australia's multi-racial societies?

By way of closing Unc's Story, we will combine the spirit of that discourse with the words and deeds of the past two Federal Governments of Australia. For surely they are fully culpable regarding the lack of deep change in the circumstances of the sole heirs to the facet of the Mother Earth colloquially known as Australia — Australian Aboriginal peoples.

⁵² Reconciliation Council report *Walking Together: The First Steps - Report of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation to Federal Parliament 1991-94.*, 1991-94, AGPS 1994, Introduction.

To give a crisp grasp of the absence of such changes of circumstances we look to what the scholars of that society define as imperatives for change and maintenance of their society. Again I refer to Stephen Castles⁵³ under a sub-heading of Nationalism and democracy where he states:

... Recent debates have raised the issue of whether nationalism automatically leads to racism, i.e., that racism is a sort of supernationalism (see Anderson 1983; Goldberg 1993, p. 79, Nairn 1980). Against this may be put the idea of 'good and bad nationalism' (Balibar, 1999b, p. 47). 'Good nationalism' is the one that helps construct a nation-state or which provides the focus for a struggle for emancipation of an oppressed group (like African-Americans). 'Bad nationalism' is the one that subjugates other nations and oppresses minorities. But does a good nationalism turn bad once it has gained power? Is there an automatic link between the encouragement of national feeling as a way of building identity and community, and the development of hatred and contempt for members of other national groups?

... And this is not simply a conceptual issue. Nationalism required the construction of myths of common origins, traditions and culture - i.e., ethnicity - in order to achieve the integration of the 'imagined community' of the nation (Anderson 1983).

And of course there are the perennials of biological differences and genetic variations towards evolutionary development and a gamut of other 'isms' that all serve to keep the innate stupidity of hegemony at bay. For to survive, Unc and the others of the 'in group' of healers sages and seers must promulgate the essential differences and in terms of a fully operating Japanangka, irrespective of the actual personae of each Aborigine's own Japanangka. It is essential that almost all that is described herein is actuated with our own selves for us to survive.

Closing statement

⁵³ Ibid.uh p. 24, 25

The task for us, as the rightful and legal caretakers of this continent, is to remain whole and to actually transcend the 'pathological dwellings of oppression' and to complete the journey as self. In doing so we will become the unquestioned — the silent speakers and the tangible evidence that circumstance and culpability are not synonymous. That the love for the greater number is an essential quality for permanent residence with the Ancestors.

