GOVERNING CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

The Incorporation of the Aboriginal Subject into the
Mechanisms of Government with Reference to the
Development of Aboriginal Radio and Television in
Central Australia

Philip Batty
Dip.Fine Arts, Grad.Dip. Education

School of Communication, Information and New Media
University of South Australia

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART THREE : PRIVATE POLITICS, PUBLIC STRATEGIES

Chapter 6   A Stranger in my Own Land

Chapter 7   A Mutual Recruitment

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABA   Australian Bi-Centennial Authority

ABC   Australian Broadcasting Commission
(later the Australian Broadcasting Corporation)

ABS   Australian Bureau of Statistics

ABT   Australian Broadcasting Tribunal
(formerly the Australian Broadcasting Control Board)

ABTA   Aboriginal Benefits Trust Account

ADC   Aboriginal Development Corporation

AFC   Australian Film Commission

AFTS   Australian Film and Television School
(later the Australian Film, Television & Radio School)

AIATSIS   Australian Institue for Aboriginal and Islander Studies

ARCDAC   Australian Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

ATSIC   Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

AUSSAT   Australian domestic satellite service (proprietary name)

CAA   Council for Aboriginal Affairs

CAAC   Central Australian Aboriginal Congress

CAAMA   Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association

CAOA   Combined Aboriginal Organisations of Alice Springs

CLC   Central Land Council

DAA   Department of Aboriginal Affairs

DP&T   Department of Post and Telecommunications
(later Department of Communciations)

IAD   Institute for Aboriginal Development

GWN   Golden West Network, a regional television service in Western Australia

HR   House of Representatives

NLC   Northern Land Council

NT   Northern Territory

NTA   Northern Territory Administration

NTLA   Northern Territory Legislative Assembly

OAA   Office of Aboriginal Affairs

RAM   Remote Area Media, a video production company in Darwin

RCTS   Remote Commercial Television Service

8AL	ABC regional AM radio station in Alice Springs
8CCC	Community FM radio station in Alice Springs
8HA	Commercial AM radio station in Alice Springs
8KIN	CAAMA FM radio station in Alice Springs

SUMMARY

In 1970, the Federal Government made preliminary moves to establish a broadcasting service in the Northern Territory for indigenous Australians. However, Aboriginal people would not be invited to run this service themselves, nor would it be used to 'maintain' Aboriginal cultural traditions. Rather, these new facilities would deliver programs that 'informed' Aboriginals about 'plans for their future advancement'. By 1985, the position had changed dramatically. The government was now funding 'Aboriginal-controlled' media organisations throughout the country 'to restore and rebuild' Aboriginal 'cultural identity'. It was also underwriting the launch of an Aboriginal-owned commercial satellite service covering a third of the Australian continent. In this thesis, I have attempted to understand the policies that led to this remarkable change in government thinking.

In undertaking this work, I have not attempted to construct a 'resistant' Aboriginal 'voice', positioned against 'the media establishment' and the state to explain these transformations in Aboriginal policy. Although such a voice routinely appears in the literature on Aboriginal broadcasting, I argue that such an approach simply replicates the rhetoric surrounding the state's own policies of 'Aboriginal self-determination' and, more problematically, masks the complex operations of government itself. It also assumes the pre-discursive existence of a particular kind of Aboriginal agency, without considering the specific conditions that gave rise to it. In this study, I have sought to demonstrate how this agency was largely constituted through the policies of Aboriginal self-determination.

I argue that under these policies, the state would no longer act on Aboriginals as it had in the past. Rather, Aboriginals would be invited to act on themselves in managing programs proffered by the state. Through these means, the Aboriginal 'self' became an indispensable element in the operations of the government. However, since the Aboriginal self would be expected to carry out the work of the state, it also became the object of intense governmental scrutiny. Here, I show how a multiplicity of governmental technologies emerged throughout the 1970's that served to regulate, channel and enhance Aboriginal subjectivity in accordance with a number of governmental ends. In undertaking this task, I have focused primarily on the development of the 'incorporated Aboriginal association'. I will argue that such bodies not only allowed Aboriginal people a degree of 'self-management', but also provided the state with an institutional framework through which it could constitute both a competent and verifiable Aboriginal agency. The Central Australian Aboriginal Media

Association, CAAMA, was one of numerous bodies established under these governmental technologies. The development of this complex organisation will serve as the main case study in this thesis.

In taking this analytical approach, I have adopted one of Michel Foucault's primary objectives which is to examine the ways in which the human subject is constituted through relations of power, and attempted to respond to the following set of queries Foucault poses:

How was the subject established, at different moments and in different institutional contexts, as a possible, desirable, or even indispensable object of knowledge? How were the experiences that one may have of oneself and the knowledge that one forms of oneself organised according to certain schemes? How were these schemes defined, valorised, recommended, imposed? (Foucault, Subjectivity and Truth, 2000:87)

I declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Philip Batty

September 2003

INTRODUCTION

> To understand the situation of indigenous people in Australia one must understand the role of the state.
>
> Jeremy Beckett: *Colonialism in a Welfare State*

> Each reforming achievement, which transforms policy in the name of equality, establishes a new regime of governance.
>
> Anna Yeatman: *Voice and Representation in the Politics of Difference*

In January 1980, a meeting was organised in Alice Springs to discuss the establishment of an Aboriginal broadcasting service in Central Australia. The need for such a service seemed indisputable, given the fact that half the population in the region was then Aboriginal (see ABS 1982). Nonetheless, no one from the local community attended the gathering. Indeed, only the organisers came: an Aboriginal person by the name of John Macumba and myself, a non-Aboriginal.

Despite this setback, another meeting was arranged for the following month. On this occasion, twenty-two Aboriginal people and several non-Aboriginal supporters attended [1]. An interim organisation was subsequently formed to implement the proposed service. By March that year, a name was found for this fledgling body: the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, CAAMA. John Macumba was elected President and Director, and I was employed as the organisation's Deputy Director.

Over the following ten years (1980-1990), CAAMA established the first Aboriginal-owned radio station in Australia, an Aboriginal music recording company, the first Aboriginal film and video production house and an Aboriginal arts and crafts retail business. By 1987, it was also the owner of a commercial satellite television service, Imparja Television Pty Ltd, which began transmitting television and radio programming over an area the size of Western Europe, encompassing numerous townships throughout the Northern Territory and South Australia and more than 200 remote Aboriginal communities (ABT 1986).

CAAMA became a model from which other Aboriginal groups developed similar organisations. This included the Torres Strait Islander Media Association (TSIMA), the Western Australian Aboriginal Media Association (WAAMA), the Brisbane Indigenous

Media Association (BIMA), the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Media Association (TAIMA) and more than 120 other media bodies (see ATSIC 2000).

Throughout CAAMA's first decade of development, I held the position of Deputy Director, working alongside various Aboriginal board members and staff, as well as a number of non-Aboriginal employees. Although I eventually left the organisation in 1991, the circumstances surrounding the formation of this complex body have remained a source of much rumination over subsequent years. This thesis originates in these thoughts.

<div align="center">⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯➣•◂⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯</div>
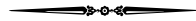
Although CAAMA sought to 'establish an Aboriginal voice in the media, free of government control' (CAAMA 1980:1), it was taken for granted that it would require direct government support to achieve this goal. Indeed, the state would have probably been less likely to assist CAAMA in the absence of these expressions of 'independence' and 'resistance'. Under the policies of 'Aboriginal self-determination' (introduced seven years prior to the formation of CAAMA), such declarations were a prerequisite for state support.

Certainly, the more CAAMA represented itself as an independent body, beyond the bounds of government, the more it fulfilled the government's desire to 'strengthen the capacity of Aboriginals to manage their own affairs' (DAA 1975: 3). The state responded to these representational strategies by providing CAAMA with substantial assistance to establish itself and indeed, has continued to support the organisation for more than twenty years. This leads to a number of questions:

Was CAAMA established through a process of 'struggle and opposition', as Helen Molnar has argued (Molnar 1995) or was this 'process' simply the fulfilment of state policy? (as was the case for numerous other bodies established under the policies of 'Aboriginal self-determination'). Did this 'struggle' to create an Aboriginal 'voice in the media' have more to do with governmental expectations - and the desires of its largely non-Aboriginal constituency - than with those of Aboriginal people themselves, or with both? Was the 'free expression of Aboriginal views and opinions' through 'Aboriginal-controlled broadcasting services' (DAA 1983:11) informed by 'a new regime of governance' that invited these forms of expression?

In my view, these questions cannot be answered in either the absolute affirmative or negative. As we shall see, the people who worked to establish CAAMA (including both

Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals) did not consider themselves to be the agents of government, nor its advocates - in fact just the opposite. They worked with what might be described as 'a missionary zeal' to create an Aboriginal presence in the media and generally imagined themselves - and CAAMA - to be in an antagonistic relationship with governmental authority. Nevertheless, their energies were almost entirely devoted to acquiring government support. Indeed, prior to the emergence of CAAMA, there were no specific government policies on Aboriginal broadcasting that could facilitate its development. The licensing procedures, technical specifications and discrete funding programs required to create such services were yet to be formulated within the broader framework of Aboriginal self-determination. In this peculiar sense, it could be said that CAAMA was simply reminding the state of its obligations under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination and asking that it activate its administrative engines to give physical form and structure to 'an Aboriginal voice in the media'.

To understand this tension between independence and dependence in Aboriginal broadcasting and in the policies of Aboriginal self-determination, we need to examine the broader relationship between Australia's indigenous minority and the Australian state. The following study will focus on this problematic by using the development of CAAMA as a primary field of investigation. In particular, I hope to elucidate the constitution of certain subjectivities - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - within the processes of 'self-determination' and to establish a link between the production of cultural difference and these governmental operations.

GOVERNING THE ABORIGINAL SUBJECT

In devising an analytical framework, I have drawn on several disciplines, including political science, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies and communications. Most importantly, I have used Michel Foucault's notion of 'governmentality' (Foucault 2001) and its later elaboration by others (see Burchell, Gordon & Miller 1991, Rose 1989, Hindess 1996, Dean 1999, Cruikshank 1996, O'Malley 1996, Hunter 1988). This literature offers a useful way of understanding questions relating to the governance of the Aboriginal population and the constitution of the Aboriginal subject.

First, Foucault's notion of governmentality conceives of the modern state not as an 'all-powerful' entity ruling absolutely over the lives of its citizens. Rather, relations between

liberal democratic governments and those it seeks to govern are dispersed and de-centreed, residing not within a single, omnipotent power but in what Mitchell Dean describes as 'a multiplicity of authorities and agencies' (Dean 1996:210). Further, these forms of rule seek to produce subjects and organisations imbued with the capacity to function independently of the state. As Dean also suggests, these organisations may seek to 'empower' their constituencies so that they can 'participate in governmental programs and even resist certain state authorities' (ibid: 211). Hence, a whole range of techniques have emerged within liberal-democratic forms of rule which seek to generate 'free subjects' who act and work as 'autonomous' agents. At one end of the spectrum, this might include governmental schemes that aim to 'reduce government interference in the market place'. At the other end, it might involve the promotion of 'community-controlled' welfare societies, housing cooperatives, health clinics or, in this case, 'independent' Aboriginal organisations. Liberal forms of rule therefore tend to accommodate both the political ideologies of the right and the left. In providing an understanding of these conceptions of governance, Nikolas Rose proposes that

> ... liberal rule ... seeks to degovernmentalize the State and de-statize practices of government, to detach ... the apparatuses of political rule, relocating experts within a market governed by the rationalities of competition [and] accountability. It does not seek to govern through "society" but through the regulated choices of individual citizens, now construed as subjects of choices and aspirations to self-actualisation and self-fulfilment. Individuals are to be governed through their freedom, but neither as isolated atoms ... nor as citizens of society, but as members of heterogeneous communities of allegiances ... (Rose 1996:41)

The second feature of the 'governmentality' approach that I wish to highlight here concerns the 'linkages' it establishes between the 'government of the self', or 'technologies of the self', and state forms of governance.

As Foucault proposed:

> ... if one wants to analyse the genealogy of the subject ... one has to take into account not only techniques of domination but also techniques of the self. Let's say one has to take into account the interaction of these types of techniques. (in Burchell 1996: 20)

By 'technologies of the self', Foucault refers to the ways in which we act on ourselves to correct our behaviour, to discharge 'our duties', to perform in a given role: as parent, professional, patient, sexual partner or member of a distinctive 'ethnic' group - in other words, he is referring to how we might 'govern ourselves' in accordance with the demands of the social reality to which we are subject. By 'techniques of domination', he refers to particular methods through which various forms of power insert themselves into the ways in which we govern ourselves. For instance, there are various techniques used by employers to

force or encourage employees to act on themselves to fulfill the particular corporate ends. Foucault therefore established an important connection between the formation of human subjectivity and power. Here, of course, I am concerned with governmental power and the extent to which it infuses the formation of subjectivities. In many respects, this notion lies at the conceptual heart of my thesis.

As indicated above, this linkage or interaction between the way in which one might go about 'governing oneself' and the way in which the state might seek to govern that self, or one's 'subjectivity', has been further developed in the governmentality literature. Rose argues that

> The self is a vital element in the networks of power that traverse modern societies. The regulatory apparatus of the modern state is not something imposed from outside upon individuals who have remained essentially untouched by it. Incorporating, shaping, channelling and enhancing subjectivity have been intrinsic to the operations of government. But while governing ... has come to require subjectivity, this has not been achieved through the growth of an omnipotent and omniscient central state ... Rather, government of subjectivity has taken shape through the proliferation of a complex and heterogeneous assemblage of technologies. These have acted as relays, bringing the varied ambitions of political, scientific, philanthropic and professional authorities into alignment with the ideals and aspirations of individuals, with the selves each of us want to be. (Rose 1989:213)

In this thesis, I will argue that like other groups and individuals, the 'Aboriginal self' has become a 'vital element' in the mechanisms of government. I will also focus on the 'heterogeneous assemblage of technologies' that facilitated this process. Again, Rose provides a concise definition of the term 'technology', as used in this context:

> The notion of technology may seem antithetical to the domain of human beings ... However, our very experience of ourselves as certain sorts of persons - creatures of freedom, of liberty, of personal powers, of self-realisation - is the outcome of a range of human technologies that take modes of being human as their object ... Human technologies are hybrid assemblages of knowledges, instruments, persons, systems of judgment, buildings and spaces, underpinned at the programmatic level by certain presuppositions about, and objectives for, human beings. (Rose 1996a: 132)

As indicated above, one of the primary aims here is to understand how the various governmental technologies associated with the policies of Aboriginal self-determination worked through 'certain presuppositions' about Aboriginal people. I will now turn to the set of arguments based on these broad Foucauldian frameworks.

THE ARGUMENT: GOVERNING CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

When the Whitlam Labor government launched the policies of Aboriginal self-determination in 1972, it seemed to assume that all Aboriginal people harboured an overwhelming desire to 'liberate' themselves from the past oppressions of the old 'assimilationist' era[2]. In fact, the first Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Whitlam government, Gordon Bryant, fervently believed that once Aboriginals had been provided with the means to 'control their own affairs', the state would, in his own words, 'withdraw' from any further engagement in Aboriginal life (Cavanagh,1975). Of course, this did not eventuate. As Altman and Sanders have shown, over the following decades a vast array of new governmental structures were introduced that only served to increase Aboriginal dependency on the state (see Altman & Sanders, 1991). It seems the Whitlam government had been too hasty in assuming the existence of an Aboriginal constituency willing and able to grasp the reins of its new policies. Indeed, it became apparent that it would have to find ways of nurturing this constituency in order to make its policies of 'Aboriginal self-determination' work.

Under Labor's new policy approach, the state would not act directly on Aboriginal people as it had in the past; the use of coercive policies and practices to deal with 'the Aboriginal problem' had, of course, long been discredited. Rather, under the policy regime of 'self-determination', Aboriginals would now be required to *act on themselves* - both in an individual and a collective sense - in order to manage programs and projects proffered by the state. As a result of these new demands on the Aboriginal subject, I will argue that the Aboriginal 'self' became an essential element of these new governmental policies. Moreover, since the Aboriginal self was now expected to carry out the work of the state, I will also argue that it became the object of intense governmental scrutiny. Here, a multiplicity of administrative technologies began to emerge that would provide the government with a means to regulate Aboriginal subjectivity, albeit at an appropriate distance from the state.

These governmental technologies encompassed a complex assemblage of legal, institutional, financial, legislative and administrative instrumentalities (see below). As with all such technologies, their domain and reach tended to be expansive and subject to constant adjustment, depending on the context of their deployment and their purpose. In this study, I will investigate three interrelated domains in which many of these technologies arose.

First, I will examine the 'incorporated Aboriginal association' or, less formally, the 'Aboriginal community-controlled organisation' [3]. As we shall see, these institutions evolved throughout the 1970's under the tutelage of successive federal governments until they became prime sites of 'Aboriginal self-determination' (see DAA 1977, Rowley 1986). For the most part, they were directly funded by the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and incorporated under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976* or similar legislation (see Tonkinson 1985). I will argue that they not only allowed Aboriginal people a degree of 'self-management', but also provided the state with an institutional framework through which it could constitute a *competent* and *verifiable* Aboriginal agency. CAAMA was but one of numerous bodies established under these governmental mechanisms.

Second, within these institutions, a complex range of internalised techniques of governance began to emerge, largely through a process of 'trial and error', to use H.C. 'Nugget' Coombs' phrase (Coombs 1978:173). These bodies encompassed a host of operational procedures, including locally-specific forms of management, tactics for dealing with government, representational strategies, certain rules of engagement with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal publics, etc. Within this mix of technologies, I will argue that a particularly important and somewhat idiosyncratic kind of administrative component arose: managerial 'partnerships' between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. As a number of authors have observed, these close working relationships became a common feature of the 'Aboriginal community-controlled organisation' (see Von Sturmer 1984, Gerritsen 1982, Sullivan 1996, Cowlishaw 1999). I will further propose that these black-white relationships worked as significant sites of cultural and administrative mediation, both delineating and channelling the aspirations of Aboriginal people and government. As such, they provide a particularly rich arena in which to investigate the production and regulation of cultural difference at both a governmental and an interpersonal level.

Third, under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination, aspects of 'Aboriginal cultural tradition' were selectively used to accomplish particular governmental ends. Indeed, through these techniques, a whole range of 'culturally appropriate' procedures were identified and incorporated into the management of numerous governmental programs relating to Aboriginal health, housing, education and other areas (see Nathan 1980, Heppell 1979, Harris 1990). Since these 'cultural traditions' were deployed to accomplish particular governmental objectives, I will argue that they were shaped and given particular meanings in relation to their constitution and usage within the mechanisms of government. This

7

process of cultural incorporation was of vital importance in the emergence of Aboriginal broadcasting.

Taken together, these arguments revolve around the following general proposition: that under the policies of 'self-determination', there was a move away from the old governmental attempt to eliminate Aboriginal cultural difference (through the policies of 'assimilation') to one in which the state sought to incorporate, articulate and enhance this difference as a way of governing the Aboriginal population more effectively. Here, the 'government' of cultural difference constituted the primary objective of these policies.

QUALIFICATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

I will briefly define some of the understandings and terms I have used and show how they relate to the above arguments. First, to clarify what I mean by the terms 'subjectivity' and the 'self' [4]:

As is commonly understood in contemporary cultural theory, I view the 'self' as a *social product* and not as an 'essential' entity that exists beyond the realm of ordinary social discourse (see Easthope & McGowan 1992, Jenkins 1996). In this sense, the self is not to be understood as something that emanates from a non-human, transcendental source (e.g. god), rather, it is constituted through mundane interactions with other selves, ideas or objects. As Mansfield suggests:

> … our interior lives inevitably involve other people, either as objects of need, desire and interests or as necessary sharers of common experience. In this way, the subject is always linked to something outside of it - an idea or principle or the society of other subjects … (Mansfield 2000:3).

I therefore view the 'Aboriginal self' as a social product, just like all other human selves. While this may seem an obvious point to make, the popular mythologies surrounding the nature of the Aboriginal 'self' (see Muecke 1992) and, indeed, the constructions of undifferentiated indigenous 'selves' that appear in certain scholarly literature (see Wolfe 1999) seem to require a reiteration of this basic point.

Second, I view 'cultural difference' and its production in a similar vein. Following the British cultural studies group and its associated thinkers such as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall (Williams 1981, Hall 1996), I argue against the proposition that 'cultural difference' is constituted through 'essential' attributes or that 'culture' can be thought of as 'a finite and

self-sufficient body of contents, customs and traditions' (Donald & Rattansi 1992:1). Apparent differences between cultures should be seen as emergent, arising through shifting historical contingencies, power relations and specific contextual arrangements, and not as 'fixed' quantities. Moreover, I will emphasise the relational and incomplete nature of cultural identity and its dependence on a 'different other'. As Hall puts it

> … [cultural] identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself (Hall 1996:21).

These assumptions about the self and cultural difference have important consequences for the propositions presented above. In arguing that the state 'incorporated' the 'Aboriginal self' into the technologies of government, I am not suggesting that there was an 'essential' Aboriginal self that the state was able to 'borrow' and then utilise for its own purposes under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. Such a notion would of course run counter to the ideas presented above (that the self is a product of emergent social process rather than a fixed entity capable of being 'borrowed' by the state). Rather, I am proposing that the Aboriginal self was directly shaped, channelled and enhanced by these policies and indeed, became its centrepiece. To put it bluntly, the policies of Aboriginal self-determination not only had the effect of re-inventing or even creating new kinds of Aboriginal subjectivity, but they also made available new ways of 'being' Aboriginal.

As Patrick O'Malley has argued, under these policies, Aboriginal subjectivity and government 'mingle and hybridise' to form new cultural formations (see O'Malley 1996). In other words, governmental power should be seen as *productive* of Aboriginal subjectivity and not something that necessarily stands outside or against the Aboriginal subject.

As Foucault states

> Power … doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but … traverses and produces things … forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body (Foucault 1980:119).

Further, I am not proposing that the constitution of Aboriginal subjectivity is entirely dependent on the mechanisms of government; there are of course innumerable factors that contribute to the formation of the self. Moreover, while there are all kinds of demands placed on the human subject to behave in certain ways, to assume particular identities and

to adopt various 'cultural attributes', there is no natural law that makes it compulsory to act on these demands. While the work of government may make available a range of subject positions, or roles, for Aboriginal people, there is no guarantee that such positions will be occupied by their intended subjects. In this sense, an Aboriginal person may or may not respond to the solicitations of the state and, in the case of self-determination policy, may decline the invitation to 'manage' his or her 'own affairs'.

Finally, I do not wish to imply that it is only Aboriginal people whose subjectivity is shaped and incorporated through the technologies of government. As argued above, this is a central attribute of liberal-democratic forms of rule and is the case with any individual or group subject to liberal forms of governance.

Further, my intention here is not to point to the inability of the policy of Aboriginal self-determination to meet its apparent objectives, nor do I wish to mount a case about how these policies should work, or how they might work. Rather, I want to understand how they work in practice. In pursuing this task, I will employ an analytical approach that avoids taking a particular position with regard to the efficacy or otherwise of the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. Here, the aim is to understand how such policies work as a technology of governance and, moreover, how this produces certain 'culturally different' subjectivities.

FURTHER ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

Intersubjectivity

While Foucault's governmentality approach certainly constitutes the analytical backbone of this thesis, it nevertheless has certain limitations which I will now discuss since they have a direct bearing on the way in which I will proceed with my research. Generally speaking, writers in the governmentality field tend to focus more on governmental programmers and less on the individuals subject to such programming. More importantly, while the governmentality approach allows for an 'interaction' between the 'technologies of the self' and the 'technologies of government', little is said about the extent to which the actions that an individual might take in governing him or herself may impinge on, or influence, the broader project of rule.

Indeed, O'Malley, Weir and Shearing (O'Malley *et al* 1997) have expressed the view that much of the governmentality literature restricts itself to describing the 'mentalities of rule',

without an adequate examination of the specific characteristics of those subject to government. They point out that closer attention to the 'mentalities of the ruled' can be found in Foucault's earlier work (see Foucault:1975). Furthermore, O'Malley *et al* have also argued for an approach that encompasses 'social variation and social heterogeneity', and recognises the 'multiplicity of voices' both subject to government and within government itself.

Much of my analysis is located in specific sites of 'social heterogeneity' where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal actors constantly moved in and around 'culturally different' social formations. Moreover, I have devoted three chapters (Three, Six and Seven) to examining the interaction of individuals caught up in these complex social environments. As indicated above, I wish to focus on these 'partnerships' since, in my view, they played a significant role in operationalising the policies and practices of self-determination policy.

Other analytical fields will therefore need to be incorporated into the governmentality approach to understand with greater clarity the dynamics associated with such 'partnerships' and the way in which they are affected by, and affect, state forms of governance. Here I draw on the work of the symbolic interactionists, specifically Erving Goffman. He provides a way of examining the interactions of specific social actors that the governmentality literature tends to obscure.

Along with Foucault, Goffman subscribes to the view that the 'self' is a social product. However, what is of interest here is his emphasis on the connection between human 'relationships' and the production of this self. He proposes that

> … each self occurs within the confines of an institutional system, whether a social establishment … or a complex of *personal and professional relationships.* The self, then, can be seen as something that arises in the arrangements prevailing in a social system of its members. The self in this sense is not a property of the person to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person by himself and those around him. This special kind of institutional arrangement does not so much support the self as constitute it (Goffman 1961:168, emphasis added).

Goffman further proposes that the self is produced through 'performances' which are 'staged' by individuals in a given social situation. Moreover, while individuals might play a role in shaping these self-indicating performances, they are generally constrained to present images of themselves that can be socially supported, or withheld, in accordance with a given social order:

> A correctly staged and performed character leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation - this self - is a product of a scene that comes off, and is not the cause of it. The self then … is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited. (Goffman 1959: 252-3)

In expanding on this theatrical metaphor, Goffman proposed that, for the most part, these social 'performances' concern the cooperation of 'teams' (or partnerships) which work together to produce certain 'impressions' of a given social situation. Such performances depend on the delineation of social space into 'front regions', where the team presents the performance, and 'back regions' where the performance is orchestrated in accordance with various objectives that the team may wish to accomplish. However, there is no rigid logic that operates between these two social spheres; indeed, within the 'back regions', Goffman suggests that 'the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course' (ibid:112). Importantly, Goffman also points out that the extent to which a performance might be 'true' or 'false' depends less on the actual nature of the performance itself than on whether or not the performer is *authorised* by the 'team' (ibid:59).

I will argue that the correct staging of various 'performances' by these black-white partnerships, or teams, was of fundamental importance in achieving their various objectives. For example, in establishing Aboriginal organisations, complex political campaigns had to be mounted which involved the recruitment of Aboriginal community support, the presentation of submissions to government, the formation of alliances or the neutralisation of opponents, meetings with government Ministers, the implementation of legal proceedings, the cultivation of sympathetic relations with the press, and a host of other strategies. All this necessitated the careful construction and presentation of various 'performances' before differing audiences. I will argue that in staging these presentations, the construction of differing representations of the 'Aboriginal community', of 'Aboriginal culture' and of 'Aboriginal self-determination', etc. occurred as a matter of course. Moreover, the form and content of these constructions was largely delineated in accordance with the strategic requirements of a given situation, depending on the objectives that the 'team' wished to achieve.

In other words, to achieve certain ends, the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners involved in such campaigns had to trade and deal in strategic constructions of collective forms of Aboriginal social, cultural and political identity. In some cases, these constructions may have

been represented in the person of the Aboriginal partner, particularly when dealing with the press, or in other 'front regions' such as community meetings. In other instances, the non-Aboriginal partner might be responsible for the representation of such constructions in written submissions to government, in legal proceedings, in correspondence, etc. As Goffman suggests, these representations were generally formulated within the 'back regions' of such partnerships and constructed in accordance with particular strategic objectives. However, this is not to imply that this process always ran smoothly or that a consensus was always reached between the partners or teams involved in the development and presentation of these strategies. Indeed, open disputes about the articulation of such performances could often derail the broader objectives of the team.

While I have attempted to distinguish two particular lines of theoretical analysis here (one from a Foucauldian point of view and the other using Goffman), they are nevertheless interrelated. Essentially, I wish to understand, on the one hand, how these partnerships operated as technologies of government, and on the other, how cultural difference was produced as a result.

Aboriginals and the State

Beyond the analytical frameworks outlined above, this study is also informed by an extensive body of work - largely in anthropology - that deals with the policies and practices of Aboriginal self-determination, and the extent to which these governmental technologies have transformed the Aboriginal subject (see Tonkinson & Howard 1990, Howard 1978, Von Sturmer 1984, Beckett 1985, Altman 1989, Weaver 1984, Merlan 1998, Rowse 1992, Sullivan 1996, Povinelli 2002, Myers 1986).

One of the more enduring critiques to emerge from this literature has been that of Jeremy Beckett. Although the term 'welfare colonialism' was originally coined by Robert Paine to describe the position of indigenous Canadians (Paine 1977), Beckett has redeployed this concept in the Australian context to illustrate his understanding of the contemporary situation of Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginals (Beckett 1988). He states that:

> Juxtaposing terms which connote citizenship (welfare) and its denial (colonialism), [Paine] suggests a policy that is contradictory and unstable. Historically continuous with classic colonialism, it is 'solicitous rather than exploitative, and liberal rather than oppressive' ... yet it is still 'the colonisers that make the decisions that control the future of the colonised' and

the 'decisions are made (ambiguously) on behalf of the colonised, and yet in the name of the colonisers' culture (and of their political, administrative and economic priorities) ...' (Beckett 1988:14).

Yet another contradictory feature of welfare colonialism is its need to secure the assent of its subjects as evidence of their political enfranchisement. This is required in terms of democratic values, once indigenous peoples are included within the nation ... Ironically, the subjects are often so politically weak and fragmented that the state is itself obliged to create the channels of political expression and articulate indigenous aspirations (ibid:14).

In chapters One and Two, I have attempted to trace, in detail, how the Australian state went about securing what Beckett describes as 'the assent of its [Aboriginal] subjects as evidence of their political enfranchisement'.

The 'solicitous' nature of the policies of Aboriginal self-determination have also been addressed by Francesca Merlan. In her book *Caging the Rainbow*, she argues that such policies 'seek to elicit from Aboriginal people what are taken to exist as their own modes of organisation and to recast the management of Aboriginal Affairs in what are seen to be indigenous terms' (Merlan 1998:150). For Merlan, these 'terms' are largely orientated around what she describes as an 'imagined identity', located in the past (ibid:234). Merlan further suggests that 'existing representations of Aboriginality are engaged to produce images partaking of continuity with the past but yielding definitively new intercultural products and representations' (ibid: 180).

Like Merlan, I also try to examine the complexities associated with the 'intercultural' position of indigenous Australians, rather than simply reifying cultural constructs. Indeed, in chapters Six to Nine, I have made a point of locating my study not in an 'imagined past', but in the unstable regions of Aboriginal organisational development where 'new intercultural products and representations' constantly appeared and disappeared as a matter of course.

As indicated above, one of the primary aims of this thesis is to investigate the relationships, or 'partnerships', that emerged between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people involved in the development of projects under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. There are a number of studies highlighting such partnerships within the anthropological literature (see Von Sturmer 1984, Gerritsen 1982, Cowlishaw 1999, Hinkson 2002, Sullivan 1996, Graham 1994).

In his book *All free man now : culture, community and politics in the Kimberley region, north-western Australia*, Patrick Sullivan investigates the operation of various Aboriginal organisations in the eastern Kimberley region of Western Australia (Sullivan 1996). He describes as 'ambiguous' the intersections between 'European political and economic processes' and the 'Aboriginal domain'. Sullivan does not however depict Aboriginal organisations as undifferentiated cultural bulwarks positioned against European domination. Rather, he presents them as complex institutional crossroads which are forced to accommodate both European and Aboriginal cultural practices in ways that are not always successful. Moreover, he goes beyond the public rhetoric surrounding these bodies and examines the internal interactions that occur between various actors - both black and white - involved in their operation. In describing the differing internal perceptions of a Kimberley Land Council (KLC) meeting, Sullivan observed that:

> While the Europeans involved saw … the KLC as a primary instrument of Aboriginal political action with the meeting as its necessary support, the [Aboriginal] membership reverse this order of priority. The meeting itself is a significant Aboriginal cultural activity. The reason workers [ie. Europeans]… persevere with the meeting strategy is not that it is effective in supporting the daily tasks of the KLC, but that it has the more general result of offering the ideological support to their activity. At the meetings, the workers … recharge their sense of commitment to an uncompromising non-European mode of behaviour. In between large-scale meetings they occupy the promontory of Aboriginal political expression, the point at which it intrudes into European political and economic process and which is seen from the European vantage to be the whole ground. In this way, they work between two unequal and incompatible domains. (Sullivan 1996: 113)

Although Sullivan has certainly applied a critical and incisive eye to the complexities of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interaction, I would argue that he tends to accept without question the notion that Aboriginals and whitefellas live in 'incommensurate' cultural 'domains'. Most contemporary cultural theorists would consider such a view anachronistic, if not entirely flawed. Indeed, as Hall and others have shown, the production of cultural difference is a mutually constitutive process in which 'cultural opposites' tend to produce one another, albeit through the complex play of unequal power relations. In other words, a 'cultural domain' should be seen as a 'structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative' (Hall 1996:21).

Indeed, Sullivan and other authors such as Cowlishaw tend to be overly reliant on this convenient conceptual device of 'cultural domains' in explaining black-white interaction. By utilising this notion to facilitate their arguments, they not only perpetuate unhelpful

analytical models, but lead us, I think, into dangerous waters. For example, in her book *Rednecks, eggheads and blackfellas : a study of racial power and intimacy in Australia*, Cowlishaw proposes that traditional notions of 'race' and 'racial difference' (both biological and cultural) should be retained in analysing black-white interaction (Cowlishaw 1999). Moreover, she argues that such differences are largely immutable: 'I would assert that, like skin colour, cultural characteristics and the meanings they carry are not ... malleable, but are deeply internalised and embodied in the psychic as well as the physical being' (ibid:13).

In this study, I make no assumptions about fixed cultural differences, rather I try to show how 'difference' is relational - and, more specifically, how it can be an 'effect' of governmental technologies.

Aboriginal Broadcasting and Communications

The appearance of scholarly literature on Aboriginal broadcasting seems to have coincided with the emergence of CAAMA. Indeed, the first academic article to be published on the issue occurred in 1980, the year of CAAMA's incorporation (see Noble & Munro 1980). The dearth of literature in the area changed markedly in 1982 when the Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies awarded a three-year fellowship to Eric Michaels to investigate the impact of new telecommunications services on remote Aboriginal communities (see Leigh 1994, O'Regan 1990). The material published by Michaels during and after his fellowship had the effect of generating a substantial body of literature on the subject (see Michaels 1986, 1987, 1994, Meadows 1992, Ginsburg 1991, Molnar & Meadows 2001, Dowmunt 1993, Hinkson 2002, Peters 1994, Langton 1993).

For the most part, there is little discussion in this literature on the role played by the state in the formation of 'an Aboriginal voice in the media', nor on the constitution of the Aboriginal subject within the policies and practices of government. Needless to say, since the primary focus of this thesis is on the constitution of the Aboriginal subject, much of this literature is only indirectly relevant. However, it is not just the lack of relevance that restricts the usefulness of this work. I will argue that in failing to address the problematic relationship between the development of Aboriginal broadcasting and government, many of these writers not only demonstrate a certain naïveté about the state's project of 'Aboriginal self-determination', but take an intellectually barren approach in its analysis. Indeed, the governmental apparatus that provided most of the 'necessary conditions' for the emergence

of Aboriginal broadcasting is left largely unexamined. Here, the government is simply seen as part of the 'natural' social and political order in which these developments occurred. Furthermore, the propensity to render invisible the role of government in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting is, I will argue, directly connected to the narrowly-defined ideologies that underpin such work.

For instance, many of these writers promote what I will term a 'resistance model' in explaining the emergence of these services. Tony Dowmunt, for example, proposed that Aboriginal groups in Australia found themselves 'in institutional and technological situations not of their own making' and began 'to resist this domination' (Dowmunt 1993:14). Helen Molnar - one of the most dedicated proponents of the resistance model - expressed similar views in an article entitled *Indigenous Media Development in Australia: A Product of Struggle and Opposition*. Molnar argued that opposition to the media establishment was one of the key determinants in the emergence of Aboriginal broadcasting (Molnar 1995). Michael Meadows has also promulgated the idea that Aboriginal broadcasting arose as result of a singular 'struggle' against the 'hegemonic' impositions of non-Aboriginal media (see Meadows 1994).

These writers unhelpfully reduce a complex process to a contest between the dominated and the dominant. For an example of the inadequacy of this model, I will show that certain Aboriginal groups were opposed to the launch of the first radio programs in Central Australia. Nor were the 'dominant' unified: sometimes the 'struggles' between different government instrumentalities were of great significance. Often, the most influential protagonists in these developments were not Aboriginal and at other times they were. At one critical point in the development of CAAMA, the availability of air time and therefore the survival of the project depended on a set of politics within the broadcasting industry that lay outside the control of those involved in the project itself (see chapter Five).

Another common tendency in this literature is to represent Aboriginal broadcasting as a means to recovering a 'lost' identity. Again, Meadows suggests - in relation to the establishment of Aboriginal media organisations - that 'The struggle by indigenous people to re-claim their identities has been a long one' (Meadows 1994a:4). The problem with this proposition is that 'identity' is not something that can be temporarily 'lost' by its owner and then 're-claimed' at a lost-and-found office. Identities are not produced pre-discursively, indeed, they are inextricably bound together in the present, and are continually produced not outside social processes but within them:

'… identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies ...' (Hall 1996:4).

Even if such a notion made sense, it would be meaningless to suggest that Aboriginal broadcasting was established to salvage lost identities. It would be closer to the mark to say that these events produced a whole range of 'identities', 'speaking positions' and 'voices' (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) and that they were produced as a result of various alliances between blacks and whites, public and private institutions, federal and state governments, and other social entities (see chapter Four).What is important here is that 'identities' should be seen as 'the product, rather than the origin, of representational strategies' (Wilson 1992:6).

Paradoxically, much of the literature cited above simply reiterates the governmental rhetoric surrounding the emergence of Aboriginal broadcasting and thus fails to elaborate the real complexities and ambiguities associated with these developments. In this thesis, I will take an analytical approach that foregrounds these incongruities. I follow Dean in seeking to

> .... respect dispersion and rarity, to grasp things in their admixture and impurity, to avoid the *a priori* and the dogmatic .... to be wary of premature generalisations, theoretical unification, political purity and the correct line. (Dean 1996: 212)

While I am generally critical of the literature on Aboriginal broadcasting, there are some important exceptions. Most notably, in the work of Michaels, Ginsburg and Hinkson, there is at least a willingness to confront the problematic relationship between the state and the constitution of 'an Aboriginal voice in the media'. In his article *Aboriginal Content: Who's Got It - Who Needs It?,* Michaels interrogates the role of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal and other governmental agencies in attempting to define Aboriginal programming content (Michaels 1994). He questions not only the governmental need to classify such content, but also the basis upon which this classification is made. Michaels is not concerned about whether Aboriginal content can be categorised or not - rather, he is interested in how the notion of Aboriginal content and - by extension - Aboriginal identity became an object of formal governmental verification. In pursuing these investigations, he draws our attention to the ways in which the routine administrative procedures of government ensnare Aboriginal subjectivities, which is a central theme in this thesis. Nonetheless, as I argue in chapter Four, Michaels failed to appreciate the significance of this governmental process and,

indeed, fell back on essentialist notions of 'Aboriginal tradition' to bolster his arguments against government 'interference' in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting.

Ginsburg also examines the ambiguous nature of government policy on Aboriginal broadcasting. She argues that

> In an international climate characterized by a problematic rhetoric of 'self-determination', state officials are in the contradictory position of creating government programs promoting indigenous self-expression, yet wanting to claim that Aboriginal initiatives are evolving through a (collective) self-initiated process. ... Even more ironic, the mastery of new communications forms as a means of resistance and assertion of rights is often motivated by dire political circumstances created by the very governments that also provide much of the necessary support … (Ginsburg 1995: 131).

METHODOLOGIES : LOCATING A POSITION FROM WHICH TO SPEAK

In the latter half of this thesis, I analyse events in which I was an active participant, including the early emergence of CAAMA and the development of Imparja Television. I also examine certain working relationships that developed between myself and various people involved in these activities, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. In undertaking this task, I have employed a mix of primary sources including oral accounts (interviews with the participants) and a variety of documentary evidence. While this has allowed for a relatively accurate 'factual reconstruction' of particular episodes in the development of CAAMA, the interpretation and thus the representation of these events must ultimately rest on my own particular perceptions.

How then can I provide an 'objective' account of events in which I was 'subjectively' involved, particularly in the context of personal relationships? Moreover, in presenting such analysis, to what extent does the representation of my own position within these accounts delineate their structure and meaning?

As Charlotte Davies points out in her book *Reflexive Ethnology* (Davies 1999), the difficulties associated with the production of 'objective' accounts of social reality have long been the subject of intensive debate within the social sciences (see Hymes 1972, Geertz 1988, Bourdieu 1990, Latour & Woolgar 1986). This is particularly the case where the researcher becomes an active participant in the research event and is therefore in danger of 'contaminating' the 'objective' results of their work. As Davies notes, while traditional research techniques have sought to minimise these effects (e.g., by eliminating any reference

to the researcher/observer in reporting on a piece of research, etc.), the attempt to produce accounts that are wholly 'objective' remains problematical. She argues that

> .... in the realm of particle physics, questions about the effects of observers on their observations are of fundamental importance. If reflexivity is an issue for these most objective of sciences, then clearly it is of central importance for social research, where the connection between researcher and research setting - the social world - make influences by the researcher and the research process on its outcome both more likely and less predictable. (Davies 1999:3)

Pierre Bourdieu argues that the possibility of the researcher influencing his or her own research results is not only 'likely' but is an inevitable part of the research process. He states that 'Nothing is less neutral than the relationship between the subject and the object, researchers and the objects of their research' (in Harker, Mahar & Wilkes 1990: 79). He also argues that the methodologies used by the researcher will also shape and delineate the research outcomes. Frederick Steier takes this argument a step further:

> As inquirers and researchers, we create worlds through the questions that we ask coupled with what we and others regard as reasonable responses to our questions ... what I describe in my research is in no way existent apart from my involvement in it - it is not 'out there'. My claims are not ontological, in the traditional sense that they reveal an existent universe that might be known apart from my knowing activity and its entailments ... the research process itself must be seen as socially constructing a world or worlds, with the researchers included in, rather than outside, the body of their own research. (Frederick Steier 1991: 1-2)

While I generally agree that 'the researcher must be included in' their own research, I would again follow Bourdieu in arguing that this does not necessarily give the researcher an open license to produce research based purely on 'lived experiences', as some of the more extreme adherents of the phenomenological approach to social research would propose (see Jackson 1996). On the contrary, in 'constructing' a discrete 'world', one must be mindful of the structural elements, strategies and tactics that are used through the research process by the researcher in constructing this 'world'. For my purposes, the most important question to be asked in relation to this constructive process is how and on what basis should the researcher be 'included in' their research, as Steier argues. Indeed, it seems clear that the way in which the researcher chooses to *position* themselves in relation to the research will have a significant effect on its outcomes.

This question is of particular significance for my own research since I endeavour to describe not only events in which I was an active player, but certain working relationships in which I was also a participant. In other words, to what extent do terms such as 'I', 'me', 'myself'

or 'the author' inform the structure and meaning of the written texts I produce in analysing these events and relationships, and how do these forms of authorial representation affect the position of other actors in the text? Indeed, in what context do my Aboriginal colleagues and I become a 'we' or an 'us', or an object: 'ours'? As Toorn and English point out, such terminology not only positions the author in the text, but requires 'focused attention because, whether used casually in passing, or as elements in a formal terminological system, they are instrumental in structuring thought and, indeed, in delineating the arena of the thinkable' (Toorn & English 1995: 1).

In responding to these difficulties, I have taken what Donna Haraway has described as a 'mobile positioning' approach in elaborating my research (Haraway 1991). Rather than establishing a fixed, authorial point of view in writing the thesis (eg. permanently locating myself in either the first, second or third person), I have instead adopted a variety of 'speaking positions' and methods for presenting the research results, depending on the particular site of the research and the context of its elaboration. Markus has described this approach as follows:

> In conducting multi-sited research, one finds oneself with all sorts of cross-cutting and contradictory personal commitments. These conflicts resolve, perhaps ambivalently, not by refuge in being a detached ... scholar, but in being a sort of ethnographer-activist, renegotiating identities in different sites ... This condition of shifting personal positions in relation to one's subjects ... generates a definite sense of doing more than just ethnography, and it is this quality that provides a sense of being an activist for and against positioning ... (Markus 1998: 18).

Thus, in the first half of the thesis, I have kept my authorial presence to a minimum (in keeping with a more traditional scholarly approach), while in the second half - particularly in chapter Six - the personal pronoun 'I' makes frequent appearances. Given the nature of my close association with the subject of my research, I perhaps have little choice in adopting this 'mobile positioning' approach.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Part One is composed of three chapters that theorise the central arguments of this thesis. In chapter One, I show how the Aboriginal 'self' became incorporated into the mechanisms of government under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination, and the extent to which this produced new forms of Aboriginal subjectivity. In analysing the circumstances that facilitated this process, I briefly examine the demise of the 'assimilationist' era during the

late 1960's, and demonstrate how this led to the search for new policy approaches in the early 1970's that would incorporate, rather than eliminate, the Aboriginal self. I show how the work of the policy intellectual Charles Rowley played a critical role in establishing the parameters of this new approach. His early proposals concerning the development of government-subsidised 'Aboriginal companies' led directly to the formation of 'Incorporated Aboriginal Associations'. I argue that such bodies not only accommodated the Aboriginal self, but also provided the government with a means of constituting an effective Aboriginal agency, capable of managing a multitude of state-sponsored programs. Chapter Two examines the practical implementation of these policies by focusing on developments in Alice Springs during the 1970s. I show how this new approach produced a complex network of Aboriginal organisations in the township, where various forms of Aboriginal agency began to emerge. I argue against the notion that such bodies represented a 'natural' expression of Aboriginal self-determination. Rather, I demonstrate how Aboriginal people had to acquire certain capacities that would enable them to become effective agents of this governmental process of 'self-determination'. I have characterised this as a 'game' that Aboriginals were obliged to play in order to acquire the benefits of these new policies. In chapter Three I analyse the working 'partnerships' that developed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people who worked for these Aboriginal bodies. I show how they played a central role in operationalising the institutional mechanisms of Aboriginal self-determination through a process of mutual recruitment. I am also interested in the 'performative' nature of these partnerships and how they traded - and therefore, created - differing forms of Aboriginal cultural identity in order to achieve their objectives.

In Part Two, I examine two distinct but related historical events. The first, presented in chapter Four, concerns the federal government's attempts to create an Aboriginal broadcasting service in Northern Australia over a period of eight years (from 1970 to 1978). As I show, these efforts encountered persistent setbacks, despite the implementation of numerous feasibility studies, special reports and at least one 'pilot program'. I argue that these protracted governmental manoeuvres not only presupposed an Aboriginal agency capable of facilitating the government's plans for an Aboriginal broadcasting service, but that they also created the need - and therefore the conditions - for the formation of such agency. In chapter Five, I show how this agency did indeed begin to appear - albeit in a very tentative manner - in Alice Springs. As shown in chapter Two, the policies of Aboriginal self-determination had produced a burgeoning network of Aboriginal administrative structures in the township that provided a suitable environment capable of nurturing this agency. I

examine the launch of the first Aboriginal radio program Ten the Northern Territory: ' The Aboriginal Half Hour', transmitted from Alice Springs, and how this led to the establishment of CAAMA in 1980.

Although Part Three builds on the themes established in Parts One and Two, it departs substantially from previous methodological approaches. Here, I focus on the relationship that developed between an Aboriginal person, John Macumba (see above) and myself during our joint engagement on The Aboriginal Half Hour and in the establishment of CAAMA. The analytical aims here are twofold. First, I wish to show how our respective motivations and interactions were not only delineated by our desire to establish an Aboriginal broadcasting service, but also by the policies and practices of Aboriginal self-determination. In other words, I try to demonstrate - in Foucauldian terms - how linkages are established between the private operations of the 'self' and the public operations of the state, and, in a more conceptual sense, how governmental power facilitates the formation of subjectivity. Second, I wish to show how Macumba and I worked together as a 'team' to produce certain 'performances' in order to establish CAAMA. In undertaking these tasks, I begin, in chapter Six, with a brief biography of Macumba and show how his personal experiences found a degree of resolution and congruity in the work he took up in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting. In chapter Seven, I examine my own motivations and the nature of the working relationship that evolved between myself and Macumba.

The final section of the thesis, Part Four, examines the institutional formation of CAAMA and its offshoot, Imparja Television Pty. Ltd. Here, I demonstrate how the establishment of organisations under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination necessitated the production of specific forms of Aboriginal agency and, similarly, the construction of certain Aboriginalities. In undertaking this task, I am particularly interested in showing how the formation of Aboriginal agency and the production of Aboriginalities may occur as a result of actions and events beyond the control of either the state or the Aboriginals it seeks to govern. This, I will argue, was particularly the case with regard to the early development of CAAMA. As elaborated in chapter Eight, the development of this complex organisation was conditioned more by a series of haphazard events and unforeseen circumstances than by any coordinated planning. Chapter Nine looks at the consolidation of the Aboriginal agency that had began to emerge within CAAMA. Of particular interest here is the operation of CAAMA's corporate and managerial structure and how it worked to subsume internal differences within the local Aboriginal community. Chapter Ten concludes with a detailed

examination of CAAMA's bid for a commercial satellite television licence between 1984 and 1987 (Imparja Television). This involved two closely contested Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) hearings and two appeals to the Federal Court of Australia. As I will demonstrate, CAAMA was able to overcome its initial shortcomings in these proceedings on the basis of a single argument: that it possessed a superior 'understanding' of the 'nature' of the Aboriginal audience within the satellite zone. My interest lies in examining the nature of CAAMA's 'understanding' of the 'Aboriginal audience', and how this 'understanding' led to its winning the satellite licence. I show that certain Aboriginalities were produced to achieve particular ends within this process, while others were unintended consequences of these governmental processes.

PART ONE :

GOVERNING CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

ENLISTING THE ABORIGINAL SUBJECT

> How was the subject established, at different moments and in different institutional contexts,
> as a possible, desirable, or even indispensable object of knowledge? How were the experiences
> that one may have of oneself and the knowledge that one forms of oneself organised according
> to certain schemes? How were these schemes defined, valorized, recommended, imposed?
>
> Michel Foucault: *Subjectivity and Truth*

Introduction

From 1970 to 1976, the Australian federal government made several attempts to establish Aboriginal broadcasting services in Northern Australia. Despite numerous 'feasibility studies', special reports and a 'pilot project', nothing of any substance came of these endeavours [1]. Nonetheless, the first Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Fraser government, Ian Viner, made a determined effort to resuscitate the project in 1978. In a speech delivered to Parliament House in August that year, he declared that the provision of Aboriginal broadcasting services was one of his highest priorities (Hansard 1978: 3449). Moreover, he believed that Aboriginal culture was 'everywhere threatened' and that broadcasting services - particularly in Aboriginal languages - could help to prevent its further 'destruction'. Viner subsequently created a special Working Party to re-establish the project [2]. However, little progress was made, and it ceased operations in February 1979.

I will argue that the main reason for the state's inability to establish these services was the lack of an appropriate Aboriginal agency capable of facilitating its development. A broadcasting service operated by the state *for Aboriginal people* was not what the state required: such a service had to be run *by Aboriginal* people themselves - only then could it claim to represent 'the voice of indigenous Australia'. Indeed, to what extent could the state be involved in a project that demanded - by its very nature - freedom from state interference? On the other hand, the federal government and its representatives - particularly Viner - knew that without state support the development of a viable broadcasting system for Aboriginal people would not be possible. The government faced a peculiar dilemma: on the one hand it had to establish procedures that might facilitate the constitution of an effective

Aboriginal agency capable of controlling and operating the envisaged service, while on the other hand such an agency would need to work 'independently' of the state.

Of course, this agency did not pre-exist in some 'ready-made' form; it was not an essential object located in some arcane realm waiting to be 'appropriated' by the state. On the contrary, the state would need to find ways of creating the appropriate conditions that might foster its construction.

In this chapter I wish to examine, first, the historical processes that facilitated the formation of this agency and second, how it was incorporated into the mechanisms of government. In undertaking this task, I will focus on the policy rubric of 'Aboriginal self-determination', formally introduced by the Whitlam Labor government in 1972. As I hope to show, these policies inaugurated an intensive governmentalisation of the Aboriginal population, particularly in the Northern Territory where a whole range of administrative techniques were introduced to facilitate the production of a 'self-determining' Aboriginal agency. In regions such as Central Australia, a unique social and political culture arose as a direct result of this process. I will further argue that the governmental technologies deployed in this part of Australia produced the conditions for the emergence of an agency with the capacity to create the first Aboriginal broadcasting organisation in Australia, the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, CAAMA.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that the government's general desire to 'encourage Aboriginal people to manage their own affairs' under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination (DAA 1975: 3) has remained a primary objective of successive federal governments up to and beyond the year 2000, even though its public representation may have varied. For instance, the Federal Coalition government under Malcolm Fraser (1975-1983) preferred the term 'Aboriginal self-management' or 'self-sufficiency' as opposed to 'self-determination', while under the Hawke and Keating Labor governments (1983-1996), 'self-determination' made a muted reappearance (see Sanders 1982). Under Howard (1996-), there appears to have been a return to the term 'self-sufficiency'. Nonetheless, much of the legislative and administrative infrastructure first proposed and partly developed by the Whitlam Labor government has remained intact.

Seeking an Alignment of Aboriginal-State Aspirations

What kind of governmental technologies did the Whitlam government initially deploy in implementing its program of 'Aboriginal self-determination'? Broadly speaking, the program entailed a range of interrelated initiatives including the enactment of new legislative frameworks, an expansion of administrative facilities, increased financial and personnel resources, the incorporation of special instrumentalities, legal reform, enhanced statistical investigation, the training and engagement of 'experts', etc.[3]. One of the most effective and wide-spread 'technologies' developed by Labor (and later refined by the Coalition Fraser government) was an institutional entity now commonly referred to as the 'Aboriginal community-controlled organisation' or, more formally, as the 'Aboriginal corporate body'. Here I am referring specifically to bodies incorporated under special legislation (see below) and funded by the state to provide various services to Aboriginal people. I will argue that these particular institutional devices proved to be extremely useful in establishing what Rose has described as an 'alignment' between Aboriginal and state aspirations, since they were able to facilitate, to a relatively successful extent, the incorporation of Aboriginal agency into the mechanisms of government (see Introduction).

It was the creation of the Aboriginal corporate body and its associated technologies that provided the primary vehicle through which Aboriginal broadcasting was able to come into existence. Incorporation not only allowed for the formal establishment of 'independent' Aboriginal broadcasting organisations, but created an institutional arena in which an Aboriginal agency - capable of implementing Aboriginal broadcasting services - could be generated and sustained. In this way, the lack of agency that had largely prevented the state from fulfilling its long term ambition of establishing broadcasting services for Aboriginal people could be overcome.

It is important to understand however that it was not a simple matter of 'forcing' Aboriginals to respond positively to the state's demand for such agency. It was only through a gradual process of trial and error, over an extended period of time, that the 'Aboriginal community-controlled organisation' and other associated technologies were able to solicit a degree of Aboriginal participation and become a relatively well-established site of Aboriginal governance. In other words, there was a level of interdependency in this process that produced inherent instabilities and uncertainties both in relation to the state's ambitions and to the kind of agency (or subject positions) that these governmental processes began to make available to Aboriginal people.

The Demise of State Discipline

I will argue that the concept of the Aboriginal corporate body arose in response to the perceived failures of the 'assimilationist' policies, in operation from the early 1950's to the late 1960's [4]. In this sense, the new bodies were not so much vehicles of Aboriginal 'independence' as institutional frameworks through which the state could better govern the Aboriginal population. How then did the seemingly contradictory idea of government-funded 'independent Aboriginal organisations' become so central to the policies of Aboriginal self-determination? To answer this question, we first need to examine policy developments leading up to the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972. Here I will focus on the Northern Territory and in particular, Central Australia.

The 'assimilation policy' was enthusiastically promoted by the Commonwealth Minister for the Interior, Paul Hasluck. Like all 'new deals' for Aboriginal people, it was publicly represented as a departure from the 'neglectful' policies of the past. Under this new approach, it was expected that Aboriginal people would, according to Hasluck:

> … attain the same manner of living as other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes, loyalties as other Australians'. (Hasluck 1988: 93)

However, to become a member of a 'single Australian community', Aboriginals had to demonstrate that they had the 'capacity' to live like 'other Australians': only then would they be granted full Australian citizenship and enjoy its 'rights and privileges'. The policies of assimilation therefore operated on a 'carrot and stick' basis: if Aboriginals decided to act like white people, they would 'obtain' their freedom. In the Northern Territory, the administration of these policies was undertaken by the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration.

From 1953 to 1964 the *Welfare Ordinance (NT)* gave the Welfare Branch substantial powers to regulate and control the Aboriginal population (see Austin 1993). Under its provisions, a register of 'Aboriginal wards' (known amongst Aboriginals as the 'stud book'. See Rowse 1998) was created to identify those falling under its regulations. Once on the register, 'wards' were subject to a range of restrictions including movement within and outside the Northern Territory, ownership of property, place of residency, private income and the consumption of

alcohol. In practice, however, only so-called 'full-blood' Aboriginals were generally made 'wards of the state' and, as a result, were largely confined to the government settlements located outside the main townships of the Territory, including Alice Springs. As indicated above, Aboriginal 'wards' could be removed from the register once they had been judged able to exercise the 'usual' attributes of citizenship (see Long 1967).

The *Welfare Ordinance* regulations were not only difficult to administer but, by the early 1960's, were seen as unjust. Its anomalies were made particularly apparent when the celebrated artist Albert Namatjira was caught up in its contradictory regulations in the late 1950's. Although Namatjira was not a ward, he was charged with 'supplying alcohol' to his relatives (who were 'wards of the state') and was subsequently detained for six months on a remote community, dying shortly afterwards. Namatjira was perhaps the most famous Aboriginal person in Australia at the time and his death received wide coverage in the press (see Batty 1976). The Ordinance was further eroded in 1962 when the federal government introduced voting rights for all Aboriginal people, including those in the Northern Territory. This had the effect of making the *Welfare Ordinance* all but redundant since 'wards of the state' were defined as 'those persons not entitled to vote' (see Donovan 1988).

Moreover, it seemed that many Aboriginal people wished to retain aspects of their own cultural traditions - despite the pressure to 'assimilate' - or found the pressures within their own community against 'turning whitefella' irresistible. Alternatively, where Aboriginals did express a desire to learn 'whitefella ways', the question of what actually constituted these 'ways' remained vague, if not entirely indefinable. In other words, it was not just a matter of Aboriginal people being unable or unwilling to accept the 'same customs … beliefs [and] loyalties as other Australians'; such attributes were simply abstract norms, open to interpretation (see Tatz 1964).

As a result of these political, social and cultural pressures, the Northern Territory Legislative Council was finally compelled to overturn the restrictive regulations in the *Welfare Ordinance*. In 1964 it passed the *Social Welfare Ordinance (NT)* which gave all Aboriginal people, regardless of their genetic inheritance, the rights of Australian citizenship.

In Central Australia, this meant that Aboriginal people living on remote settlements were now more or less 'free' to travel into Alice Springs and other townships. They could also live in areas from which they had previously been 'prohibited'. As a result, there was an upsurge in the movement of people from the settlements into Alice Springs where they often took

up residency in the largely unserviced 'camps' surrounding the township (see Heppell & Wigley 1981). More problematically, as Pamela Lyon has noted in her study on Aboriginal alcohol abuse in Central Australia (Lyon 1990), there was also a substantial increase in the consumption of alcohol. In September 1964, an unnamed missionary wrote to the *Northern Territory News* claiming that the change in the law had led to 'drunkenness, prostitution, broken homes, and moral degradation among the Aboriginals of Alice Springs' (in Rowse 1988: 202).

Although the Welfare Branch continued to administer government service to Aboriginals, it was at a loss as to how to address the changing circumstances in Alice Springs and, to a lesser extent, in the government settlements (Rowley: 1972c). Of course, it no longer had at its disposal the *Welfare Ordinance (NT)* nor its coercive powers to deal with what the Welfare Branch's 1965 annual report described as 'unruly elements' within the Aboriginal community (NTA 1965). It was therefore inevitable that the old methods of administration would become progressively less effective, even inoperable.

It was at this point, I would suggest, that a profound hiatus in Aboriginal policy began to emerge. No longer could Aboriginal people be closely regulated by the state, nor could the state simply abandon its responsibilities to them. Indeed, they continued to experience a standard of living far below that of the non-Aboriginal community, notwithstanding the changes in the law (NTA:1965). Further, the political and social upheavals that were then occurring in the wider Australian polity - occasioned by Australia's growing military involvement in Vietnam - had the effect of focusing greater attention, both nationally and internationally, on Australia's treatment of its indigenous minority, as Jeremy Beckett has argued :

> [It] was a period of decolonisation, when discrimination on the grounds of colour or race could embarrass attempts to make friends with the new nations … The struggles against apartheid in South Africa and the civil rights movement in the United States, both widely reported in Australia, not only structured Australians' perceptions of their own situation but gave them a language with which to describe it … In this discourse Aboriginal people were assimilated not into the community but into the ranks of the oppressed, the colonized, coloured people, the 'wretched of the earth' …. If there was a sense of history in all this it was that the world was, or should be, moving towards greater justice, equality, toleration and harmony.' (Beckett 1988: 202-203)

Clearly, it was no longer acceptable to deploy coercive forms of rule in relation to the governance of Australia's indigenous minority. Moreover, the way in which the State actually

treated Aboriginal people was becoming - as Whitlam was to proclaim in 1972 - 'a test' of the nation's 'integrity and humanity' (Whitlam 1974: 32).

While there was an emerging desire for policy change, it was not entirely clear what form this change might take, nor how it might be implemented. Nonetheless, if the government was to retain a specific involvement in the lives of Aboriginal people at all, it would have to recognise - at the very least - that Aboriginal people were 'culturally different' and that they could not - and should not - be 'converted' into 'mainstream Australians' through coercive measures and any new policy would have to accommodate this difference. The problem for government therefore was to construct appropriate technologies that might accomplish this task. I will now turn to an examination of the work of Charles Rowley: I will argue that he provided one of the keys to resolving this dilemma: the formation of 'subsidized' Aboriginal 'companies'.

A Dialogue with Government

In his seminal three-volume history concerning the governance of Australia's indigenous population (first published in 1970), Rowley mounted a comprehensive critique of official government policies towards Aboriginals (covering a period from the late 19th century to the 1960's) (Rowley 1972, a,b,c). In examining the policies of 'assimilation', he argued that the policy's basic aim of facilitating the absorption of Aboriginal people into a 'single Australian community' was not only ill-conceived but had also not been particularly successful. He was critical of the fact that the assimilationist approach disregarded the importance of group life in Aboriginal society and instead attempted to

> ... winkle out the deviant individual from the group, to persuade him to cut the ties which bind him and his family to it, and to set him up as a householder in the street of a country town. (Rowley 1972b:417)

Like other critics of the assimilationist model (see Elkin 1951), Rowley was not proposing that Aboriginal people should return to a 'traditional' way of life in order to overcome their difficulties. He was simply proposing that better methods might be deployed in accommodating the changes that Aboriginal people would, he felt, inevitably face:

> ... policies which aim to change social habit ... while ignoring the social context ... can only have limited success. A program involving social change must deal with the social group. (Rowley 1972b:417)

He argued that a more effective way for governments to 'deal with' Aboriginals would be through the creation of what he termed 'Aboriginal companies' or 'corporations'. He

suggested that the state should 'provide the framework' through which the proposed corporations might be established and 'subsidize and deal with such bodies and hand over to them progressively, special welfare activities as they agree to operate' (Rowley 1976:66). More significantly, he felt that such bodies could facilitate an all-important link between the aspirations of Aboriginal people and those of the government. On the one hand, Aboriginal people could develop what he described as a 'a pride' in running and operating their own corporate bodies, while the state would have at its disposal a corporate entity through which it could more effectively administer its programs.

> Corporate bodies can be advised ... argued with [and] subsidized .... At the same time they may, by making necessary the leadership with which government ... deals, provide the carapace which the Aboriginal social group has always lacked, the protective shell within which ... new patterns of leadership and organisation may be worked out. (Rowley 1972c:11)

> It makes possible a meaningful identity and a pride ... and a dialogue with, rather than an evasion of, government. Such an objective will be extremely difficult to achieve. Yet it forms one - in my opinion the only - way to provide effective incentives for such social changes as will enable the Aboriginal caste to demand, with a chance of success, access to all strata of Australian society. (Rowley 1972c:13)

In accordance with Rowley's vision, Aboriginal people would no longer be treated as 'deviant' individuals to be 'winkled out' of their social surrounds. On the contrary, they would now be seen more in a collective sense, as part of a 'social group', protected within the 'carapace' of a corporate identity. As such, they would be 'construed as subjects of choices and aspirations' by the state and not as isolated individuals to be reformed against a set of abstract social norms, as had occurred under the policies of 'assimilation'.

In proposing that governmental concerns should move away from the 'Aboriginal individual' and focus instead on the 'Aboriginal group', Rowley clearly believed this would give Aboriginal people the capacity to make decisions about their governance on their own collective terms. However, by also proposing - in a contradictory way - that this arrangement would make possible a 'dialogue with, rather than an evasion of, government', he was also suggesting that the Aboriginal corporate group would serve as an instrument of governmental administration. Here I would argue that Rowley was seeking to establish an institutional device whereby Aboriginal people would be incorporated into the chain of government itself, not by coercion, but through a process of solicitation (see Beckett 1988).

The corporate Aboriginal body would not only function as an administrative device but, as Rowley also proposed, 'make possible a meaningful identity'. As noted above, Rowley was

not, I believe, particularly concerned about preserving 'traditional' forms of cultural identity when he made this suggestion. (Indeed, by using the word 'meaningful' he seemed to imply that Aboriginal people lacked the kind of 'identity' that would allow them to engage with the broader community). Rather, he felt that corporate Aboriginal bodies would only work if Aboriginal people actually identified with them and, in effect, made them their own. According to Rowley, past attempts to 'impose' administrative regimes on Aboriginal people had failed because Aboriginal people themselves had not been able, or were not given the opportunity, to incorporate such administrative procedures into their own sense of communal personhood. The corporate body would not only provide routine services to the Aboriginal community, it would also assume an important role in 'enhancing and shaping' Aboriginal subjectivity.

The central point to be made here is that the envisaged corporate body would create linkages between the mechanisms of government (since the state would be required to subsidise such bodies) and the collective Aboriginal 'self'. In this way, Aboriginality and governmental practice would thus become interdependent, and as a result, mutually constitutive.

Of course Rowley was not the first to advocate the formation of Aboriginal corporate bodies as such. Indeed, he pointed out that Aboriginal people had set up their own organisations long before he began to formulate his ideas (for example, the 'Aborigines Progressive Association' formed by William Ferguson in 1937 in New South Wales). Rowley was also influenced by certain experiments in Aboriginal group organisation that were taking place during the mid 60's, particularly in Central Australia [5]. Further, as Rowse and others have pointed out, the anthropologists Elkin and Stanner had often criticised the policy of 'assimilation' for failing to take into account the importance of the 'social group' in Aboriginal society.

Nonetheless, what I believe is critically significant and different about Rowley's conceptions is that he began to think about - and formulate - a specific way in which Aboriginal self-governance and the state-governance of Aboriginal people might be effectively linked. As Rowse points out :

> When Rowley advocated that governments respect Aboriginal group life, he implied also that Aboriginal people should be willing to ... develop new forms of association in order to render their collective projects both recognisable in legislation and familiar to established practices of government ... (Rowse 2000:132)

We will now examine how Rowley's ideas on Aboriginal corporations entered the formal domain of governmental policy.

Incorporating the Aboriginal Self

In 1972 the Australian Labor Party won Federal office for the first time in twenty-three years[6]. Not surprisingly, it wasted little time in implementing its program of reform. One of its first official acts was the creation of a Federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), 17 days after its electoral victory [7].

Unlike all previous governments, Labor would not, it claimed, 'make decisions on behalf of Aborigines', nor would it pursue policies that simply turned Aboriginals into 'pawns in some game played by non-Aboriginal Australians', as the first Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gordon Bryant, proclaimed (Bryant 1973:903). Henceforth, Aboriginals would have the right to 'determine their own affairs', as indicated in a speech delivered by Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam :

> My government intends ... to assume full responsibility for policy in respect of Aboriginal Affairs and will take any necessary legislative action to this end ... The basic object of my government is to restore to the Aboriginal people of Australia their lost power of self-determination in economic, social and political affairs ... (Whitlam 1974: 12)

One of the primary vehicles adopted by the Whitlam Labor government in enacting these policies was the Aboriginal corporate body. This was due in large part to the influence of H.C. 'Nugget' Coombs, who, as a member of the Council for Aboriginal Affairs [8], had become a keen advocate of incorporated Aboriginal groups through his earlier contacts with Rowley (Coombs had read an early draft of Rowley's 'The Destruction of Aboriginal Society' before its publication). As Coombs later noted, Labor 'seized on' the idea of the Aboriginal corporation and it rapidly became a central part of the administrative operations of its newly created Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Coombs 1978). This was made clear when Whitlam proposed in a speech (delivered a year after assuming office) that DAA would:

> ... seek to devolve upon ... organisations of Aboriginals themselves, responsibility for carrying out the policies decided upon by my government. (Whitlam 1973:697)

However, if Aboriginal corporations were to take over responsibilities once vested in the state, as Whitlam seemed to be suggesting (following Rowley's original proposal), then a

level of bureaucratic and institutional rigour would be required to ensure their managerial and financial competency. In framing legislation allowing for the incorporation of such bodies, it would be essential therefore that provisions be included to satisfy these demands. Although the Labor government made moves to produce and enact such legislation, it was only after the election of the Coalition government of Malcolm Fraser (1975-1983) that the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976* - under which Aboriginal bodies could become incorporated - was eventually passed.

In this way the Aboriginal corporate body become firmly lodged within the mechanisms of government. Not only did it possess a well defined status in law, but perhaps more importantly, it could be funded, supported and regulated through an administrative apparatus established through DAA.

Under these governmental arrangements, I will argue that the Aboriginal 'self' or the 'collective Aboriginal self' became an object of intense governmental scrutiny since it was now expected to carry out the work of the State. The *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976* not only allowed Aboriginal people to form themselves into manageable and calculable organisations, but provided the state with a range of regulations concerning their administrative operations, particularly in relation to their fiscal probity. For example, under sub-section (3), section 61 of the Act, the Registrar of Aboriginal Incorporations has the power to dissolve an Aboriginal organisation if it fails to provide a set of audited accounts in a timely manner [9]. Numerous other regulations concerning 'Offenses', 'Entry on Premises', 'Judicial Management', 'Eligibility for Membership', etc. are also provided within the Act.

Thus, in restoring to Aboriginal people 'their lost power of self-determination', the state provided Aboriginal people with a regulated freedom to be determined - as Rose puts it - by 'the rationalities of accountability'. At the same time the state created an institutional framework through which it could constitute a competent and verifiable Aboriginal agency. In theory at least, Aboriginal people would now be required to establish a 'dialogue with, rather than an evasion of, government' as Rowley had originally proposed.

As argued above, such a framework also demanded that Aboriginals act on themselves or their 'own subjectivity' to ensure the effective operation of 'their own organisations'. As a result, the state began to play a burgeoning role in both reifying and giving legitimacy to the collective Aboriginal agency it sought to produce, and indeed, in the formation of

Aboriginal subjectivity. In the following section I wish to explore further the ways in which the state sought to incorporate this subjectivity into the mechanisms of government.

Making Calculable Aboriginal Subjectivity

The production and regulation of a managerially competent agency is of course a common objective of liberal governance and can be seen in any number of institutional contexts. However the policy of Aboriginal self-determination required not only managerial competency. It also sought - ambiguously - the formation of what I would describe as a kind of *cultural* competency. To put it plainly, if Aboriginal people were to be supported by the state on the basis of their Aboriginality, then the question of what constituted this Aboriginality or identity necessarily became a significant object of state interest. In many contexts, it formed the very basis upon which Aboriginal people were to receive government assistance, particularly through Aboriginal corporations.

In short, I will argue that the policies of Aboriginal self-determination and their associated institutional technologies rested - fundamentally - on the production of an Aboriginal 'self' definable in terms of certain attributes, recognisable both within the administrative apparatuses of government and by Aboriginal people themselves. Therefore, it was not only a matter of developing techniques for the regulation of managerial competency. Mechanisms that might ensure - and regulate - the identity or subjectivity of the Aboriginal 'self' were just as important, if not more so.

In proposing that the state is implicated in the formation of Aboriginal identity, I do not wish to suggest that it is only Aboriginal people whose identity is given form and meaning as a result of their constitution within the mechanisms of government. Nor am I suggesting that there is an 'essential' Aboriginal self that the state is able to somehow *appropriate* and then regulate for its own particular purposes. Neither am I proposing that the constitution of the Aboriginal subject is entirely bound up in the way in which the state seeks to govern that subject.

What I am saying, first of all, is that all forms of human identity are constituted - as Stuart Hall proposes - 'in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices ... and emerge within the specific modalities of power'. In this sense, identities should be seen not as the 'sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity' (Hall 1996: 4), but as the product of a complex, shifting social realm. As indicated above,

37

I am specifically interested here in how Aboriginal identity is constituted within the 'formations and practices' of government, notwithstanding the fact that there are innumerable factors that contribute to the formation of any human identity. I would also propose that while there are all kinds of demands placed upon the human subject to behave in certain ways, to assume particular identities and adopt various 'cultural attributes', there is no natural law that makes it compulsory to act on these demands. An Aboriginal person therefore may not respond to the solicitations of the state and may indeed decline the invitation to 'manage' his or her 'own affairs', as the policies of Aboriginal 'self-determination' insist. As Hindess has pointed out (following Nietzche), 'very few individuals will take the opportunity to "liberate" themselves' (Hindess 1996:75).

Thus, in seeking to govern the Aboriginal community through the policies of Aboriginal 'self-determination', the Aboriginal 'self' necessarily assumed a significant strategic importance within the administrative and legislative technologies deployed by the state. Here, a number of questions about its nature and how it might be located within these technologies came to the fore. For example: how was this identity to be made recognisable? who should have the right to claim it? under what circumstances might such a claim be made? in what specific ways might it be applied in law? what kind of powers did the possession of this identity confer? and how should it be exercised? In this sense, Aboriginal subjectivity and the questions surrounding it also began to play a fundamental role in shaping the practices of government itself. As I hope to demonstrate in the following chapter, the significant degree to which Aboriginal identity has been reshaped through its interaction with the state appears to be one of its most outstanding features.

Indeed, under the policies of 'assimilation' Aboriginal people had been encouraged to rid themselves of all traces of their 'Aboriginal identity' since its eradication opened the door to citizenship and all its privileges. Becoming the 'same' meant becoming 'free'. Under the regime of 'self-determination', however, cultural difference and 'Aboriginal identity' were no longer to be seen as an impediment to freedom - just the opposite: it became one of the primary means through which Aboriginal people would become free 'to determine their own affairs'. Self-determination did not therefore seek a diminution of an individual's Aboriginality. On the contrary, it demanded a totalising, verifiable Aboriginal identity that might be deployed in both constructing and rendering governable 'the Aboriginal domain'. Here, any trace of one's Aboriginality could either be a distinct asset or, indeed, a burden.

How then did the state seek to produce an essentialised and calculable Aboriginal identity under the policies of self-determination? In answering this question it is important to first note that since the introduction of these policies in the early 1970's there has been an exponential growth in the number of governmental departments, agencies and instrumentalities directly involved in the administration and regulation of Aboriginal life (see Tonkinson 1985). Most of them deploy - in different contexts and for varying reasons - working definitions of Aboriginal identity as an administrative necessity. It should also be noted that during the same period, Commonwealth and State legislation specifically concerned with Aboriginals - where definitions of Aboriginal identity are also required - have seen a massive expansion. Here I will again focus on the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976*, since it helped to establish the basis upon which many subsequent forms of related legislation have been enacted and under which the vast majority of Aboriginal organisations have been incorporated.

Under this particular Act, the state sought to ensure the identity or, one might say, the 'racial integrity' of Aboriginal bodies in very specific ways. For instance, Section 49 (1) of the Act states that 'A person who is not an Aboriginal is not entitled to become a member of an Incorporated Aboriginal Association'. In defining an 'Aboriginal', the Act also states, under Section 3 (a), that such a person is 'a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia'. As far as I am aware, this legislation represents the only instance in current Australian law where a person's 'race' is a strict determinant of eligibility for membership of a legally constituted body. Thus, unlike any other form of 'identity', Aboriginal racial identity becomes, under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976*, an enforceable object of state governance.

However, the Act does not attempt to establish any detailed criteria as to what might actually constitute the 'Aboriginal race of Australia', nor does it point to any specific cultural or 'biological' attributes that might make a person 'Aboriginal' [10]. The framers of the Act were obviously concerned that to prescribe essential racial attributes of either a cultural or biological nature would have been tantamount to the state endorsing the worst kind of racial stereotyping, thereby inviting a host of unintended consequences. As we have seen, previous legislation directed at Aboriginal people had attempted to govern Aboriginals on the basis of their genetic characteristics (categorised in terms of 'admixtures of black and white blood'). This had of course led to several infamous results (the 'stolen generations' being just one). Nonetheless, I would argue that like these previous approaches, the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976* and the extensive legislative machinery that it prefigured also sought

to constitute a recognisable and thereby calculable Aboriginal identity through which the Aboriginal population might be governed, even if the means for establishing and verifying such identity were very different.

The Act's silence on what actually constitutes the 'Aboriginal race of Australia' did not mean that the question of 'Aboriginal identity' was irrelevant in terms of the Act or in relation to the general project of Aboriginal 'self-determination'. Nor did it change the fact that the State would only support organisations that possessed a demonstrable 'Aboriginality'. On the contrary, by remaining silent on such a pivotal issue (pivotal in the sense that it determined the lawful membership and therefore the existence of the corporate body), it only served to make the question of Aboriginal identity the object of a far more intensive process of verification and contestation, not so much within government, but in the broader social polity, and particularly within the Aboriginal community itself. Indeed, other Acts concerned with Aboriginal corporations have specifically directed the question of Aboriginal identity to the 'Aboriginal community' for resolution. For example, the Aboriginal Housing Act 1998 (NSW) states that an Aboriginal person is someone who 'is accepted by the Aboriginal community as an Aboriginal'. In this way the state was not only able to sidestep the dangers associated with strict racial categorisation but more importantly, distance itself from its role in constituting a calculable Aboriginal identity. As O'Malley has proposed in his important article on the practice of self-determinationist policy :

> ... liberalism is attracted to technologies of rule which distance the process of regulation from the forms or images of coercion ... Thus one of the particular attractions of the language of 'community' in advanced liberalism is precisely that it locates rule in the everyday, voluntary interaction or commonalties of interest of private individuals ... (O'Malley 1996: 313).

By demanding that Aboriginal people attempt to fix, or make calculable their identity, the state not only began to play a role - if indirectly - in attempting to determine the parameters of such identity, it also established a powerful link between itself and its production, more so because of the invisibility of its involvement. As Foucault has suggested:

> …power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms. (Foucault 1990:86)

These legislative and administrative procedures therefore helped fuel what I would describe as a powerful normative process that sought to locate, identify and construct what Hall has termed 'markings of difference and exclusion' that would render Aboriginal identity recognisable within the administrative processes of state governance. Here Aboriginal people

would be impelled to act on their individual and collective selves in order to construct 'cultural attributes' and 'markings' of identity which might render them recognisable within the law. More specifically, these procedures would make them recognisable as particular kinds of Aboriginals, delineated by a range of historical, cultural, genealogical and other characteristics. One could cite here, for example, the *Native Title Act 1993* [11], under which certain rights to land may or may not be granted to specific Aboriginals on the basis of legally recognisable 'traditional customs' and demonstrable 'historical connections' (see Pearson 1997). Jane Jacobs has also shown that 'acceptable proof of Aboriginality, especially in terms of land rights, must be done in a language and with mechanisms endorsed [and] structured by the government' (Jacobs 1988: 41). Here again Aboriginal people are impelled to examine and inspect themselves, to discern attributes and characteristics that might make certain state-sanctioned rights available to them.

As Foucault has also proposed, the imperative to 'know oneself' has become one of the central characteristics of the modern era. He also pointed out that this imperative is accompanied by a host of 'procedures' that either 'suggest or prescribe' ways in which an individual might '... determine their identity, maintain it, or transform it in terms of a certain number of ends ...' (Foucault 2000: 87) As I have tried to demonstrate above, the policies of Aboriginal self-determination and the kind of 'technologies' deployed in their implementation have impelled Aboriginal people to 'know themselves' in order to determine their identity in relation to a number of governmental ends.

I would now like to look more specifically at the nature of this identity and its determination. Here I will examine the kind of attributes or 'markings' that have been deployed in its constitution.

Enlisting Cultural Tradition and Resistance

The constitution of the Aboriginal 'self' within the mechanisms of state governance has tended to be both narrow and ambiguous. This is perhaps the inevitable outcome of any attempt to govern a specific 'community', since the very process of governance will tend to minimize internal differentiation and valorize certain 'attributes' deemed to form the 'common' basis of that 'community' (see Morton 1998). Further, as these 'attributes' will be shaped directly or indirectly by a variable mix of governmental 'ends', they will also tend to lack any long-term consistency and in certain contexts, seem mutually exclusive. This is

partly due to the fact that these 'ends' will themselves be subject to changing policy prescriptions and conflicting political objectives which in turn lead to anomalous outcomes at a programmatic level (see Tonkinson & Howard 1990, Beckett 1985).

Throughout the era of Aboriginal 'self-determination' (in all its various guises), the state has sought to constitute a range of differing Aboriginal 'selves'. One might cite here, for example, the 'administratively competent' Aboriginal 'self' (ruled by accountability), the culturally authentic 'self' (ruled by 'traditional custom'), the independent 'self' (ruled by freedom) and a number of other 'selves' that interact and overlap in various ways. Perhaps the most ambiguous feature of the Aboriginal self-determinationist project has been its desire to constitute - in certain contexts - what I will describe as a 'resistant Aboriginal self'.

Here I will focus on the 'culturally authentic' and 'resistant' Aboriginal 'self', since their formation was of central importance in the formation of an Aboriginal agency capable of establishing an Aboriginal broadcasting service. First to the question of the 'culturally authentic' Aboriginal 'self'.

The Cultural Aboriginal Self

As outlined above, during the assimilationist era, the figure of 'traditional Aboriginal culture' appeared in governmental policy as a negative attribute to be subdued and eventually eliminated. Indeed, it was seen as an impediment to achieving improved living conditions for Aboriginals. Under the policies of 'self-determination', it assumed a remarkably different position and meaning. The state would now encourage Aboriginal people to 'preserve' these 'cultural traditions', since they formed a kind of foundation upon which they might build a 'self-determining' identity (see Povinelli 2002). Henceforth, government policy would not only attempt to enhance and revitalize such tradition but seek an alignment with it in order to prosecute its programs for indigenous Australians. In short, 'Aboriginal culture' would be enlisted as a vital element in the implementation of state policy. Indeed, the second Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Whitlam government, James Cavanagh, demanded that his departmental officials 'utilise Aboriginal culture', to accomplish his governments objectives. In a somewhat confused but revealing statement made in 1974, Cavanagh said,

> The whiteman has done much to kill the culture of the Aboriginal, but it is worth preserving. It is something that means much to Australia …Therefore we have something to gain from

Aboriginals. We must get into the position of trying to utilise Aboriginal culture, a culture that could assist us to have Aboriginals living in a more acceptable form of the standards that the white man has developed… That this gain from culture will be developed and brought out, is the determination of the government. It's my determination; it is the determination of most officers in the Department and we must be ruthless and ride roughshod over those who would seek to stop us from achieving this ambition in Aboriginal Affairs. (Cavanagh 1975: 9-11)

Thus we begin to see - from the early 1970's - the emergence of a whole range of state-supported projects that actively sought to incorporate certain reconstituted versions of Aboriginal 'culture and tradition' into the administrative practices of government. For instance, the establishment of 'outstations' on traditional 'homelands' is seen as a significant way to improve Aboriginal health (Moran 1999); the insertion of 'traditional' forms of education into school curricula is proposed as a way of combating poor educational achievement (Keefe 1990); the construction of 'culturally appropriate' Aboriginal accommodation informs the practices of Aboriginal housing corporations (Heppell 1979) and Aboriginal ceremonial life now becomes the 'key' to arresting 'community break-down' since its perpetuation is seen as a way of re-establishing 'traditional' forms of social organisation and authority.

Nonetheless, I would argue that because these 'cultural traditions' were deployed to accomplish particular governmental ends, they should be understood more as 'artifacts' of rule than as separate or 'essential' cultural attributes (see Hindess 1996). In other words, such 'traditions' were shaped and given a meaning largely in relation to their constitution and usage within the mechanisms of government.

This process of incorporating 'Aboriginal tradition' has been thoroughly analysed by Pat O'Malley in relation to an anti-petrol sniffing project conducted on a remote Aboriginal community in Western Australia (O'Malley 1996). O'Malley clearly demonstrates how the government programmers of this project *selected* certain aspects of Aboriginal 'tradition' in order to facilitate an alignment between the aims of their department and those of 'the community'.

Interestingly, although many local Aboriginal people wished to use certain violent 'traditions' to deal with the 'sniffer gangs' - such as beatings - they were rejected by the government programmers as 'inappropriate'. Rather, the programmers felt that other traditions would be more effective, such as giving Aboriginal elders 'control' over the program. Thus by 'selecting' only 'traditions' that were deemed 'appropriate' and re-locating

them within a discrete governmental program, they assumed a purpose and a meaning quite distinct from their original setting. This exercise in 'self-determination' therefore entailed the translation of 'Aboriginal culture' into an 'artifact' of rule:

> ... the process of self-determination involves its constitution via the selective valorization of those aspects of indigenous [culture] that produced administratively desired effects ... By implication, there is a neutralization ... of those aspects which are seen as ... incompatible with the project of rule. (O'Malley 1996: 317)

How then did this enlistment of Aboriginal tradition into the project of government propel the development of Aboriginal broadcasting? When the state first expressed an interest in Aboriginal broadcasting in 1970, it was seen as an instrument that might be used for educational purposes. Coombs, for instance, initially thought that it could play a useful role in informing Aboriginals about 'plans' for their 'future advancement'. After the implementation of self-determinationist policy, however, the state's view changed significantly. As seen above, in 1978 the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner, proclaimed that he wanted to establish a broadcasting service that would 'restore and rebuild [Aboriginal] cultural identity'. Under these arrangements, broadcasting technologies would not be used to 'advance' Aboriginals into the 'modern world' (and away from their 'traditions'), on the contrary, the state would now deploy these technologies to retain and reify these 'traditions' and, indeed, re-construct an Aboriginal 'cultural identity'. For Viner, this 'identity' was most clearly pronounced in 'remote communities' where Aboriginal languages were still spoken. Indeed, when announcing his government's plans to create the proposed services, he noted that they would be provided in select Aboriginal communities and that the languages to be used had 'already been identified'. More tellingly, in 1977 - the year before making his announcement to Parliament - Viner noted in a Cabinet submission that

> … my immediate and at this stage sole interest is in indigenous language broadcasting; I am not interested in urban or rural English language broadcasting …[12]

Thus, the project to develop Aboriginal broadcasting became securely attached to the state's general - and far more powerful - project to incorporate Aboriginal 'cultural tradition' into its programs of governance. As a result, the restoration and 'protection' of Aboriginal 'cultural identity' would necessarily play a decisive role in any future development of broadcasting services for Aboriginal people. Obviously enough, the kind of agency required to facilitate this development would need to be one that was dedicated to the ' maintenance and perpetuation' of 'Aboriginal culture'.

As I will show in the following chapters, the conditions required for the formation of such agency began to emerge in Central Australia in the late 1970's. Apart from a number of governmental and political factors (which I will be examining), the large presence of Aboriginal people - living on remote communities and speaking their own languages - was to have a significant effect in constituting and capacitating this agency. Certainly, for Viner and his governmental colleagues, the kind of 'Aboriginal traditions' evident in Central Australia made it an ideal arena for the development for Aboriginal broadcasting. Here an alignment between the interests of the state and those of Aboriginal people might be effectively established.

The Resistant Aboriginal Self

The general question of 'Aboriginal resistance' has in recent times attracted wide attention (see Cowlishaw 1986, Lattas 1993, Wolfe 1999). Most of this work also seeks to construe - in varying contexts - a 'resistant' Aboriginal subject located in a strictly oppositional relationship to non-Aboriginal Australia. Cowlishaw, for instance, argues that 'Aborigines have … continually responded to and resisted the hegemony of white society' (Cowlishaw 1986:188). Here, oppressors and oppressed are neatly reduced to fixed, unproblematic categories, and any engagement between Aboriginals and whites can only result in the further subjugation of Aboriginals. A crude form of binary logic is deployed here to manufacture a unified Aboriginal speaking position and an oppressive, all-powerful state.

I will argue that we cannot understand the relationship between power and resistance without examining the ways in which they tend to produce one another. As Foucault has proposed, 'we should not imagine a world divided between accepted discourses and excluded discourses, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies' (Foucault 1990:100). Further, Foucault also suggested that 'resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' and indeed, that it can play the 'role of target, support, or handle' in determining relations between the state and those it seeks to rule (ibid).

Taking these understandings into consideration, I will propose that certain forms of Aboriginal 'resistance' have always played a productive role in the operation of the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. Indeed, such policy not only depends on a certain level of 'Aboriginal resistance' but actively seeks its formation. The policies of 'self-determination'

therefore provide an outstanding example of how 'resistance' has come to play a vital role in providing a 'handle' for the kind of power relations that operate between the ruled and the rulers, or, in this case, between Aboriginal people and the state. In describing how this process functions in relation to 'indigenous' forms of 'governance', O'Malley proposes that

> Government and resistance articulate, mingle and hybridize, so that resistance cannot readily be thought of as external to rule. In this way, liberalism's governmental relations with resistance are characterized by incorporation of resistant, 'indigenous', governances. In turn, this is a source of its innovativeness and flexibility, becoming part of its strategy of government at a distance. (O'Malley 1996:310)

In relation to the development of Aboriginal broadcasting, I propose to demonstrate in the following chapters how the state not only sought to incorporate certain forms of Aboriginal resistance, but how a 'resistant' Aboriginal agency was constituted as a necessary ingredient for this development.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to demonstrate that the policies of 'Aboriginal self-determination' and the kind of technologies deployed in their implementation sought to produce Aboriginal subjects capable of 'managing their own affairs' independently of the state. This was not to be accomplished through coercive measures but by seeking an alignment between state and Aboriginal aspirations. One of the most effective technologies used in this process was the Aboriginal corporate body, since it was able to incorporate, shape and enhance an effective Aboriginal agency while acting - at the same time - as an instrument of government. I have also argued that this process was mutually constitutive, involving a process of on-going negotiation and contestation.

PRACTISING SELF-DETERMINATION

> To understand modern forms of rule requires an investigation not merely of grand political schema … but apparently humble and mundane mechanisms which appear to make it possible to govern: techniques of notation, computation and calculation; procedures of examination and assessment; the standardization of systems of training and the inculcation of habits; the inauguration of professional specialisms and vocabularies - the list is heterogeneous and in principle, unlimited … the analysis of such technologies of government requires … an attention to the complex of relays and interdependencies which enable programs of government to act upon and intervene upon those places, persons and populations which are their concern.
>
> Miller and Rose, *Governing Economic Life*

Introduction

As argued in the previous chapter, when the Whitlam Labor government began to formulate its policies of Aboriginal 'self-determination' in the early 1970's, it sought to establish what I have characterised as an 'alignment' between its own aspirations and those of Aboriginal people. This was to be accomplished, primarily, through the incorporation of Aboriginal agency into the mechanisms of government. In undertaking this task, the government began to implement a range of technologies that might give effect to this process of incorporation and, as a result, bring into alignment Aboriginal and state aspirations.

As we shall see, these kinds of governmental technologies were implemented in Central Australia - in Alice Springs in particular - with a vigor rarely seen in other regions. It included the development of local Aboriginal corporate bodies, building projects, health and housing schemes, welfare programs, intensive training programs, arts and crafts enterprises, rehabilitation centres, child care organisations and a host of other projects. This necessitated a rapid expansion in departmental administrative resources, the recruitment of a large pool of non-Aboriginal expertise and the implementation of a broad range of new legislative frameworks. This in turn generated - over a period of some years - what I will describe as a highly elaborate 'Aboriginal administrative culture', based primarily in Alice Springs, with its own internal hierarchies, its own 'rules of engagement' and a complex form of politics based around the often antagonistic relationship between the Federal and Territory governments. Furthermore, this 'culture' had a substantial influence on the broader social

and economic environment of Central Australia. A survey conducted in 1988 indicated that close to 30% of the region's income was derived from government spending on projects and schemes directly related to the local Aboriginal population [1] and that the single largest employer (for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals) was the 'Aboriginal community organisation sector' (Crough, Howitt & Pritchard 1988).

This complex 'Aboriginal administrative culture' succeeded, up to a point, in facilitating a certain *contested* alignment between Aboriginal and state aspirations and, therefore, in developing various forms of Aboriginal agency capable of managing a range of projects on behalf of the state. As a result, the possibility of creating, within this pre-existent governmental culture, an Aboriginal organisation - and hence an Aboriginal agency - with the capacities to develop an Aboriginal broadcasting service became a distinct possibility.

In this chapter, I wish to examine the historical and political processes that facilitated this alignment and how it generated an 'administrative culture' capable of producing an organisation such as CAAMA. Here I will focus primarily on the development of the Aboriginal corporate body, since it formed what I would suggest was the 'hub' of the various technologies that underpinned this broad 'culture'. In other words, if we are to understand the emergence of CAAMA, and the formation of an Aboriginal agency with the capacities to develop Australia's first 'independent Aboriginal broadcasting service', then it is imperative that we gain an appreciation of the particular governmental technologies that enabled this to occur.

In undertaking this task, I will argue that the application of Labor's policies and the processes involved in facilitating an alignment between state and Aboriginal aspirations did not proceed in a programmatic or deterministic way. On the contrary, it presented almost insurmountable difficulties and was prone to failure, particularly during the early stages of its implementation. I will also argue that contrary to the rhetoric surrounding the introduction of these policies, Aboriginal people had to acquire certain capacities that would enable them to become the effective agents of this process of 'self-determination'. Such capacities not only involved the 'practical' abilities associated with the management of Aboriginal organisations (and numerous other institutional formations), but more importantly also required what I will argue was the capacity to 'recognise' what actually *counted* as an 'act' of self-determination. The subjects of these policies would therefore require a sophisticated knowledge of the complex mechanisms of government in order to *enroll* themselves in this process of recognition.

The ability to discern what might count as an act of self-determination presupposed an ability to *practice* them. However, this did not mean that there was a prescribed or definitive way in which an Aboriginal person might recognise and practice self-determination. Rather, such acts had to be identified on a case-by-case basis and enacted in accordance with the specific conditions operating within any given situation. It was through these highly contested and often unstable processes that an alignment - no matter how ambiguous - began to emerge between state and Aboriginal aspirations. As I also hope to demonstrate, the 'Aboriginal corporate body' was to become the preeminent site where this process of alignment occurred.

I will therefore begin this account by tracing the formation of these bodies in Alice Springs from their tentative beginnings in 1965 through to the election of the Labor government in 1972. I will start with a brief examination of the policy changes that began to occur in the 1960's and show how this led to the first experiments in 'Aboriginal group organisation' in the region.

The Birth of the Incorporated Aboriginal Organisation in Alice Springs

As discussed in the previous chapter, during the 1960's a number of historic changes occurred in the Northern Territory - and at the national level - that had significant consequences for Aboriginals living in the Northern Territory. In 1962, the federal government enacted legislation giving all Aboriginal people the right to vote. This not only made the restrictive provisions in the *Aboriginal Ordinance (NT)* more or less redundant, but led to its annulment in 1964. In the same year, Aboriginal stockman were awarded equal wages by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, and the success of the national referendum in 1967 meant that all Aboriginal people would now be counted in the national census and, more importantly, allow the Commonwealth to act on their behalf. Further, the upheavals that were then occurring in the wider Australian polity - occasioned by Australia's growing military involvement in Vietnam - had the effect of focusing greater attention both nationally and internationally on Australia's treatment of its indigenous minority.

While there was a growing need for policy change in Aboriginal affairs, no decisive move was made in this direction before the end of the 1960's. Nonetheless, it seemed apparent that Aboriginal people would need to play a more assertive role in 'managing their own

affairs' if the old 'paternalistic' policies of 'assimilation' were to be abandoned. The problem for government therefore was to construct appropriate technologies, such as Aboriginal-managed institutions, that might accomplish this task. In reflecting on this changing mood, the policy historian C.D. Rowley wrote at the time:

> It is significant that there is a new trend on the part of governments and even Christian missions to talk of devolution of responsibility to Aboriginal communities. And whatever the difficulties may be, in this direction only seems to lie any hope for a constructive change towards involvement in the economy, while retaining what remains of group autonomy … Without it, there can be no new incentives stimulating Aboriginal pressures to improve the Aboriginal lot. Only organisations which provide for a degree of autonomy can give legitimacy to Aboriginal leadership, and a social enclave in which it can develop. The alternative, and the price of failure to achieving something like this, seems to be a rapidly increasing 'fringe' and dependent population in 'colonial Australia'. (Rowley: 1972c 11)

From the beginning of 1965, several small but highly significant experiments in 'Aboriginal group organisation' began to occur in Alice Springs in response to the prevailing uncertainties in Aboriginal policy. In that year, the Welfare Branch provided the United Church (as it was then known) with a grant to employ a Congregational Minister, Jim Downing, to conduct 'social work' among the Aboriginal community of Alice Springs (see Downing 1988). Downing had previously worked with Aboriginal people in Redfern, Sydney and was committed to what might be described as 'political organisation' and 'consciousness raising' [2]. Surprisingly, Downing was given a 'free hand' in this work and was not expected to follow the existing administrative practices of the Welfare Branch.

In keeping with the changing social and political environment, Downing believed that the only way to remedy the kind of problems afflicting the local Aboriginal community was to establish 'Aboriginal-controlled' organisations through which Aboriginal people would become both responsible for their own affairs and acquire the necessary skills to manage them. Initially, such organisations would be governed by 'cross-cultural' committees (made up of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals) until the 'appropriate time' arrived when complete control of such organisations could be handed over to Aboriginal people themselves. Similar ideas had of course been in circulation for some years prior to Downing's arrival in Alice Springs (as Rowley indicates above), particularly on government settlements and in some urban centres such as Redfern. However, they had not been applied to any real effect. Indeed, as far as I can determine, there were no incorporated organisations anywhere in Australia that were then controlled by all-Aboriginal governing committees, funded by the state.

In order to accomplish what he described as his 'vision', Downing spent several months talking with local Aboriginal people about his proposals concerning Aboriginal-controlled organisations. As a part of this process, he began to learn one of the local Aboriginal languages, Pitjatjantjara, and encouraged his colleagues within the United Church to do the same. Significantly, many of the Aboriginal people with whom he discussed his ideas during this period were to become involved in the formation of Aboriginal organisations following the election of the Whitlam government in 1972. This included Neville Perkins (nephew of Charles Perkins), who later helped establish local Aboriginal legal and medical services, Harry Tjakamarra Nelson, who became the chairman of the Yuendumu Community Council, Patricia Turner, who was later to become the general manager of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and Bill Gorey, who was for several years the chairman of CAAMA. Most particularly, Downing developed a close working relationship with Yami Lester, with whom he later co-directed the Institute for Aboriginal Development[3]. But it was not just within the Aboriginal community that Downing sought alliances in undertaking his work. He also established contact with prominent non-Aboriginal figures who were sympathetic to his ideas. They included the then Senator for the Northern Territory, Bernie Kilgariff, the Inspector of Aboriginal Schools, Max Althaus, the head of the Finke River Mission, Pastor Albrecht, and W.C. ('Billy') Wentworth, who became the Federal Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs in 1968.

Downing experimented with two Aboriginal organisational models between 1965 and 1969. The first of these, known as the 'Central Australian Aboriginal Social Club', grew out of a desire to remedy what Downing saw as a 'chronic lack of services for Aboriginal people' who were then travelling into Alice Springs from the surrounding settlements in increasing numbers. However, the formation of an organisation that might resolve these problems proved to be an exceptionally difficult task. On the one hand, Downing did not wish to take the leading role in establishing such an organisation. This of course ran counter to his political commitment to 'Aboriginal control'. On the other hand, the Aboriginal people with whom he worked did not, for the most part, possess either the experience, the governmental contacts, nor perhaps the confidence to form the proposed organisation, even though there was clear agreement concerning its need. Downing therefore began to experiment with a number of 'techniques' that might accomplish this task. For example, he developed a method in which he would call a meeting to discuss the development of the organisation - which often involved arranging transport for those who had expressed an

interest - and then, as he describes it, 'waiting' for Aboriginal people 'themselves' to call the next meeting.

One of the main difficulties that he encountered in this process was the lack of cohesion among the Aboriginal groups with whom he worked (see Appendix 1). Indeed, there were often 'violent' disagreements between these groups over who should control the proposed organisation, how it should be managed and what kinds of aims it should pursue (Rowley:1972c). Nonetheless, after numerous meetings extending over a period of some ten months, the Central Australian Aboriginal Social Club came into a semi-formal existence in late 1965 [4]. The Club was overseen by a committee of eleven Aboriginal people and five non-Aboriginals. It received donations from various local missionary societies and the United Church provided some basic premises in the centre of Alice Springs. For a period of time, the Club did manage to provide some support for local Aboriginals, mainly in the form of temporary accommodation, and as a point of referral. However, by 1968, it ceased to exist due primarily to a lack of resources.

Nevertheless, Downing continued to pursue the idea of developing Aboriginal-controlled organisations, although he was less optimistic about the length of time it would take for Aboriginal people to fully 'control' and operate such organisations. In May 1969, he arranged a lunch with 'Billy' Wentworth at Parliament House, Canberra. The Minister had developed a keen interest in Downing's work and had made a point of visiting him while on a trip to Alice Springs the previous year. After discussing his plans, Downing asked for and subsequently received a sizable one-off grant to assist in the establishment of a new organisation, modeled on the Social Club. In December of the same year he initiated a second organisational experiment: the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD).

IAD had a number of objectives, including the establishment of a health clinic for Aboriginal mothers and their newborn children, courses in local Aboriginal languages, general community development services, and tutorials in English for settlement-based Aboriginal people. It also became involved at a later point in the development of a local Aboriginal housing association, known as the Tangentyere Council (see below). Like the Social Club, IAD was governed by a board made up of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, with the eventual aim of handing over total control to Aboriginals. Importantly, the Welfare Branch was also represented on the first IAD board by its Southern Regional Director, Creed Lovegrove.

Ambiguities

Of course, there were a number of obvious ambiguities associated with these experiments in 'Aboriginal group organisation'. Such ambiguities were to have long-term consequences for the future development of Aboriginal-controlled organisations and their operation, particularly after their formal incorporation into the mechanisms of government following the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972. What then were these ambiguities and how were they significant?

First, although Downing was indirectly employed by the Welfare Branch and therefore - technically speaking - a public servant, to what extent could he legitimately work for and, indeed, initiate the development of Aboriginal groups which were, in some sense, meant to operate independently of government? When Downing first took up his position in 1965, the Welfare Branch's stated policy was that 'aborigines should be encouraged to detach themselves from their ... position of group solidarity and become merged as individuals in the general community' (NTA 1965:10). Downing of course was proceeding in the opposite direction. He was not only encouraging Aboriginal people to retain their sense of 'group solidarity', but actively working towards the establishment of institutions that would both reflect this solidarity and consolidate it. Here, it seems, the government was prepared to take the unprecedented step of employing someone who was openly committed to 'resisting' its stated policies. Moreover, he was encouraging Aboriginal people to do the same. It seems the government was prepared to support such 'resistance', even if in a highly provisional and 'hands-off' way.

This, I would suggest, was an important moment. As proposed in the previous chapter, the policies of Aboriginal self-determination depended to a certain extent on the 'incorporation' of 'Aboriginal resistance' into its general operations. As O'Malley has pointed out, under these policies, 'government and resistance articulate, mingle and hybridize, so that resistance cannot readily be thought of as external to rule' (O'Malley 1996: 312). I would propose that in these tentative experiments, we begin to see not only a hybridization of 'government and resistance', but the formation of institutional technologies through which this process might be facilitated. This of course was a fundamentally important characteristic of future Aboriginal organisations.

A second ambiguity was that, on the one hand, Downing insisted that the Aboriginal organisations he was attempting to establish should be free to operate *outside* the strict orbit

of government. On the other hand, he was careful to garner both political and financial support with relatively powerful figures *within* government and, as we have seen, such figures were often prepared to lend their support - albeit 'at a distance' from the organisations with which he was involved. This, I would suggest, was also an important development. As previously discussed, the policies of Aboriginal self-determination also depended on governmental technologies that had the effect of 'distancing' the mechanisms of rule from those it sought to govern. In a similar vein, the formation of 'Aboriginal community' organisations that were 'indirectly' supported by the state were a particularly attractive proposition, since they located rule in the everyday, voluntary interaction of a 'community of allegiances' or, in this case, within the Aboriginal community itself.

Third, and perhaps most problematically, there was the issue of Downing's 'ethnicity': he was not Aboriginal. The obvious question that arises here is that if the organisations that he was committed to establishing were meant to be - in his own terms - 'Aboriginal controlled and operated', then his particular role in initiating and managing their development becomes highly ambiguous, as does the role and operation of the organisations themselves.

My aim here is not to criticise Downing's work. On the contrary, I would argue that the ambiguities and contradictions associated with these experiments in 'Aboriginal group organisation' were an inescapable aspect of the emerging social, political and governmental requirement that Aboriginal people 'manage their own affairs'. In this sense, Downing and the Aboriginal people with whom he worked can be seen as pioneers of these new forms of governance. Furthermore, it was within these emergent organisations - through which Aboriginal people would be expected to exercise a degree of 'self-determination' - that these ambiguities would inevitably be most pronounced. Indeed, I have argued that these institutional technologies were *necessarily* ambiguous, partly because they depended for their effective operation on the obfuscation of governmental power (see previous chapter).

A Feature of the Liberal Project

At a broader level, these developments and their contradictory nature can also be seen as an inherent feature of the liberal project, as Barry Hindess has noted:

> In the discourse of liberal politics … the figure of a community of autonomous individuals appears on the one hand as a given reality, serving to identify the character and the limits of legitimate government. On the other hand, it appears as yet to be realised positively, serving to define the objective for a variety of governmental projects. One of the central figures of

liberal discourse, in other words, has a distinctly ambiguous ontological status. (Hindess 1996:66)

I would suggest that Downing's work was primarily concerned with the 'yet to be realised positivity' of a taken-for-granted Aboriginal 'community of autonomous individuals', against which a variety of governmental projects could be 'defined'. I would further argue that in these various experiments in developing 'self-governing' Aboriginal organisations, Downing assisted in the process of defining a set of specific government projects that would later emerge in Central Australia under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. More importantly, he also helped to create what I would describe as certain locally-specific techniques and practices through which these projects might be developed and managed. By the term 'techniques and practices', I am referring to a range of administrative, corporate and, most critically, inter-cultural practices that emerged throughout this period of experimentation. As we shall see, these techniques established an enduring pattern that other non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people would subsequently adopt in developing new Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs throughout the 1970's, including, of course, CAAMA (see below). I will now examine how these developments in Alice Springs entered the broader processes of government and how they eventually informed national policy.

A 'Spark of Hope'

Towards the end of the 1960's, Downing's work came to the attention of C.D. Rowley, who was then completing his seminal three-volume study on the history of Aboriginal policy. In formulating his ideas on the 'corporate Aboriginal body' (see previous chapter), Rowley suggested that Downing's experiments created an important precedent that might lead to a new approach in government policy towards Aboriginals:

> Here, then, was a small growing point which might, with official restraint, and with assistance on request … develop into a new institution. Eventually, this would seem to require some corporate entity … The cost of much of the work was borne by government, with the Welfare Branch showing restraint in allowing the social worker [Downing] to spend the time, for which it was paying, on 'group therapy' rather than on the individual counseling on which it seems to mainly to have been depending in similar situations … Here was the small spark of hope … indicating the one way out of the social impasse. (Rowley 1972c: 53-54)

As we have also seen, H.C. ('Nugget') Coombs was particularly taken with Rowley's ideas on the development of 'Aboriginal corporate bodies'. No doubt Rowley would have discussed with Coombs the developments then taking place in Alice Springs and, like

Rowley, perhaps saw them as an example of how an Aboriginal organisation might work. Indeed, Coombs became an advocate of the Aboriginal corporate body and took every opportunity to recommend their support by government. In an address given to The Society of Friends in 1969, Coombs spoke of the potential of such bodies to advance the development of Aboriginal self-sufficiency:

> It is in these, even in the humblest of them, that a people learns the lessons of government and administration. Aborigines will need great help therein. There is room for any person of good will to offer aid and to take pride in their growing self-reliance. (in Rowse 2000: 33)

As we have also seen, from 1968 to 1976 Coombs chaired the Council for Aboriginal Affairs (CAA), through which he exerted a considerable influence on the emergent policies of the Whitlam Labor government. Of course, one of the initiatives he urged it to adopt was the Aboriginal corporate body.

An Alignment with Governmental Power

When Labor came to power on the 2nd of December 1972, it did not consider its new policy of 'Aboriginal self-determination' as simply an 'improvement' on past approaches. Indeed, it felt that one of its primary duties as a national government was to try and undo the 'damage' that had been done to Aboriginal people as a direct result of previous approaches, even though, as indicated above, there were certain continuities with such policies. Nonetheless, Labor wished to be seen to be making a clean break with the past, as indicated in a speech delivered in 1973 by the first Labor Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gordon Bryant :

> … the new direction ... in Aboriginal affairs ... involved the establishment of a completely new administrative system, it involved a totally new approach … 1973 will be a watershed in the history of Aboriginal advancement in this country. (Bryant 1973: 904)

Before Labor's electoral victory, the Welfare Division of the Northern Territory Administration - which then fell within the Commonwealth Department of the Interior - had coordinated most governmental services for Aboriginal people in the Territory, as seen above. However, with the establishment of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) on the 19th of December 1972, the Welfare Division ceased to exist, and its operations were transferred in their entirety to DAA (DAA 1975). While the Welfare Division had closely managed services and programs to the Aboriginal population 'from the top down', Labor's reforms aimed at reversing this order of administration. Henceforth, the government would

- to quote DAA's first Secretary, B.G. Dexter - 'encourage and strengthen the capacity of Aboriginals to manage their own affairs' (DAA 1975:5).

The actual application of this objective nevertheless presented DAA with a dilemma. On the one hand, it did not wish to replicate, in a different departmental guise, the administrative operations of the Welfare Division, as this of course ran counter to its central policy principles. Whilst on the other hand, it could not deliver the promised improvements in Aboriginal health, housing, education, legal representation, etc. without expanding the governmental machinery required to undertake these complex tasks. As we have seen in the previous chapter, in attempting to resolve this difficulty, DAA eventually 'seized on' (to use Coombs words) the 'Aboriginal corporate body'. As Rowley and Coombs had consistently proposed, not only might these organisations be adapted to take over the administration of services once provided by the government, but they could also perhaps deliver Labor's new programs. Most importantly, they would be 'controlled and operated by Aboriginal people themselves'.

Thus, the tentative initiatives in 'Aboriginal group organisation' undertaken by Downing and subsequently championed by Rowley and Coombs would assume a central role in Labor's plans to 'empower' Aboriginal people. The 'Aboriginal corporate body' would become the primary vehicle through which an alignment between Aboriginal and state aspirations might be achieved and, most importantly, through which various forms of Aboriginal agency might be nurtured to undertake a range of projects on behalf of the state (see previous chapter). As we have also seen, twelve months after Labor's election to office, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam announced that his government would 'devolve upon … organisations of Aboriginals themselves, responsibility for carrying out the policies decided upon by my government' (Whitlam 1973:697).

Nevertheless, the development of Aboriginal organisations capable of 'carrying out' Labor's policies would prove to be an extremely fraught process. It was one thing to develop policy models that provided neat conceptual resolutions for the government's political and moral ambitions, but quite another to realise such ambitions in practice. Similarly, while Downing's initial experiments had produced a 'spark of hope' in developing such organisations, the conversion of these experiments into fully operational institutions, capable of administering a range of services previously undertaken by government, would be a difficult and long-term project. Indeed, I would suggest that Labor possessed only a

limited understanding of the problems it would encounter in attempting to create such institutions. This was perhaps understandable given the fact that no government had pursued this particular course of action before, or at least not on the scale proposed by Labor. I will now turn to the specific problems associated with this implementation process.

Implementing Self-determination

> 'Reality' always escapes the theories that inform programs and the ambitions that underpin them; it is too unruly to be captured by any perfect knowledge. Technologies produce unexpected problems, are utilized for their own ends by those who are supposed to merely operate them, are hampered by underfunding, professional rivalries, and the impossibility of producing the technical conditions that would make them work … Unplanned outcomes emerge from the intersection of one technology with another, or from the unexpected consequences of putting a technique to work. Contrawise, techniques invented for one purpose may find their governmental role for another, and the unplanned conjunction of techniques and conditions arising from very different aspirations may allow something to work without or despite its explicit rationale. The 'will to govern' needs to be understood less in terms of its success than in terms of the difficulties of operationalizing it. (Miller & Rose 1990:11)

By mid-1973, the establishment of incorporated Aboriginal organisations had become an essential strategy in Labor's drive to 'encourage' Aboriginal people to 'manage their own affairs'. Aboriginal government settlements were now to be 'controlled' by locally-elected, incorporated Aboriginal Councils and no longer supervised, as they had been in the past, by Welfare Division staff. In theory at least, these staff would now act more in an advisory role, with the aim of progressively handing over to local Aboriginal people the day-to-day administration of local services (Long 1992, DAA 1975). In a similar vein, Aboriginals would be encouraged to form themselves into incorporated bodies to deliver Labor's new programs in health, housing, legal representation and other areas.

Attempts to create these 'self-determining' Aboriginal Councils in the remote government settlements ran into severe problems. In many instances, local Aboriginal people were simply unable to respond in any effective way to the new governmental demand that they 'manage their own affairs'. This was particularly the case in locations where rates of literacy and competencies in English were poor, or in some cases, negligible. At Papunya, for example, a large proportion of the residents - the Pintupi - had only come into contact with non-Aboriginals during the mid 1950's and late 1960's and so had no expertise to run what was then a relatively complex community of over 1,100 people (see DAA 1977). By the same

58

token, the Welfare staff who had previously managed these operations were confused and, in some cases, openly hostile about their new roles.

When Coombs visited the Central Australian community of Yuendumu in 1974 to inspect, at first hand, the application of the government's policies, he was troubled by what he found. A group of local Aboriginal women told him that they were extremely worried by the upsurge in drinking on the part of their menfolk and proposed that there was a 'continued need for white administrators and … police', which presumably ran counter to Coombs's long-held views on 'Aboriginal self-determination' (in Rowse 2000: 139). Far more disturbing was Coombs's discovery that certain Aboriginal Councilors were 'running grog' into the community from Alice Springs. Of course, Yuendumu was not alone in experiencing such difficulties. Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory were encountering similar, if not worse, problems in adjusting to the new policy regime. Towards the end of 1973, the Secretary of DAA, Barrie Dexter, said in relation to these developments that 'we may have a problem of major proportions here' (in Rowse 2000: 138).

Yet it was not only Aboriginal people who were having problems with the new approach. The government itself came to the belated realisation that it did not possess the appropriate administrative infrastructure to implement its policy changes. Moreover, it had proceeded to dismantle pre-existing government services and programs on Aboriginal communities without replacing them with workable, 'self-determining' alternatives. Indeed, in a number of locations, chaos had come to supplant the old restrictive order of the past (see DAA 1977).

As a result of these calamities, Dexter took the unprecedented step of officially informing the Auditor-General, in August 1973, that DAA could not 'cope with its administrative obligations'. More disturbingly, he also indicated that he 'could no longer control the financial operations of the department' (DAA 1975:2-3). He subsequently recommended that a parliamentary committee be established to thoroughly examine the department's internal structure and most importantly, the effectiveness of its policies. Inevitably, the government's general disarray in implementing its new programs attracted wide publicity. It also generated a substantial degree of hostility within the non-Aboriginal population of the Northern Territory. In response to these pressures, the Prime Minister dismissed the first Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gordon Bryant, in September 1973, and replaced him with Senator James Cavanagh.

The new Minister was determined to be 'frank and open' about the difficulties his government had encountered over the previous months. In February 1974, he delivered a speech at the National Press Club in which he declared 'Labor's implementation of its policy on Aboriginal Affairs has been one of disaster' (Cavanagh 1974:7). Clearly, the government had become less confident about its abilities to translate the rhetoric of 'Aboriginal self-determination' into administrative reality. Indeed, when Cavanagh was asked to define 'Aboriginal self-determination' - ten months after taking up his appointment - he replied:

> Yes, what is self-determination? I don't think any of us really knows. It is a new experiment, but I suppose self-determination is the creation [by government] of town and village councils run by Aborigines; the establishment of housing associations, medical centres and other projects … (in Mullard 1974:9)

Nonetheless, these problems did not appear to diminish the government's overall commitment to its policies. As Cavanagh subsequently indicated, these early setbacks simply meant that it would require a longer period to implement the new approach. It would also entail the gradual development - through a process of experimentation - of appropriate governmental mechanisms that might make it work. More specifically, 'Aboriginal corporate bodies' would need to be carefully honed, and special techniques developed that would allow them to enact - with enhanced capabilities - the policies of government.

Arguably, Labor had little choice but to continue to experiment with its new direction in governing Aboriginals. Certainly, there could be no returning to the coercive methods deployed in the past. As we have seen, the demand for a more 'liberal' approach in Aboriginal affairs had begun long before Labor's electoral victory in 1972. This was the case even within certain sections of the old Welfare Branch which, as shown above, had provided tacit support for Downing's experiments in 'group Aboriginal organisation' in 1965. Moreover, the social and political climate within the wider Australian polity - not to mention Labor's electoral constituency - would not have allowed any reversion to previous practices. As Rowse has shown, even the conservative McMahon government (which lost office in 1972) had begun to make moves towards a more 'open' approach to Aboriginal affairs.

In summing up the problems associated with these initial attempts to create local 'Aboriginal community-controlled councils and organisations', Coombs was to later note that it produced a 'record of confusion, dissension, trial and error, failures and new beginnings' (Coombs & Smith 1994:173).

The Capacity to be Self-determining

As argued in the introduction to this thesis, in implementing its new approach, Labor had tended to assume, at least in the initial stages, that Aboriginal people were simply waiting to be 'liberated' from the 'oppressive' policies of the past and that once these policies had been removed they would automatically 'determine their own affairs'. In fact, it was expected that the government would 'withdraw' from any specific involvement in the lives of Aboriginals once the policies of self-determination had been fully implemented (see Cavanagh 1975). However, as we have seen, this was far from the actual case. As Pat O'Malley has argued, the Aboriginal 'subjects of self-determination were not liberal subjects already primed with the taken-for-granted assumptions, knowledge and practices of the populace of urban, white Australia' (O'Malley 1996: 315). In other words, it became increasingly obvious that Aboriginal people would require certain *capacities* to become the *effective subjects* of the government's project of 'empowerment'. Indeed, the rhetoric associated with its implementation tended to elide the very real need for the acquisition of such capacities.

There were, I would suggest, two interrelated kinds of 'capacities' that were required here. In the first instance, there were the 'practical' abilities that would be needed to manage and run the sometimes complex institutional formations that operated under the policies of self-determination. Certainly, expertise of a high order would be needed to operate local municipal councils, legal aid services, medical clinics, schools and housing associations. In other words, they would require a basic level of western education, experience in the mundane routines of non-Aboriginal organisational environments, the acquisition of specialist skills in a range of professions and a broad understanding of the political and social practices of the wider Australian polity.

Ironically, the acquisition of these kinds of 'capacities' had always been the goal of previous policy approaches, particularly during the 'assimilationist' era. For example, by the early 1970's (before the election of the Labor government), many of the staff within the Welfare Branch were in fact Aboriginal people who had been trained to take up various administrative positions (see DAA 1973). In this sense, I would argue that the kind of practical abilities required to operate these new programs and organisations under Labor did not differ, to any great extent, from the capacities needed to run any modern governmental program or service organisation. So in what sense, we might ask, did Labor's 'totally new

approach' differ from those deployed by previous governments? This brings me to the second, and far more complex set of 'capacities' that this project of 'empowerment' necessitated.

Under Labor, it was not just a matter of training Aboriginals to work within various departmental service organisations, as previous governments had attempted to do. On the contrary, most of these administrative operations now had to be *detached* from government and *controlled* by 'the Aboriginal community' through 'a process of self-determination'. Clearly, this was the most ideologically significant difference separating Labor's policies from those deployed in the past. As outlined above, the energies of the new Department of Aboriginal Affairs had been primarily directed at ensuring that this 'process' was activated throughout the Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory. Here, the 'capacity' of Aboriginal people to exert, on a collective basis, what might be termed 'acts of self-determination' was central to Labor's ambitions to 'empower' Aboriginal people and was, arguably, of greater importance than the kind of 'practical' capacities noted above.

Recognising Acts of Self-determination

Despite the imposition of new legislative frameworks, expanded funding programs and other governmental technologies designed to make these new policies work, it became increasingly difficult to discern what actually counted as 'acts of self-determination' and, more disconcertingly, what it was that gave Aboriginal people the 'capacity' to undertake such 'acts'. Indeed, if the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Cavanagh, had problems in knowing what 'self-determination' actually meant, to what extent could Aboriginal people respond to the demand that they 'act' in self-determining ways? Furthermore, how could officers within his own department implement such policies on a practical basis?

The difficulties associated with identifying what actually constituted a 'process of self-determination' were highlighted, I would suggest, when Coombs visited Yuendumu in 1974. As seen above, Coombs had observed that a local Aboriginal Councilor was 'running grog' into Yuendumu from Alice Springs. For Coombs, this would have hardly counted as 'an act of self-determination', since it undermined the prestige of the local 'community-controlled' Council, which in turn undermined the government's broader policy ambitions. Nonetheless, for the Councilor, his actions may well have constituted a preeminent act of self-determination, given the fact that only a few years before he would have been jailed for

doing the same thing. On the other hand, when local Aboriginal women told Coombs that they were worried about the growing importation of 'grog' into the community (by the local Councilor, for instance) and that the white administrators and police were needed to deal with the resulting problems, Coombs seemed more puzzled. As we have seen, the retention of white staff ran counter to Labor's desire to 'empower' local Aboriginal communities. Presumably, Coombs would have felt that the women's request to maintain the presence of white staff did not constitute an *appropriate* act of self-determination. Clearly, perceptions about what 'self-determination' actually entailed varied, both within government and the Aboriginal community, and between both domains.

Coombs's confrontation with the anomalies associated with the application of Labor's policy was not an isolated case. Almost from its inception, the policy generated a large body of critical literature (see Introduction). Furthermore, those charged with its actual implementation have also continued to experience difficulties. For example, in the final report by the Australian Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 'Aboriginal self-determination' was consistently touted as the key to 'alleviating the disadvantages and widespread prejudice suffered by Aboriginal Australians' (ARCADC 1991). However, in attempting to come to terms with this notion, Commissioner Johnson could only state in the same report that it was

> … remarkable how a concept which is so widely recognised as being central to the achievement of the profound change which is required in the area of Aboriginal affairs remains so ephemeral and so difficult to define. (in Brennen 1994:19)

While much of the debate surrounding the policies of self-determination has sought to establish clear 'definitions' of what these policies might mean, I would argue that such endeavours are not especially important, or useful. What is important is to understand how *particular* definitions of Aboriginal self-determination are *deployed* in achieving various political, private, institutional and governmental ends.

In fact, the conceptually obscure and ambiguous nature of these policies has never prevented governmental agencies from producing varying definitions or interpretations to support the objectives of numerous projects under its name. Programs in health, welfare, substance abuse, language retention, child care, nutrition, commercial enterprise and a host of other government-led initiatives have deployed selective interpretations of self-determination in the implementation and operation of such projects (see previous chapter). Moreover, such

definitions are usually applied in accordance with the prevailing circumstances in a given situation, even if this means that one definition used in a particular situation might later contradict a definition used in another. The point to be made here is that these various definitions or interpretations only achieve a meaning, or make sense, when deployed in a practical, strategic context when advancing the specific ambitions of those particular actors involved in a given set of circumstances, whether they be members of the Aboriginal community, or government officers.

Under these conditions, I would argue that Aboriginal people had to acquire what I would describe as the capacity to *recognise* what actually counted as a 'process of self-determination' - almost on a case-by-case basis - and to 'act' accordingly (if they so desired). One could also say the same for the governmental programmers charged with the implementation of such policies. We should therefore not look to establish conclusive, conceptual definitions of 'Aboriginal self-determination'. Rather, we should try to identify the kind of technologies that make these 'acts' *recognisable*.

A Politically Able Self

In this sense, the application of self-determination constituted what I would describe as a kind of long-term *game* whereby certain rules of engagement, points of negotiation and strategic alliances began to emerge through a hit-and-miss process, irrespective of their ambiguity and contradictory nature. Here, Aboriginal people had to develop ways of *recognising* 'self-determination' within frameworks established by government, even if such frameworks appeared to be arbitrary and difficult to discern.

While this 'game' may have seemed, at times, almost impenetrable, it nonetheless involved high stakes of a material, political and personal nature. The possibility of gaining access to substantial funding resources, employment opportunities, political power and status gave it a kind of pragmatically determined coherence. This in turn began to produce distinct roles or *subject positions* in which the various players might *enroll* themselves, depending on the immediate circumstances and their own private or collective ambitions.

Yet, in order to recognise, inhabit and effectively operate within any subject position - even if in a temporary, strategic sense - one requires certain abilities, knowledges and capacities. This, I would suggest, is particularly the case in regard to the formation of subject positions within the processes of government. As Barbara Cruikshank has proposed:

> … self-government depends on the ability of the citizen to recognise, isolate and act upon their own subjectivity, to be governors of themselves. The ability of the citizen to generate a politically able self depends upon technologies of subjectivity … which link personal goals and desires to social order and stability, which link power to subjectivity. (Cruikshank 1996:235)

Here I would argue that the ability of Aboriginal people to 'generate a politically able self' under the policies of 'self-determination', depended on a particularly elaborate array of 'technologies of subjectivity'. As O'Malley has pointed out, these policies actually constituted a complex form of advanced liberal governance, requiring abilities of a special kind to navigate its ambiguities, internal contradictions and obscurities. While the acquisition of 'practical' capacities was an important aspect of this 'politically able self' (as it had been under the policies of 'assimilation'), far more important, I would argue, was the 'capacity' of Aboriginal people to effectively position themselves in this 'game' of 'self-determination'.

Yet an Aboriginal person's ability to play this complex yet ill-defined 'game' depended on their possessing, as O'Malley also suggests, the same or at least some of the 'assumptions, knowledge and practices of the populace of urban, white Australia' (see above). In other words, they would need to have an understanding of the elaborate politics and mechanisms of these governmental policies in order to locate themselves within them and thereby become effective players. In a further irony, I would also suggest that those Aboriginal people who *did* possess these abilities (in varying degrees) had acquired them, for the most part, as a result of previous governmental approaches that had attempted to inculcate in them these 'practices' of 'white Australia', particularly under the policies of 'assimilation' (see Appendix 1). As we shall see, the most effective and enduring 'Aboriginal-controlled' organisations were those in which such Aboriginal people had a substantial involvement.

Self-determination as a Practice

While the capacity to recognise 'acts of self-determination' was of fundamental importance in operationalising Labor's policy ambitions, the formation of certain 'practices' or technologies that might constitute such 'acts' was just as significant. Indeed, to a certain extent, the ability to 'recognise' such acts presupposed an ability to 'practice' them, although, as we have seen, the formation of a 'fit' between the various governmental and

Aboriginal perceptions about what might 'count' as an 'act' of 'self-determination' could be difficult to establish.

As Foucault has suggested, although governments may devise projects designed to secure the 'liberty' of their citizens, or, in this case, the 'right of Aboriginal people to determine their own affairs', this does not necessarily mean that such projects will result in the 'liberation' of those at whom such projects are directed. What governments must do then is attempt to facilitate a 'fit' between their projects of 'liberation' and the reorganisation of the habits, roles and behaviours of those they seek to 'liberate'. In other words, a whole range of 'practices' must be developed to augment this process of liberation, or self-determination:

> I do not think that there is anything that is functionally - by its very nature - absolutely liberating. Liberty is a *practice*. So there may, in fact, always be a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even to break them, but none of these projects can simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically, that it will be established by the project itself. The liberty of men is never assured by the institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them. (Foucault 1994: 162)

I would therefore argue that 'Aboriginal self-determination' should be understood as a particular kind of 'practice' and, like all 'practices', it must be 'learnt' through the application of certain mundane routines, the acquisition of particular capacities and, in this specific case, the development of certain technologies, both of a subjective and governmental nature.

Although the Labor government believed that its policies would in some sense 'liberate' Aboriginal people from the burden of 'governmental interference', this proved not to be the case. In fact, Labor instituted an increasingly complex and expansive governmental administrative network to facilitate this apparent 'liberation'. Here, a whole range of 'practices' were progressively developed over a number of years, during which time they gradually became 'recognisable' - to both the government and to Aboriginal people - as constituting a 'process of self-determination'.

Incorporating the Practices of Self-determination

I would suggest that the primary institutional technology through which the 'practices' of Aboriginal self-determination would be developed and made 'recognisable' was the Aboriginal corporate body. Of course, in providing the mechanisms for the 'practice' of self-determination, such institutions also enabled Aboriginal people to acquire, if they so wished, the 'capacities' to engage in such practices. Here, in other words, was the preeminent site

where the 'game' of self-determination could be played out to a relatively effective extent, although it should be emphasised that this 'game' remained extremely ambiguous and highly unstable.

As we have seen, Labor's preliminary attempts to develop such institutions proved almost overwhelming. Certainly, the gap between its initial expectations and the practical implementation of these bodies produced what Coombs described (above) as a record of 'confusion'. Indeed, its attempts to establish 'Aboriginal-controlled' organisations and councils within the first twelve months of its term came close to ending in what Minister Cavanagh referred to as a 'disaster'.

Conclusion: The Solicitation of the Aboriginal Community

As we shall see, the kind of 'practices' established by Downing and his Aboriginal colleagues were to be emulated, in various ways, by other non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people who were to become involved in the formation of other organisations throughout the 1970's, including CAAMA. This entailed, for instance, the inauguration of certain procedures in which an organisation might enlist the support of the local Aboriginal community, the formation of particular styles of organisational management that could satisfy the competing demands of both community and governmental accountability, training programs designed to 'Aboriginalise' these Aboriginal organisations, distinct ways of relating within the workplace, the formation of certain political and administrative relationships with government, etc. Here, in other words, procedures and techniques for the *practice* of self-determination were developed within frameworks that could be supported by the state.

I would further propose that the most significant aspect of Downing's work revolved around the actual working relationships he established with local Aboriginal people in pursuing the establishment of these 'community-controlled' organisations. As Rowley has noted, the 'techniques' (to use Rowley's term) developed by Downing in working with Aboriginal people represented a very different approach to the methods previously deployed by the Welfare Branch. Although he was actually employed indirectly by this organisation, he deliberately sought to undermine, or at least to reconfigure the relationships that had previously operated between government officers within the Branch and Aboriginal people. In other words, instead of 'talking down' to Aboriginal from a position of authority, Downing attempted to create a certain level of parity in these relationships, whereby issues

and problems could be resolved through a process of 'dialogue' and solicitation instead of direct imposition. Moreover, Downing sought to *position* himself *with* Aboriginal people in a kind of joint oppositional stance to government, so that, in a sense, his professional and personal ambitions found an *alignment* with those Aboriginal people with whom he worked. As Rowley also noted, the 'techniques' pioneered by Downing required special skills and most importantly, a level of 'humility' in order to make them work.

As I hope to demonstrate in greater detail in the following chapter, the relationships that Downing established with Aboriginal people represented a certain kind of *governmental technology* that would prove to be an essential element in the future development of Aboriginal organisations in Central Australia. Indeed, to a certain extent, such relationships would form, I would suggest, one of the primary sites through which the policies of Aboriginal self-determination could be effectively implemented.

As argued in this chapter, throughout the 1970's these procedures and techniques helped inaugurate and shape the expansion of what I have described as a complex administrative culture in Central Australia. A multiplicity of governmental technologies rapidly emerged to facilitate the 'processes self-determination'. This did not only include the more obvious techniques outlined above, but the development of administrative procedures for the acquittal of grants, the regulation and minutes of annual general meetings (as required under various acts of incorporation), progress reports for numerous funding authorities, detailed auditing practices, etc. As Rose and Miller have suggested (above), these 'apparently humble and mundane mechanisms' made it possible to govern and 'act upon' the Aboriginal population of Central Australia. As we shall see, this complex 'administrative culture' facilitated the emergence of an Aboriginal agency capable of establishing the first Aboriginal broadcasting service in Australia, CAAMA.

WHITE ADVISORS AND THEIR SUBJECTS

Introduction

When Yami Lester and Jim Downing established the first Aboriginal organisation in Alice Springs in 1970 (see previous chapter), they not only demonstrated that they could work effectively together on behalf of the Aboriginal community - they were also establishing the parameters for a certain kind of black-white working relationship that others would use as a model.

Indeed, there were a number of significant partnerships that emerged between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in Alice Springs throughout the 1970's. For example, the non-Aboriginal lawyer, Geoff Eames (now a Supreme Court judge), worked from 1974 to 1978 with Wenten Rubuntja in establishing the Central Land Council (see Faine 1993). The environmental activist and former Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Phillip Toyne, worked closely with Donald Fraser and other Pitjatjantjara in obtaining secure title to their lands in the early 1980's (see Toyne & Vachon 1984). The architect Julian Wigley and social worker Bob Durnan worked with Geoff Shaw and other Aboriginal 'towncampers' in developing Tangentyere Council (now the largest independent owner of residential housing stock in the Alice Springs township) (see Heppell & Wigley 1981). The late Trevor Cutter, a medical doctor, played an instrumental role in consolidating the Congress Health Service with Aboriginals Neville Perkins and Bob Liddle (see CAAC 1991). As we shall see, similar partnerships were also forged through the establishment of CAAMA.

There are two distinct but related lines of inquiry I wish to pursue in analysing such partnerships in this chapter. First, I will propose that they constituted a kind of *governmental technology* that played a central role in operationalising the institutional mechanisms associated with the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. I am not referring here to mundane administrative procedures and practices, nor to the provision of particular forms of professional expertise. Rather, I am concerned with the question of how these partnerships facilitated the government's objective of 'encouraging' Aboriginal people to 'govern themselves'. As Mitchell Dean has proposed, one of the most important ways in which the modern state seeks to govern is through what he describes as 'a swarm of experts, specialists, advisors and empowerers' (Dean 1996: 211).

Second, I am also interested in the 'performative' nature of these partnerships. As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, in attempting to accomplish their various objectives, the members of these partnerships were constantly involved in the presentation of what I have termed 'performances' before a wide range of audiences. For example, in procuring government funding for a particular project, a series of carefully constructed performances might be presented before several government officials or perhaps a government minister. Similarly, in gaining the authorisation of 'the Aboriginal community', another kind of performance may have been required. In constructing and presenting these performances, I will argue that strategic representations of 'the Aboriginal community', of 'Aboriginal culture', of 'Aboriginal identity' and of 'Aboriginal self-determination' were routinely produced as a matter of course. Moreover, the form and content of these constructions were largely delineated by the tactical requirements of a given situation, depending on the objectives that the partnership wished to achieve.

The important point I wish to make here is this: in seeking to establish Aboriginal organisations, or in pursuing other related projects, these partners dealt and traded in differing forms of Aboriginal cultural identity and, furthermore, this process was largely informed by the governmental machinery associated with the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. I will therefore propose that the constitution of differing forms of cultural identity both of a subjective and external nature were a necessary, if sometimes unintended, consequence of these various operations. In other words, there were certain linkages between the policies and practices of government and the formation of cultural difference within these partnerships. As Shore and Wright have proposed:

> … policy has become an increasingly central concept in the organisation of contemporary societies. Like the modern state … policy now impinges on all areas of life so that it is virtually impossible to ignore or escape its influence. More than this, policy increasingly shapes the way individuals construct themselves as subjects … (Shore & Wright 1997: 35)

In pursuing these propositions, I will first provide an historical analysis tracing the emergence of these partnerships in the Northern Territory, following the implementation of self-determination policy in the early 1970's. I will further argue that the application of these policies precipitated the development of a kind of 'administrative class' consisting primarily (but not exclusively) of non-Aboriginals who worked to maintain the administrative machinery associated with these policies and their practices.

Reluctant Subjects

As touched on in previous chapters, up until 1972 the Social Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration employed a sizable staff who provided services to Aboriginal 'settlements' and, to a lesser extent, urban-based Aboriginal groups (see Tatz 1964).They also maintained a certain level of control over the Aboriginal populations placed under their care. Indeed, until the *Welfare Ordinance (NT)* was repealed in 1964, officers within the Branch could discipline and, if deemed necessary, have Aboriginal people arrested if they consistently failed to follow the directions of Branch staff (NTA 1965).

However, as we have seen, in the years following the implementation of Labor's policy of self-determination (1972 to 1975), this administrative order experienced radical change if not a complete collapse. Most of the staff employed within the Welfare Branch were transferred to the newly created Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) or other departments, and in some cases were simply made redundant (DAA 1975). As noted above, the federal government now sought to provide services to Aboriginal communities through a multiplicity of discrete 'Aboriginal-controlled' organisations which would be supported through various funding-assistance schemes, coordinated by DAA.

The establishment of these bodies was of course a key objective in the campaign to 'empower' Aboriginal people. Moreover, it was intended that they would not only be 'controlled' by Aboriginals in a corporate sense, but run by them as well (Cavanagh 1974). Nonetheless, there was a tacit understanding that during their early development phase they would require the assistance of non-Aboriginal 'expertise' until they became, at a later point, 'fully Aboriginalised'. Furthermore, in its 1974-75 annual report, DAA proposed that once these Aboriginal organisations had been established and were entirely managed and operated by Aboriginals, 'the Department itself should disappear' (DAA 1975:2).

Nonetheless, as suggested in successive reports issued by DAA (which of course did not 'disappear'), the availability of Aboriginal people with the expertise required to operate these organisations remained relatively limited and in some contexts, almost non-existent. Moreover, it became apparent that many Aboriginal people (particularly those living on remote communities), were disinclined to take up the challenge of 'managing their own affairs'. The prospect of wielding administrative forms of power over close relatives or arbitrating in disputes over the allocation of governmental resources fell outside established patterns of local authority and, as some have argued, tended to erode these pre-existent forms of Aboriginal organisation (see Von Sturmer 1984, Tonkinson 1974). A senior officer

within DAA during the implementation of these policies suggested in 1974 that the 'reluctance of Aboriginals to assume responsibility' for these newly imposed forms of administration and their general unwillingness to take charge of 'matters that they would rather have white people fuss about' was 'reasonable and sensible' (in Rowse 2000:137).

The lack of experience with Western forms of administrative organisations (including 'incorporated Aboriginal organisations') made it difficult for Aboriginal people to take 'responsibility' for managing them. Furthermore, the high levels of illiteracy and the poor command of English in many of these communities (especially among the Aboriginal 'elders' who were often expected to take up these managerial positions) made such a task almost impossible to achieve. Even in urban settings such as Alice Springs where educational levels among Aboriginals were higher, the often complex skills required to operate these new organisations - particularly in the provision of specialist expertise - was also relatively scarce. As a result, the non-Aboriginal staff who had originally been employed on an interim basis usually continued to assist in the operation of these organisations.

In some cases, the Welfare Branch officers who had been made redundant under the new policy reforms later found employment within the Aboriginal organisations established under these same policies (DAA 1975). Moreover, as the projects and programs associated with self-determinationist policy expanded, the number of non-Aboriginal people involved in the operation of these organisations increased. Some indication of this difficulty is revealed in a note that appeared in a 1975 DAA report in which the Department's head, Barrie Dexter, stated:

> The vacuum left as departmental officers have withdrawn from a directing role has been filled … by other non-Aboriginals … to the detriment of the prospects of the Aboriginal community itself assuming the authority which the Department seeks to transfer to it. (DAA 1975:3)

As a further result, numerous campaigns and inquiries were instigated to resolve the apparent failure of Aboriginal people to fully embrace 'their lost power of self-determination'. For example, in 1977, DAA conducted a special seminar on the problems of 'Aboriginalising Aboriginal organisations', chaired by C.D. Rowley (DAA 1978). It concluded that for an indefinite period, non-Aboriginal 'development workers' and 'experts' would need to be 'employed directly' by such organisations until Aboriginals had acquired the necessary abilities to manage them. However, it also proposed that every effort should be made to 'train and employ' Aboriginal people in these organisations and that the non-Aboriginal workers and experts should 'pass on their skills' to their Aboriginal co-workers.

Birth of the White Advisor

As a long-term consequence of these developments, I will argue that a new kind of 'administrative class' arose to give effect to the expansive governmental machinery associated with the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. This included, for example, specialist medical staff, experienced legal personnel, anthropologists, training officers, financial administrators, social workers, builders and, in some cases, general managers. As several studies have indicated, this class expanded during the era of self-determination and indeed, continues to operate in a variety of positions within Aboriginal organisations (Hinkson 2002, Gerritsen 1982). Sometimes they might form the majority of staff, or hold key managerial positions, while in other contexts they might simply act as 'advisors'. In describing the operation of the Gulin Gulin Community Council at Bulman in the Northern Territory, Gillian Cowlishaw observed that

> … nearly all the senior staff positions in the community - accountant, store manager, bookkeeper, resource association manager and the senior staff of the school and clinic - were held by white staff or outsiders in 1997 … However, Bulman people held many junior positions and worked as assistants to white staff in the Council offices and the shop, and as outside Council staff. (Cowlishaw 1999: 267-8)

My intention here is not to point to the inability of self-determinationist policy to meet its apparent objectives, nor do I wish to be critical of non-Aboriginal people who work in these organisations, or indeed their Aboriginal employers. Moreover, I am not arguing for or against the employment of non-Aboriginals in these organisations. Nor do I wish to imply that Aboriginals are somehow incapable of operating them. As shown above, Aboriginal people do indeed work in various positions within these organisations. As indicated in the Introduction to this thesis, I do not wish to mount a case about how the policies of Aboriginal self-determination *should* work, or how they *might* work. Rather, I want to understand how they *work in practice.*

Governmental Verification of Aboriginal Control

As the Aboriginal organisations established under the policies of self-determination have come to depend, to a greater or lesser extent, on this non-Aboriginal 'administrative class', the issue of 'Aboriginal control' became an increasingly significant object of governmental

concern. Indeed, a whole range of procedures were devised by government to verify Aboriginal control of Aboriginal organisations. For instance, as the main provider of government funding to these organisations, DAA sought - as a matter of policy - specific evidence concerning the extent to which the Aboriginal executive committees of such bodies 'have been made aware of the activities of the organisation', evidence that the organisation is 'training Aboriginal people to replace non-Aboriginal staff', evidence that the organisation 'has the support of the local Aboriginal community', etc. Such 'evidence' was usually provided in the form of ratified minutes of meetings and other verifiable documentation.

The issue here is not to establish whether or not these governmental procedures succeeded in ensuring that Aboriginal corporate bodies are in fact under 'Aboriginal control'. Indeed, I would argue that such a question is not particularly relevant. Rather, the points I am attempting to make here are as follows: first, in creating the conditions for the establishment of these organisations, as well as the procedures to ensure that they continued to operate under 'Aboriginal control', the government not only presupposed that Aboriginal people actually wanted to manage the provision of services in their communities but, more fundamentally, it shaped notions of 'control'. Second, these governmental arrangements demanded, in effect, that such bodies give expression to the principle of 'Aboriginal control' and indeed, voice their opposition to 'governmental interference in their affairs'. By articulating such a position they therefore conformed, in a general sense, to the government polices of 'Aboriginal *self-determination*' and thus ensured the continuation of government support both politically and financially. One might suggest that the more an incorporated Aboriginal organisation demanded its independence from the state, the more it confirmed state policy and consequently continued to receive its support.

Given the central importance of 'Aboriginal control' in the effective operation of these technologies of rule, what role did this emerging 'administrative class' play in these developments? In other words, to what extent could the government's demand that Aboriginal people 'determine' their own affairs accommodate this class of largely non-Aboriginal people who were required to assist in the operation of these policies?

An Ambiguous Space

As we have seen, the emergence of this class was not something that the governmental instigators of 'self-determinationist policy' had originally anticipated. While there was an

expectation that some 'limited non-Aboriginal assistance' would be required to facilitate the development of these 'Aboriginal-controlled' institutions, this was generally meant to be a short-term measure. In other words, although this class has come to assume a fundamental role in the operations of these governmental policies, it has never been - nor can it be - fully endorsed by government itself. Not only must it reside in a kind of unstated, ambiguous space, beyond the official gaze of the state, it must also continually seek ways of making itself redundant in order to make way for the complete 'Aboriginalisation' of the governmental machinery established under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination.

I will argue that the location of this class in an ambivalent relationship to both the state and the Aboriginal organisations in which it operates has become a central element of these particular technologies of rule. Indeed, while the state continues to represent this class's involvement as a kind of 'transitory phenomena' on the road to restoring to Aboriginal people 'their lost power of self-determination', such representations, and their mantra-like reiteration, have also become a contingent component of these technologies. Following Hindess, I have argued (see chapter Two) that these kinds of ambiguities are in fact a central feature of liberal-democratic forms of governance.

As Burchell, Rose and others have proposed (see Introduction), 'advanced' forms of liberal democratic rule seek to 'degovernmentalise the state and de-statize practices of government'. Under this approach, elaborate techniques have emerged that 'detach the substantive authority of expertise from the apparatuses of political rule' (Rose 1996: 41). Here I would suggest that the 'administrative class' described above has emerged as a result of this need to 'de-statize the practices of government' in relation to the governance of the Aboriginal population. In other words, the network of Aboriginal corporate bodies that now provide a range of services to Aboriginal people (and in which this administrative class operates) has come to compete with the more formal structures of the state, such as government departments. Moreover, this 'class' (which can be understood as a 'substantive authority of expertise') must reside in what I will describe as an 'ambiguous space' in order to remain detached from 'the apparatuses of political rule'. Here, forms of expertise that were once deployed by the state in a disciplinary, even coercive way (as under the Welfare Branch) have been displaced by new forms of expertise that seek to implant in its subjects 'the aspiration to pursue their own civility, well-being and advancement'. (ibid: 42)

Moreover, in order to realise the primary aims of these policies, members of this class must

not only remain 'detached', but must also take an *oppositional* stance *with* Aboriginal people against the state in advancing programs, plans and projects that might fulfill Aboriginal aspirations. This will generally entail the highly ambiguous manoeuvre of campaigning for state support in order to achieve these aims.

This has led to the appearance, within this class, of particular individuals who have taken an assertive approach to realising these aspirations in association with their Aboriginal partners. Such individuals could perhaps be more accurately described as political activists or what I will term *entrepreneurial empowerers,* with a highly attuned personal commitment to the advancement of Aboriginal rights. It is important to recognise, however, that their appearance did not occur as a singular result of the implementation of self-determinationist policy in 1972. That is, they were not acting as a kind of 'advance guard' of the government promoters of these new policies, nor were they (or the Aboriginal people with whom they worked) simply operating in a mechanical way at the behest of government. In some cases, they were initially employed by various government agencies and worked at a distance from their employers in attempting to foster self-determining Aboriginal organisations. As we shall see, this was the case in the early moves to establish an Aboriginal broadcasting organisation in Alice Springs. In other instances, they worked outside government, directly with Aboriginals in establishing organisations that might 'resist the state'.

In his book *All free man now : culture, community and politics in the Kimberley region, north-western Australia*, Patrick Sullivan provided a perceptive description of simialar groups and individuals who worked for various Aboriginal bodies in the Kimberley region during the early 1980's:

> Independent Aboriginal organisations attracted young, educated, politically or morally motivated whites … their activities were firmly antagonistic to both bureaucrats and politicians … they tended to be inadequately paid, poorly housed, without security of occupation and consequently highly mobile. Their motivations for accepting such conditions appeared suspicious to the materialist whites of the region … Nevertheless, none considered themselves agents of such organisations but had committed themselves to Aboriginal advancement for the same general humanitarian reasons that had attracted them to radical politics in urban regions … Whenever confrontation surfaced between the administration and Aboriginal groups these committed whites absorbed most of the aggression. This was partly because Aborigines themselves were frequently exploitative, being so concerned not to allow the capture of their organisations by whites that they tended to use them and discard them, always sure that there were others to take their place. (Sullivan 1996:115)

Acquiring Aboriginal Authorisation

For the purposes of this study, I interviewed several non-Aboriginals who perhaps fall into the same category as those described in the above quote, although in this instance they all worked for Aboriginal organisations based in Alice Springs. I also interviewed a number of Aboriginal people who worked for the same organisations. The broad aim was to obtain a closer understanding of these black-white relationships and how they were perceived by the participants. The quotes I have used have not been cited or linked to particular interviewees. With a few exceptions, the interviews were conducted on the understanding that they would be used for general background information only. It was further agreed that if quotes were to be extracted, the source would remain anonymous. I will begin by focusing on the non-Aboriginals and the way in which their relationships with Aboriginals provided what Goffman has referred to as the 'authority' to conduct their various activities.

As indicated above, these individuals generally operated outside the formal structures of government in developing various projects with Aboriginal people. Indeed, in most cases, they came into direct conflict with governmental authority in pursuing these endeavours. As a result, I will argue that the 'partnerships' that they established with Aboriginal people were of critical importance in giving legitimacy to their activities. Indeed, in the absence of any explicit governmental endorsement, it was only through the relationships with their Aboriginal partners that they could acquire any level of legitimacy at all. Clearly, a white person could not dedicate himself or herself to the advancement of Aboriginal rights without *Aboriginal authorisation*, particularly given the fact that this 'advancement' was predicated on the essential 'right' of Aboriginal people to 'determine their own affairs'. In this sense, the extent to which the non-Aboriginal partner could direct his or her skills towards the implementation of a given project hinged on the quality and nature of the relationships they enjoyed with their Aboriginal partners. Indeed, these relationships would have be to carefully nurtured if such authorisation was to be forthcoming. Sullivan made a similar observation with regard to the managerial operations of the Kimberley Land Council. In examining the way in which non-Aboriginal administrators acquired the authorisation of Aboriginal Council executives to act on a particular issue, he noted:

> It is clear that a good deal of sensitivity is required to interpret Aboriginal wishes, and consequently, there is considerable opportunity for crass European interventions to elicit a favorable response if allowed to … Ultimately it means that only those who possess the

required sensitivity due to close proximity with Aborigines will also receive from them the mandate to represent them. (Sullivan 1996:112)

In the groups that I studied, the conferral of this authorisation occurred in a number of circumstances. Moreover, the techniques used in its conferral also varied, depending on the objectives for which such authorization was required. For instance, to act *on behalf of* a specific Aboriginal community group (in a legal, political, managerial or other capacity), the non-Aboriginal partner would of course require the endorsement of that group. This could be accomplished through a series of 'community meetings' where he or she was 'introduced' to the members of the group. Here, the individual's motivations, personal commitment and alignment with the group could be explained and endorsed by the Aboriginal partner. In other words, confirmation that a hitherto 'unknown whitefella' was 'on side' was facilitated through his or her demonstrable relationship with their Aboriginal partner or partners. Indeed, through these arrangements, it could be argued that the Aboriginal partner 'empowered' his non-Aboriginal partner to work on behalf of the Aboriginal community.

Similarly, where a non-Aboriginal person occupied a senior managerial position within an Aboriginal body (and was necessarily charged with the management of Aboriginal staff and the operational direction of the organisation), a close association with an equally senior Aboriginal manager would provide a certain authorisation to carry out their duties. This was the case within the Central Land Council, in which a non-Aboriginal General Manager worked on an equal footing with the Aboriginal Chairman of the organisation. Here one could perhaps ask: why did these non-Aboriginal managers require the 'authorisation' of an Aboriginal co-manager to 'carry out their duties' given the fact that like any employee, they had a contractual obligation to do so?

The organisations I am discussing here were all established under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. While the arrangements under which these bodies were incorporated ensured that their executive committees and councils would remain wholly Aboriginal (see above), this was not always the case with their management. Nonetheless, the policy requirement that such bodies should be 'under Aboriginal control' demanded that the non-Aboriginal manager should be seen to be acting, at all times, at the direction of Aboriginal people. For example, such managers might be called upon to meet with government officials over issues concerning the acquisition of government funding, changes to legislation, alterations to governmental administrative procedures, the implementation of policy reform,

etc. In such meetings (particularly those held at a Ministerial level), the ability of a non-Aboriginal manager to speak on behalf of an Aboriginal organisation usually required the physical presence of their Aboriginal partner. Through this arrangement, whatever he or she might say to the government official could be immediately verified by deferring, if necessary, to their Aboriginal partner, who would of course be obliged to confirm, and generally authorise, the points that the non-Aboriginal manager may have been putting to the official. In other words, the Aboriginal partner would serve to represent the aspirations of the particular group that they were representing, and thus reassure the official that the policy objectives of government were being fulfilled.

Following Goffman (see Introduction), I would suggest that the 'performance' of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners in these sometimes fraught situations had to be 'correctly staged' if the 'scene' they intended to present was to 'come off' (and their objectives were to be accomplished). I will further argue that one of the most important elements in the orchestration of such performances was to induce the representative of government to 'impute' certain cultural and political attributes in the person (or 'self') of the Aboriginal partner. Without this imputation, the Aboriginal partner would not be able to give his or her authorisation to the non-Aboriginal partner when he or she most needed it. Nor would they be able to achieve their broader objectives. As Goffman further proposes, this imputation, or this 'self', is the product of a successfully staged scene and 'not the cause of it'. The self, then (or here, the Aboriginal self) is 'a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented' and the 'crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited'.

Leasing an Identity

Of course, the Aboriginal individual involved in such performances would also have be 3 to provide his or her authorisation to their non-Aboriginal partner. This represented perhaps the most difficult area within these partnerships. I will suggest that it meant, in effect, that the Aboriginal partner would have to 'lend' their Aboriginality, or identity, to the non-Aboriginal partner to enable them to act with authority, particularly in situations described above. Here one could say that the Aboriginal partner was obliged to invest a certain amount of 'cultural capital' in the partnership in order to operationalise it.

In several interviews conducted with Aboriginal people involved in these partnerships, the 'lending' of their Aboriginality had become, on occasion, problematic. For instance, one

person (who had been a Director of an Aboriginal organisation for a several years) said that although they were committed to working with 'whitefellas' in developing projects for their community, they sometimes grew weary of 'having to play the blackfella' in the prosecution of these projects. Similarly, when another person was asked to identify their particular contribution to the successful outcome of a given program, they replied by pointing to the dark skin on their arm and saying 'This'. Yet another joked that they were 'a nine-to-five blackfella', meaning that they adopted an 'official' Aboriginal role while working in an Aboriginal organisation, but that such a role was tangential to the broader sense of who they felt they were outside these situations.

It also becomes apparent from these accounts that the kind of roles or 'performances' that these black-white partnerships 'staged' were enunciated across a broad range of related areas. It could entail the delicate resolution of disputes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff; the defence of their organisation against other Aboriginal bodies; public campaigns on particular issues, and, as we have seen above, meetings with government officials. Within this process, particular notions of Aboriginal cultural, political and social identity were constantly valorised, incorporated and deployed in various strategic moves to achieve a favorable outcome.

I do not wish to suggest that these forms of identity were in some way constituted under 'false pretense'. Rather, as discussed in chapter One, I am proposing that all forms of human identity are produced within complex social environments and are not fixed or essentialised entities. As proposed by the anthropologist Fredrik Barth, the generation of collective social forms, including identities, can be understood as arising from interactive social processes where various forms of 'identity' may in fact be an 'unintended consequence' of such interaction (Barth 1969). Furthermore, while the term 'identity' can refer to a multiplicity of variable elements, or 'markings' that work to constitute particular individuals at particular times in specific circumstances, the primary forms of identity that arose here centred around - I would suggest - notions of 'political' and 'cultural' identity, since it was these particular forms with which the technologies of Aboriginal governance (at this particular historical juncture) were most concerned. Indeed, as I have also argued, the incorporation of certain Aboriginal cultural and political attributes (on a highly selective basis) within these systems of governance was of fundamental importance in their general operation.

Community Credentials

The extent to which an Aboriginal person could 'lend' their Aboriginality to a partnership with a white person depended, in significant ways, on the relationship that such a person had with the wider Aboriginal community, particularly the community that would benefit or be affected by the project in hand. Indeed, by 'lending' their identity, they were also in a sense 'lending' the collective identity of this community. Several questions arise here: upon what basis and under what authority could such a person 'lend' this collective identity in the service of a particular project? More importantly perhaps, to what extent was this communal collectivity constituted through this process of recruitment?

I will argue that the acquisition of such authority and the ability to 'lend' it depended on whether the person seeking it possessed the cultural, social and political 'credentials' to do so. Such 'credentials' might refer to family affiliations within the Aboriginal community; a history of personal involvement in informal community activities; associations with a particular linguistic group; connections to specific areas of land; ceremonial knowledge and other demonstrable associations. In some situations, with regard to certain individuals, it might also depend on the extent to which that person had publicly and consistently 'identified' with his or her community and not 'gone the whitefella way', as one Aboriginal interviewee put it. Therefore, in acquiring the authority to 'represent' or in other ways act on behalf of their community, the 'community' itself became a quantifiable and 'credentialled' object of inspection.

Von Sturmer examined this process in the Alligator River region where the advent of uranium mining made available to local Aboriginal people substantial mining royalties (Von Sturmer 1984). He suggested that certain Aboriginals acted as the primary 'brokers' in dealings between the local community and the non-Aboriginal world of mining companies and government. He describes this system of brokerage as a 'channel' through which various material benefits could flow to both the 'community' and the individual brokers as well. Moreover, this 'channel' was generally established through specific relationships between the Aboriginal broker and what Von Sturmer describes as his 'captive European' (which might include a non-Aboriginal 'advisor' working within a local Aboriginal organisation). However, Von Sturmer points out that in performing this role, the broker could sometimes run into trenchant criticism from his local community and, indeed, be accused of 'exploiting' his position for his own personal gain. In such circumstances, the broker would

need to undertake certain strategies to regain the authority to continue to act on the community's behalf.

In the interviews conducted with Aboriginal people for this study, some suggested that one of the main problems they encountered in attempting to establish or manage an Aboriginal organisation (in association with a non-Aboriginal partner) was the constant need to seek the 'right' to do so from their Aboriginal community. One interviewee - who was not originally from Alice Springs - explained that although the community recognised his Aboriginality, it did not, he felt, fully endorse the actions he was taking on its behalf since he apparently lacked the kind of credentials noted above. He resented the fact that although he had been 'an Aboriginal all my life', his Aboriginality came under scrutiny by his 'own mob' as soon as he attempted to work on their behalf. Other interviewees who had spent most of their lives in Alice Springs expressed similar views, if from a different perspective. One suggested that it was only after she had commenced working with a local Aboriginal organisation that she experienced a certain pressure to 'prove' her connections with 'traditional Aboriginal culture'. In other words, although this particular person and her family were well known in Alice Springs, she felt impelled to locate and affirm her affiliations with a particular linguistic group (and their traditional lands) if she was to be effective within the organisation.

It seems apparent, at least in some cases, that the 'lending' of one's Aboriginality to a partnership with a non-Aboriginal in order to work on projects on behalf of the Aboriginal community produced a situation in which the Aboriginal person involved was impelled to inspect and examine their identity and 'connectedness' with certain 'traditions'. Here, the consolidation and, if necessary, the acquisition of certain 'credentials' that might affirm this identity was an essential prerequisite to undertaking this work. In this important sense, the Aboriginal people caught up in this process were impelled to 'know' their 'Aboriginal selves' in order to achieve certain administrative, political or *governmental* ends. It is in these particular circumstances that we see, I think, the kind of 'interaction' between the 'technologies of the self' and the 'technologies of government' as discussed above.

Public and Private Motivations

Further questions remain to be addressed concerning the operation of these black-white partnerships. For instance, how were they initiated and who played the leading role? Indeed,

why did they emerge at all given the underlying principles of Aboriginal self-determinationist policy? As noted above, it appears (from the interviews I have conducted) that each relationship had its own idiosyncrasies depending on the context in which it emerged, its specific functions and the particular personalities involved. In the case of the social worker Jim Downing and his Aboriginal partner Yami Lester (see previous chapter), it was Downing (the non-Aboriginal) who was largely responsible for pursuing his partnership with Lester (as Lester attests in his autobiography) (Lester1993). Indeed, it was Downing's personal experience in attempting to improve the living conditions and rights of Aboriginal people living in Alice Springs (during the mid- to late 1960's) that convinced him that he could only succeed in such a task through the cultivation of 'equal' partnerships with Aboriginals (Downing 1988). In other instances, it was an Aboriginal person who sought to work with a non-Aboriginal partner. This was the case with Milton Liddle (a long-term Aboriginal resident of Alice Springs), who was involved in the foundation of the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service in 1973. He and other Aboriginal people recruited a non-Aboriginal lawyer to help in establishing the organisation (Faine 1993).

Throughout this chapter I have emphasized the role that government policy played in producing the conditions for the formation of these relationships. However, I will argue that we also need to understand the personal motivations that propelled the particular individuals who participated in them. We also need to know how these individuals conducted themselves, both in a private and public sense, in and around these relationships. Indeed, if governmental processes impinge on individuals 'in their practical relationship to themselves and in the conduct of their lives', as Graham Burchell has suggested (Burchell 1996), then to fully appreciate the 'technologies of government' (and in this case, the practice of self-determinationist policy) we must also investigate the actual 'technologies' that these individuals used in conducting themselves and the relationships in which they were involved. In Parts Three and Four, I hope to undertake this task by providing a detailed examination of the relationships that operated between the various individuals involved in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting in Central Australia.

Conclusion

As I have tried to show in this chapter, when the policies of Aboriginal self-determination were introduced in the early 1970's, it was expected that Aboriginal people would take over the 'management of their own affairs' primarily through self-governing Aboriginal

organisations funded by the state. It was also expected that after some initial assistance, they would be 'fully Aboriginalised' and as a result, the state would no longer need to 'interfere in the lives of Aboriginals' (Cavanagh 1975). Contrary to these expectations, a certain 'administrative class' emerged - consisting primarily of non-Aboriginals - that not only helped to operationalise these policies, but continued to maintain the various administrative machinery upon which they continue to depend. Moreover, specific 'partnerships' between what I have described as non-Aboriginal *entrepreneurial empowerers* and Aboriginal people also emerged that were largely concerned with the establishment of Aboriginal organisations under these new policies.

Using a Foucauldian analytical approach, I have argued that the appearance of this class and these particular partnerships was an inevitable consequence of self-determinationist policy, given the fact that 'advanced' forms of liberal democratic rule seek to 'de-statize practices of government' and 'detach the substantive authority of expertise from the apparatuses of political rule' (Rose 1996: 41). In other words, the plethora of Aboriginal organisations that now serve as sites of Aboriginal governance - in which this administrative class and its *entrepreneurial empowerers* operate - has sought to replace the formal structures of the state.

PART TWO:

CONSTITUTING AN ABORIGINAL VOICE

TOWARDS THE STATE CONSTITUTION OF 'AN ABORIGINAL VOICE IN THE MEDIA'

Introduction

In Part Two of this thesis, I examine two distinct but related historical events. The first, presented in here chapter Four, concerns the federal government's attempts to create an Aboriginal broadcasting service in Northern Australia over a period of some eight years (from 1970 to 1978). The second, presented in chapter Five, examines the implementation in 1979 of the first Aboriginal radio program in the Northern Territory: 'The Aboriginal Half Hour', transmitted from Alice Springs. Although these two events occurred independently of one another, I hope to show that the linkages between the two produced the 'necessary conditions' for the foundation of the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, CAAMA.

As we shall see, the government's efforts to establish an Aboriginal broadcasting service encountered persistent setbacks despite the implementation of numerous feasibility studies, special reports and at least one 'pilot program' [1]. Nonetheless, I will argue that these governmental manoeuvres not only presupposed an Aboriginal agency capable of facilitating the government's ambitions, but more importantly, it began to create the need - and therefore the conditions - for the possible formation of such agency. This agency did indeed begin to emerge - albeit in a very tentative manner - in Alice Springs. Here, the policies of Aboriginal self-determination had produced a burgeoning network of Aboriginal administrative structures that provided a suitable environment in which such an agency might emerge. In fact, the launch of 'The Aboriginal Half Hour' in 1979 led to the formation of CAAMA in 1980.

An Object of Governmental Interest

The story of how the Australian state first developed an interest in Aboriginal broadcasting begins with the creation of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) by Prime Minister Holt, in response to the 1967 constitutional referendum. Holt was impressed by the overwhelming mandate that his government was given to make policy about Aboriginals and

established the OAA along with an advisory group, the Council for Aboriginal Affairs (CAA) to provide administrative support and recommendations (see Attwood & Markus 1997) (2).

In 1970, an informal discussion took place within the OAA about the 'effect of radio coverage on the Aborigines of the Northern Territory' [3]. As a result, the OAA's Assistant Director for Operations, F.H. Moy, sent an internal memorandum to the organisation's Director, Barrie Dexter, in which Moy suggested that since '… the Aboriginal population represents one third of the Territory population, an approach should be made to the Australian Broadcasting Commission for greater Aboriginal content in broadcast programs.' He went on to conclude that the chairman of the CAA, H.C. 'Nugget' Coombs, might contact the Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sir Robert Magwick, for initial discussions on the matter.

On the 29th of September 1970, in accordance with this request, Coombs wrote a letter to Sir Robert [4]. In it, he asked whether the ABC '… would be prepared to develop special programs for Aboriginal listeners in Northern Australia in their own languages.' The kind of 'programs' Coombs had in mind seemed to have been modeled more on the rural educational radio services still found in what used to be known as the 'third world'. He felt that the programs should be broadcast in Aboriginal languages, not so much as a way of supporting and maintaining them but for purely practical, educative purposes. He argued that

> It is a sad fact … that the majority of the Aborigines in Northern Australia ... have only a poor understanding of English. Until the present and future school generations attain sufficient fluency and literacy in English, Aboriginal Australians in remote areas will not know with any clarity about plans for their future advancement or what is happening in other areas which could affect their lives. [5].

Coombs nevertheless seems to have left room for locally produced material: 'Items of interest from Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal songs and music could be taped and rebroadcast.' He also suggested - with some foresight - that a 'separate frequency' could be used for the programs delivered to Aboriginal communities: 'If resistance to the use of present networks is likely, perhaps the solution might be to use a separate frequency.'

Coombs's proposal met with a favourable if cautious response from the ABC, and on the 12th of November 1970, Dexter and Moy met with the ABC's Federal Director of Radio Programs to discuss ways in which a broadcasting service 'for Aboriginal listeners' could be developed.

As far as I am aware, this brief flurry of activity represents the first instance in which an Australian government agency expressed an interest in providing Aboriginal people with a broadcasting service specifically designed to meet their needs. While it was a rather modest proposal and, as it eventuated, did not result in any immediate action on behalf of the federal authorities, it did create a small niche in governmental thinking about Aboriginal broadcasting which refused to disappear, despite the haphazard nature of the government's subsequent approach to the issue. Indeed, as noted above, Aboriginal broadcasting was to become the subject of an endless round of investigations by a number of government departments, agencies and authorities that continued up until 1979.

After this episode, no further action was taken for two years by any Australian government on Aboriginal broadcasting. This is not entirely surprising given the fact that the conservative federal governments led by Gorton and then McMahon during this period were generally reluctant to take a greater role in Aboriginal affairs, even though, as we have seen, they had been given an overwhelming mandate to do so (Attwood & Markus 1997). However, after the election of the federal Labor Government in December 1972, the political climate in relation to Aboriginal affairs saw dramatic change and the original interest in Aboriginal broadcasting shown by the OAA was re-ignited within the newly created Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA).

In April 1973, DAA presented a submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science, and the Arts' Inquiry into Broadcasting and Television. Among other things, DAA proposed that the ABC extend some general services into remote Aboriginal communities and that it develop some local Aboriginal programming. However, in subsequent progress reports produced by the Committee, no further specific mention was made of Aboriginal broadcasting.

Despite the lack of interest, DAA continued to maintain a commitment to its development. In 1973 it sent one of its departmental officers, Kel Lewis, to Papua New Guinea to investigate the regionally-based broadcasting system that had been operating there for some years [6]. When Lewis presented his findings at a discussion held at DAA's head office in Canberra in November 1973, among those present were Barrie Dexter, then Secretary of the Department. This would appear to indicate that the issue of Aboriginal broadcasting did not simply figure as a peripheral matter within DAA, but held the attention of its most senior officers. In his report, Kel Lewis concluded that

> A properly instituted broadcast system with regional stations at say Darwin, Derby, Geraldton, Alice Springs and Cooktown would cover a large part of our country and bring a service to our indigenous people. It would strengthen Aboriginal groups from all walks of life. (Lewis 1975:7)

Again, nothing of a specific nature developed as a result of Lewis's research, but it appears that it kept the proposal for an Aboriginal broadcasting service alive at both a senior departmental and ministerial level. Apart from Lewis's study tour to PNG, in April 1973, a rather intriguing event took place in relation to a proposal concerning the possible production of Aboriginal television programming.

A commercial television company by the name of Mid Western Television, located in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, approached the new federal Labor Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, with a plan to provide free air time for local Aboriginal television programs [7].The Minister accepted the offer and asked the ABC if it could produce the required programs. At first the ABC seemed to warm to the idea, but when it became apparent that their video equipment was incompatible with the equipment in the Kalgoorlie station, they lost interest. In any event, the ABC had a policy of not producing television programming for other broadcasting networks, particularly commercial services. The people at Mid Western Television nevertheless persisted. They suggested that if the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was prepared to purchase the necessary equipment to enable them to broadcast the ABC-produced programs, then they would assist in the production of locally produced material. Discussions continued until May 1974, when officers from the ABC and the newly created Department of the Media finally brought an end to the matter. They explained that the federal government would be establishing its own Television Access Production Centres [8], one of which would be located in Western Australia, and that it would be made available to Aboriginal people including those located in Kalgoorlie. However, there is no record of Aboriginal people from Kalgoorlie ever taking the opportunity to use the W.A. TV Access Centre - which is not surprising since it was located in Perth, over a thousand kilometres from Kalgoorlie.

The unsuccessful bid by Mid Western Television to transmit Aboriginal programs was not entirely unproductive, since it provoked the federal authorities into renewed attempts to establish an Aboriginal broadcasting service. In the same year, further discussions were held between the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, and the Federal Minister for the Media, Senator Douglas McClelland, on the issue. As a result, the newly

appointed General Manager of the ABC, Talbot Duckmanton wrote to his colleague in DAA, Barrie Dexter:

> We have been giving further thought recently to the possibility of providing on a regular basis, through our Northern Territory radio stations, special programs for Aborigines living in Australia ... We are anxious to move on this matter, but we believe we need your advice and guidance to enable us to do so ... we would attempt to define the areas in which the proposed broadcasts might be most effective, as well as the nature and content of them. I realise there will be very real problems to be faced perhaps in determining the languages and dialects in which these broadcasts should be made, and also as to their content ...' [9].

There are three important issues arising from Duckmanton's letter that I would like to expand upon here. Firstly, it appears that when the ABC first began to take the issue of Aboriginal broadcasting seriously, it tended to think of it as being relevant only to non-urban Aboriginal groups and, most particularly, to those who continued to speak their own languages. Indeed, in all the early governmental discussions on Aboriginal broadcasting, the ABC consistently looked to the Northern Territory (where the majority of Aboriginal people continued to speak their own languages) as the most appropriate location for its development. Of course, it was not just the ABC that held these views. DAA and the Post Master General's Department also assumed that if the government was to assist in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting, then it was in Northern Australia that it should devote its energies.

I would argue that the formation of this view in government thinking was important to the emergence and eventual success of CAAMA. It was not only situated in the Northern Territory (Alice Springs), but more importantly, it was able to claim that it planned to produce and broadcast programs in local Aboriginal languages. Indeed, the majority of CAAMA's potential audience spoke an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue (see following chapter). Therefore, when CAAMA set out to procure government assistance in the early 1980's, it slipped with relative ease into this particular aspect of government thinking. In other words, it was able to find a certain place within the emerging governmental construction of Aboriginal broadcasting.

Secondly, before DAA and the OAA began to provoke the ABC into developing some form of Aboriginal broadcasting, there is no record of the ABC having any official interest in the matter. The letter from Duckmanton to DAA appears to be the first documented expression of any such interest. Indeed, DAA complained that the ABC was neglecting its formal responsibilities since it was required under its charter to provide 'radio and television

programs for all Australians' and therefore should have concerned itself with providing programming services relevant to Aboriginal Australians. I would therefore propose that it was primarily through the establishment of DAA in 1973 (the first federal government department in Australian history to devote itself entirely to the governance of the Aboriginal population) that the constitution of a separate 'Aboriginal listening audience' began to enter governmental policy parameters. In other words, the establishment of a branch of the federal government where 'specialist knowledge' about the Aboriginal population could be deposited, accumulated and archived began to produce the necessary conditions required for the implementation of 'specialist' broadcasting services for indigenous Australians.

The very fact the DAA existed and therefore had a Minister who was able to lobby other government Ministers on matters relating to Aboriginals was also significant. As indicated above, Cavanagh, the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, made direct representations to the Minister for the Media, McClelland, over the issue of Aboriginal broadcasting. McClelland then put pressure on Duckmanton, who was suddenly 'anxious to move' on the development of Aboriginal broadcasting, even though the ABC had not expressed any previous interest.

Some evidence of the pressure that Duckmanton may have been under by his Minister is indicated by the fact that in seeking 'advice and guidance' from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs on how to provide a broadcasting service for 'Aborigines living in Australia', he was unconcerned about handing over one of the primary jobs of a broadcaster - the acquisition of knowledge about its audience and the development of program content - to a branch of government that knew nothing about the broadcasting business. Regardless of Duckmanton's motives, a repository for 'expert' knowledge about Aboriginals and, therefore, about the 'Aboriginal listening audience' had found a home within the new bureaucratic machinery of the federal government, and it could not be ignored.

Thirdly and most importantly, in his letter to the DAA, Duckmanton expresses a concern about the 'very real problems to be faced' in determining the actual 'content' of the proposed programs for Aboriginal people. As we have seen, the issue of 'content' was also raised by Moy (of the OAA) in the initial letter he sent to the ABC in 1970. A brief analysis of this particular problem of 'Aboriginal content' will provide us with an insight into the close association between the state and the development of Aboriginal broadcasting.

In officially concerning themselves with the notion of 'Aboriginal programming content', Moy and Duckmanton were also making it a government concern; a concern that has continued to preoccupy - and divide - not only the formulators of government policy, but regulatory bodies, legal institutions, funding bodies, academics, Aboriginal broadcasting organisations and Aboriginal people themselves up to the present time. I would propose that this prickly question of 'Aboriginal content' has become the object of a seemingly endless process of verification and contestation due to the fact that in attempting to define such 'content', one must ultimately consider the question of Aboriginal identity, since the criteria for establishing whether or not the 'content' of a radio program is 'Aboriginal' must be measured against the way in which individuals will define themselves as Aboriginal. How else can one define the term Aboriginal? [10]. This of course ultimately leads to the general question of 'identity' itself which, as Stuart Hall and others have proposed, can never remain eternally 'fixed' and as such will remain an unstable and highly contested notion (Hall 1996).

This insoluble, and somewhat perennial question about the nature of 'Aboriginal content' was discussed by the late Eric Michaels in his essay *Aboriginal Content: Who's Got It - Who Needs It?* (Michaels 1994). In this work, Michaels goes to the heart of the matter when he tried to imagine what the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (now the Australian Broadcasting Authority) might have accepted as 'Aboriginal content' when weighing up who should or should not have been awarded a broadcasting license when a percentage of 'Aboriginal content' was required in the program line-up of a broadcasting service (as actually happened in the case of the Remote Commercial Television Service license hearings conducted in 1985-86, which resulted in a win for Imparja Television) (see chapter Nine). Michaels asks the question:

> Would the Tribunal accept programs made by Europeans about Aborigines: *A Country Practice* episode with an Aboriginal character? Or only programs made by Aborigines themselves? And if the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) makes a videoclip of Midnight Oil, what is that? (Michaels 1994: 20-21)

For Michaels, there is little point in trying to answer the question 'what is Aboriginal content?' since, according to him, it 'isn't even answerable'. What interests Michaels is the fact that it is actually being asked in the first place, and more particularly, who or what is doing the asking and how these persons or institutions become authorised to define Aboriginal content. In other words, Michaels is concerned to understand how the notion of

Aboriginal content - and therefore Aboriginal identity - became an object of formal governmental verification. More particularly, he is concerned to know how and with what authority an institution such as the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal might establish a set of criteria or 'guidelines' to determine what forms of television program 'content' are Aboriginal. Essentially, Michaels believes that any attempt to define 'Aboriginal content' and therefore Aboriginal identity through a formal set of rules determined by agencies of the government is not only 'racist', but ultimately destructive of what he terms 'traditional Aboriginal society'. He argues that

> The means by which "Aboriginal Content", as an identified and authorized category of television and film, risks the destruction of traditional Aboriginal society ultimately can be identified as racist. This is because it requires an act of false identification, or ascription, of Aborigines (consistent with the more general Australian conception of race) as an equivalent class whose culture is written in their blood. The point, precisely, is that culture is not written in blood, only genetics is. Culture is extrasomatic, and it is inscribed in the communication process itself. (Michaels 1994: 41)

In attacking the ways in which 'Aboriginal Content' has become 'an identified and authorized category', Michaels does not restrict his criticism to governmental agencies and funded institutions. Rather, he tries to establish a link between the state governance of 'Aboriginal content', and the ways in which Aboriginal people themselves might be recruited into this project (which of course, is a necessary prerequisite if the project is to succeed at all). He comments that

> Oddly, contemporary Aboriginal politics encourages certain Aborigines, identified by the government, to position themselves much more conspicuously than the system traditionally encouraged, identifying their newly, bureaucratically constituted selves as signifiers, to engage in a massive opportunity for self-inscription that these new media provide (Michaels 1994: 39).

Although Michaels appears to contradict himself where he relies on an essentialist notion of 'traditional Aboriginal society' while at the same time arguing for a non-essentialist 'extrasomatic' notion of culture, he nonetheless brings into focus not only the complex problem of defining 'Aboriginal content', but how the state comes to bear on the definition, verification and authorisation of such content. More importantly for the purposes of this thesis, he draws attention to the way in which governmental processes make available - to those at whom such governmental processes are directed - certain subject positions that may or may not be taken up by those (in this case 'Aborigines') for whom such positions are produced.

As proposed in the introduction to this chapter, in establishing an Aboriginal broadcasting service (and many other projects under the policies of 'Aboriginal self-determination'), new techniques of government were required to produce a particular collective Aboriginal agency through which the state might establish an Aboriginal broadcasting service in a 'managed' engagement with Aboriginal people. This collective agency also allowed Aboriginal people - if they so desired - to act through what Michaels terms a 'bureaucratically constituted' self in order to become involved in such a project.

The central point that I have tried to make in this section is that when the federal authorities began to engage with the issue of Aboriginal broadcasting, it also began to consider categories and general administrative processes for its definition, since any project supported by the state must be quantifiable if such support is to be forthcoming. In attempting to produce an effective governmental definition of Aboriginal broadcasting, the state therefore began to construct certain conditions for its possible emergence and the subjectivities necessary for its implementation.

The First Joint Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting

Apart from raising the vexed issue of 'Aboriginal programming content', the letter from Duckmanton to Dexter had the practical effect of initiating the establishment of a Joint Working Party between the ABC and DAA that met from 1974 to 1976.

It appears that the members of the Working Party (which grew to include representatives from the Department of the Media and the Australian Broadcasting Control Board) were relatively enthusiastic in attempting to establish Aboriginal broadcasting services during this period, although for reasons discussed below, most of their plans and projects ultimately failed. Nevertheless, a discussion about the Working Party's activities is important as it had a direct effect on later developments.

At a meeting held in October 1975, the Working Party proposed that a 'Pilot Aboriginal Community Broadcasting Station' be implemented and fully operational by the end of 1976. It seems that this move was promoted by the steady development from 1972 of the public broadcasting movement, which by this stage had seen a number of urban-based community stations go to air (see following chapter). The Working Party determined

> ... that the establishment of an Aboriginal community station - like other ethnic and
> community stations already operating in Australia - was desirable and that ... if the pilot

project proved successful, further study might then be undertaken on the desirability and feasibility of establishing further Aboriginal community broadcasting stations in other locations.' [11]

It is not clear from the available documentation whether the Working Party - through its various departmental representatives - approached Aboriginal communities directly about the pilot project, or whether the communities themselves made the approach. Whatever the case, two remote Aboriginal communities did express a desire in 1976 (after the proposal was first mooted) for the establishment of low-powered radio stations in their local areas. They were the Northern Territory communities of Bathurst Island and Milingimbi [12].

However, the pilot project never eventuated, nor were any services provided to Milingimbi or Bathurst Island at this time. This was due, in part, to a significant event that occurred just three weeks after the Working Party proposed to implement the pilot project: the dismissal of the Federal Labor Government by the Governor-General on the 11th of November, 1975. Obviously, it would have been difficult for the Working Party to pursue their stated objectives with any consistency following these events. Indeed, the Working Party ceased to exist at the end of 1976. In more general terms, the lack of real coordination between the various departments involved in these early attempts to develop Aboriginal broadcasting and the critical absence of any policy or procedural guidelines also made the process near to impossible to implement.

Whatever the case, the Aboriginal communities that had expressed a desire for a local broadcasting service were ultimately left to fend for themselves. In November 1978, two years after the demise of the first Working Party, a community newspaper in Milingimbi (the *Dilakkunju Dhawu*) published the following piece on the issue:

> Whatever Happened to Milingimbi Radio? The Department of Aboriginal Affairs … are thinking about our application for money. We hope we will be granted the money soon. The Post and Telecommunications Branch is working on a license. We need a license to run a radio … We hope the government will grant us one soon ... hopefully, by the middle of next year, we will listen to our radios and hear, "This is Radio Milingimbi, the Voice of Central Arnhem Land' (AFTS 1979:4)

Both the Milingimbi and the Bathurst Island communities had to wait a further ten years before something like a local community radio station did eventually go to air. [13]

The 'Problem' of Aboriginal Agency

One of the other projects launched by the Working Party was a proposal to produce a weekly half-hour pilot radio program about Aboriginal people and issues. The program was to be made by the ABC and broadcast through their regional networks. A set of programs were actually produced, but, like the Pilot Aboriginal Community Broadcasting scheme, it too failed: the tapes were never broadcast. The ABC officially claimed that it had decided not to broadcast the tapes due to difficulties in creating an appropriate air time [14], however, in the course of my research, I have discovered that the real reason for the ABC's reluctance was quite different.

Here I will focus on the circumstances surrounding this reluctance, since it will serve to illustrate in another context how governmental ambitions to establish an Aboriginal broadcasting service began to create the need - and therefore the appropriate conditions - for the formation of a collective Aboriginal agency that could facilitate the development of the envisaged broadcasting service.

During the period in question - 1975 - the national Controller of Radio Programs in the ABC was John Newsome [15]. He had not participated in the Working Party and was only vaguely aware of its existence. When the ABC's pilot Aboriginal radio program tapes were completed, he was asked to listen to and comment on them. In an interview I conducted with Newsome in 1997, he said that he had decided against putting the programs to air - not because of the lack of an appropriate air time - but for the following reasons:

> ... I rejected those tapes and said they were not satisfactory ... not that there was anything wrong with them in a technical sense ... the problem with them was that they had been done by white people reporting on Aboriginal issues and I didn't think, at the time, that it was quite what we needed ... we were beyond that even in 1975… [16]

In fact, Newsome felt that the ABC had no business in producing Aboriginal programs at all. As far as he was concerned, such material should only be produced by Aboriginal people through their own organisations. Of course, at this point in time, Newsome was unable to locate an Aboriginal organisation that might supply such programming, since no such organisation existed.

Newsome's rejection of these programs - which represented the first attempt by the ABC to provide any radio programs specifically for an Aboriginal audience - would only be of

passing interest if it were not for the fact that five years later, in 1980, it was John Newsome, still in the position of Controller of Radio for the ABC, who helped put pressure on the General Manager of the ABC, Duckmanton, and, more significantly, on the ABC Commissioners to make an historic commitment to the development of Aboriginal radio broadcasting both inside and outside the ABC (see chapter Eight). Indeed, Newsome's efforts in this regard earned him the appellation of 'Father of Aboriginal Broadcasting' in the ABC [17].

If Newsome was so reluctant to have the ABC produce Aboriginal programming in 1975, what was it that changed his thinking so radically, five years later? In answering this question, I will need to suspend our narrative for the moment and focus on a particular event that took place in 1980.

In June 1980, Newsome was in Alice Springs with the Dix Committee of Inquiry into the ABC which had been appointed by the Fraser government the previous year [18]. Newsome was acting as an observer with the Committee on behalf of the ABC. He and the members of the Committee, including Dix, were taking verbal submissions from local organisations and various individuals from Central Australia. One of those organisations was CAAMA (which had been established only a few months before the Inquiry) and it was John Macumba, the Aboriginal President of CAAMA (see Introduction) who stepped forward to present CAAMA's submission. Among other issues, Macumba discussed the ABC's failure to provide 'appropriate' radio and television programs for the substantial Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory, said that the 'absence' of such programming was a 'disgrace' (see *The Centralian Advocate* 1980).

In a further written submission to the inquiry, CAAMA also argued that the introduction of broadcasting services to remote Aboriginal communities via the forthcoming national communications satellite due to be launched in 1985 (AUSSAT 1987), would contribute to the further destruction of Aboriginal culture unless there was some form of Aboriginal participation, and that since the ABC was associated with the satellite project, it ought to assist in minimising this impact (CAAMA 1980b).

Newsome later recalled that CAAMA's presentation 'hit him like a bomb'. He realised that it was an area - 'both in a policy and a moral sense' - that the ABC had completely overlooked, particularly in relation to the establishment of the ABC's satellite-delivered

broadcast services to remote Australia. In fact, Newsome himself had a major responsibility for the development of these new services in his capacity as Controller of ABC Radio.

Not long after these events, Newsome - along with his colleague, John Hartley (the then Director of Corporate Affairs in the ABC) - quickly set about devising ways in which the ABC could assist CAAMA, and the broader development of Aboriginal broadcasting on a national basis (see chapter Eight). They were able to convince the General Manager of the ABC and its Commissioners to establish an ABC Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Programming[19], and made submissions to the federal Ministers for Post and Telecommunications (Staley) and Aboriginal Affairs (Chaney) on funding for Aboriginal broadcasting. Indeed, CAAMA later signed a contractual agreement with the ABC in 1981 to supply Aboriginal radio programming for transmission through the ABC's Alice Springs regional station 8AL (see ABC 1984). This was the first time that the ABC had broadcast radio programs specifically for an Aboriginal audience. Further, the contractual arrangement it established with CAAMA created a precedent that many other Aboriginal media organisations have enjoyed up until the present time[20]. While CAAMA's presentation certainly enlightened Newsome as to the ABC's neglect of an Aboriginal audience and provoked him into taking almost immediate action, it had more significant consequences.

As discussed, in 1975 Newsome rejected the ABC's first attempts to provide radio programs for an Aboriginal audience. In his view, they were inauthentic: they were made by white people. But when Newsome was confronted with a presentation on behalf of an Aboriginal media organisation, he immediately felt that the ABC's five year-old dilemma had been resolved. The vital ingredient that had previously been missing in the production of Aboriginal programs - Aboriginal agency - was now available in Central Australia and it was the kind of collective agency with which the ABC could and did productively engage.

I would argue that the particular kind of collective Aboriginal agency that Newsome clearly recognised was, for the most part, the product of the changes that had occurred in the governance of the Aboriginal population under the policy rubric of Aboriginal self-determination from 1973 onwards (see chapters One and Two) and that CAAMA itself was a direct consequence of these changes.

However, such agency was not available to Newsome and the ABC in 1975 because the governmental machinery largely responsible for its production was still in an early stage of development. It was only after the radical expansion and refinement of a whole range of new

governmental procedures specifically designed to support the new policies of Aboriginal self-determination that this machinery began to emerge in a relatively effective form by the end of the 1970's. By 'machinery', I am referring to a complex ensemble of state instrumentalities and general techniques of government including, for example, new layers of legislation pertaining to the administration of the Aboriginal population, greatly increased programs of financial assistance to Aboriginals, the production of detailed policy research, the expansion of administrative resources, enhanced statistical investigation into all aspects of Aboriginal life and, most significantly here, the formation of independent Aboriginal organisations.

The dilemma that faced Newsome and the ABC in 1975: the absence of a collective Aboriginal agency with which the state could engage to produce Aboriginal broadcasting services - was also a problem for the Joint Working Party on Aboriginal broadcasting. As we shall see, it was only after the full implementation of federal policies aimed at facilitating such an agency that the conditions for the 'birth' of an Aboriginal broadcasting service would become available. I will now return to developments in Aboriginal broadcasting during the 1970's.

The Second Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting

Following the demise of the first Working Party on Aboriginal broadcasting in early 1976, DAA nevertheless continued to pursue the issue, if in a somewhat ad hoc way.

In late 1976, recommendations arising out of the deliberations of the first Working Party formed the basis for yet another DAA submission to yet another government inquiry into the Australian Broadcasting System. It was known as the Green Inquiry, chaired by F.J. Green, the Secretary of the Postal and Telecommunications Department. Again, DAA's proposals on Aboriginal broadcasting were completely ignored [21].

Despite this outcome, the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner (who had been appointed to the position by the newly elected federal Coalition Government led by Malcom Fraser) picked up where his Labor predecessor left off and again wrote to the Minister for Postal and Telecommunications in December 1976. On this occasion, he proposed that the ABC might establish an internal Aboriginal broadcasting unit and that DAA would reciprocate by appointing an officer to look at the same issue. Although nothing of any real substance came of this suggestion, it did nonetheless result in one small

development. An Aboriginal person from Alice Springs, Ron Liddle, who had just completed a tour of Indigenous broadcasting services in North America, was funded by DAA to undertake a twelve month training course in radio production. After the completion of his training stint, Liddle returned work at DAA in 1977. This seemed to be a token gesture, as Liddle appears to have been directed to work in other areas.

Viner also suggested in his letter to the Minister for Postal and Telecommunications that the Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting be re-convened. But it was not until February 1978 - more than a year later - that the re-constituted Working Party met. One has to remember that this was a period of enormous change and expansion in Aboriginal Affairs and as a probable result, relatively little attention was given to Aboriginal broadcasting, although it does seem extraordinary that virtually nothing was undertaken in this area for most of 1977. This began to change following the meeting of the Working Party.

In March 1978, DAA presented a submission to the National Satellite Task Force which had been set up by the Federal government in 1977 to 'Inquire into all Aspects Related to a National Satellite System for Australia' [22]. In its submission, DAA proposed that the new communications system could be of benefit to remote Aboriginal communities both in terms of extending existing broadcasting services and in the development of specific programs for Aboriginals. DAA also noted developments in Canada where indigenous groups had already benefited from satellite broadcasting services for a substantial period of time [23]. As a result, the Task Force made a significant recommendation: that the new satellite should be equipped with a high-powered transponder, dedicated to the provision of special radio and television programs to Aboriginal and ethnic audiences in remote areas. As we have seen, the two previous inquiries into Australian broadcasting and telecommunication discussed in this chapter (the 1973 Senate inquiry into broadcasting and television and the 1976 Green Inquiry) had essentially ignored Aboriginal interests. Here, however, we see for the first time - at least in the form of a recommendation - a move to incorporate Aboriginals in the future development of broadcasting in Australia.

It was also in 1978 that DAA produced a short piece on Aboriginal broadcasting in its Annual Report for 1977-78 (DAA 1978). It essentially reiterated developments in the area over the previous three years as discussed in this chapter, and reaffirmed DAA's commitment to establishing some form of Aboriginal broadcasting.

Aboriginal Broadcasting and the 'Restoration' of Aboriginal Culture

In August 1978, the then Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, was approached by a group of Aboriginal people while on tour in the Northern Territory who asked that the existing radio and television services be extended into their local regions [24].

These representations prompted the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Viner, to make a statement in the House of Representatives on the 24th of November 1978. This was the first mention of Aboriginal broadcasting ever made in Federal Parliament and is worth quoting at length:

> Aboriginals are ... now very conscious of their cultural identity and of the extent to which it is everywhere threatened and has in many parts suffered loss through the destructive effects of contact. The government has been helping Aboriginals ... to restore and rebuild their cultural identity ... In this context, I mention that in response to requests from several communities we have been working on proposals for the development of local community-based broadcasting services for Aboriginal in their own languages ... In this modern age, radio and television services are very powerful tools of knowledge and understanding. I have taken steps to ensure that Aboriginals are not deprived of this by directing the government's Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting to give first consideration to remote communities. Accordingly, the major Aboriginal languages that could be serviced have already been identified ... (Hansard, HR 1978: 3449)

Viner's speech is significant in that it shows a marked departure in the government's thinking about Aboriginal broadcasting which requires comment here.

As we have seen, when the federal government first began to consider the idea of Aboriginal broadcasting in the early 1970's, the general emphasis was on the use of radio as a tool to 'educate' Aboriginal people. As we have seen, 'Nugget' Coombs suggested in 1970 that until Aboriginal people in remote regions attained a sufficient level of 'fluency and literacy in English', they 'will not know with any clarity about plans for their future advancement' and that radio would be an invaluable medium for educating them about this process. Eight years later, we see quite a different emphasis on the possible uses of Aboriginal broadcasting in Viner's speech. It is clear that the Minister saw it mainly as a way of countering 'the destructive effects of contact' and that it could help Aboriginal people to 'restore and rebuild their cultural identity'. These varying perceptions on the role of radio, separated by a period of eight years, provide an important insight into not only the development of Aboriginal broadcasting, but also the significant shift in the state's approach to the governance of Aboriginals during the 1970's.

In the following chapter, I will argue that this shift in policy and the federal government's emerging interest in supporting the 'maintenance' of Aboriginal culture played a critical role in the eventual emergence of Aboriginal broadcasting. Indeed, one of the primary arguments that Macumba and I put forward in seeking to establish CAAMA in Alice Springs in 1980 was that Aboriginal culture - particularly Aboriginal languages - were threatened by the proliferation of non-Aboriginal media in Central Australia. In many respects, it could be said that the rise of Aboriginal broadcasting in general was propelled by the cultural preservation argument. Certainly, this is a view that Eric Michaels, for example, constantly reiterated in his work on the issue, particularly in his book 'For a Cultural Future' (Michaels 1987).

An Unfulfilled Project

Before bringing this chapter to a conclusion, it is important to briefly examine governmental activity in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting up to the end of 1979.

The Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting continued to meet in a somewhat haphazard way until early February 1979, when it released an 'Interim Report' for internal consideration only [25].

Nothing of any substance came of the Interim Report, which is not surprising since it was not endorsed by all the members of the Working Party, nor was it ever submitted to the relevant Ministers. Further, the officers representing the Postal and Telecommunications Department expressed the opinion that the development of any kind of broadcasting facilities for Aboriginals did not have priority, and the ABC noted that they would not be in a position to provide air time through their existing networks for Aboriginal programs.

The only positive event that occurred during this year was when DAA provided a grant of $14,000 to the Australian Film and Television School (AFTS) to complete a survey of possible training needs for Aboriginal people already involved in community broadcasting. As a result, Bryon Quigley, a lecturer at the AFTS, was engaged to conduct a comprehensive investigation throughout Australia. He visited eighteen locations in all States as well as the Northern Territory. His final report entitled *Aborigines and Radio, the Need, the Potential* (AFTS 1979) was released in August 1979 and was some eighty pages in length. Quigley recommended a number of practical steps that could be taken by the government to develop

Aboriginal broadcasting. Predictably enough, he was critical of the federal government's inability to facilitate the establishment of such services, regardless of the efforts it had made throughout the 1970's.

Nonetheless, Quigley reported on an important development in Alice Springs: the first broadcast of 'The Aboriginal Half-Hour' from the commercial radio station, 8HA. As we shall see in following chapters, this led to the establishment of CAAMA, which was to provide an institutional channel through which the government could finally achieve its long term ambitions of creating 'an Aboriginal voice in the media'.

Conclusion

Despite the government's unsuccessful attempts to establish Aboriginal broadcasting services during the 1970's, it nevertheless produced a burgeoning repository of knowledge about the project. Numerous reports, submissions and feasibility studies began to address and make recommendations on how it might operate. This included an examination of potential funding arrangements, a detailed survey of the regions in which it might be established, the development of possible programming content and careful consideration of the languages in which it would be presented. Through this protracted process, Aboriginal broadcasting became - like the object of all governmental inquiry - a cohesive object of governmental knowledge, possessing its own specific and quantifiable properties. In this way, it not only became an actionable object of governmental thinking, but was in itself constituted through these same processes.

More importantly, these governmental ambitions presupposed an Aboriginal agency capable of facilitating the development of an Aboriginal broadcasting service. Critically, this expectation began to create the need - and therefore the conditions - for the formation of such agency. However, this agency did not pre-exist in some transcendental realm, beyond the bounds of social reality; it was not a 'ready-made' quantity that could be deployed at will. As we shall see in the next chapter, certain conditions were necessary for its production.

A DIFFICULT BIRTH

Introduction

When Bryon Quigley visited Alice Springs in August 1979 to gather information for his survey on Aboriginal broadcasting (see previous chapter), he was taken aback by what he found. He noted in his report that

> The tensions of racial and community relations in Alice Springs are palpable ...we sense a great caution, reserve and even suspicion at first meeting ... Local radio news broadcasts and the local press quickly reveal severe contentions within the community, and there is an air of resentful defensiveness which one feels could change to one of challenge ... (AFTS 1979:18).

Quigley's stark assessment of the social environment of Alice Springs was perhaps typical of first-time visitors. Certainly, a casual examination of the news stories then appearing in the local press would have convinced anyone that the town was engulfed in racial conflict [1]. Indeed, the large Aboriginal community in the township - and the many problems it no doubt suffered - constituted one of the primary sources for stories in the local press (see Lyon 1991). Yet inevitably perhaps, it was the consistently negative portrayal of Aboriginals in these stories that led, in part, to an important development in the town.
Quigley discovered that an Aboriginal radio program had gone to air just a month prior to his arrival: 'The Aboriginal Half Hour' was broadcast on a weekly basis through local commercial station 8HA.

Although it may have begun with humble ambitions, the program established a number of precedents: it was the first radio program specifically produced for an Aboriginal audience ever put to air in the Northern Territory [2]. It was also the first radio program - anywhere in Australia - to present most of its spoken word material in local Aboriginal languages [3]. More significantly, the launch of The Aboriginal Half Hour would lead to the formation, in February 1980, of the first independent Aboriginal broadcasting organisation in Australia, the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (see chapter Seven). This had far-reaching consequences for the development of Aboriginal broadcasting and television services not only in Central Australia but throughout the country.

In discussing the emergence of The Aboriginal Half Hour in this chapter, there are two issues I wish to highlight. First, as discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, much of the literature on Aboriginal broadcasting generally depicts the emergence of Aboriginal broadcasting as the product of 'resistance' and 'opposition'. As I hope to show, the 'resistance model' does not adequately describe or explain the actual circumstances surrounding these complex events.

Second, the government's attempts to establish Aboriginal broadcasting services throughout the 1970's not only presupposed an Aboriginal agency capable of facilitating these ambitions, but of themselves began to create the need - and therefore the conditions - for the possible formation of such agency. In other words, these manoeuvres began to make available to Aboriginal people certain subject positions that could be taken up if the appropriate conditions happened to arise. Although The Aboriginal Half Hour was only tentatively linked to these governmental ambitions, it nevertheless provided a significant stepping stone towards the realisation of these governmental goals, albeit in ways that the government itself could not have predicted.

Problematising the Resistance Model

Identifying and locating the 'birth' of any cultural phenomenon will always be a difficult business. As with origin stories in general, there is likely to be a high degree of contestation over who can claim to be its rightful heir and instigator. The 'truth' about how such a phenomenon came into existence will tend to be defended by those who have an interest in valorising such a truth, since it will often encapsulate deeply cherished myths of a political, institutional and personal nature that may have little to do with the phenomenon in question. Perhaps one of the most important functions of an origin story is to set in train a powerful narrative, capable of privileging one set of events over a multiplicity of others. So it seems with the 'birth' of Aboriginal broadcasting in Central Australia.

In much of the scholarly literature surrounding the subject, Central Australia is identified as the place where Aboriginal broadcasting 'took hold' or, as Michael Meadows has put it, 'where it eventually came to fruition' (Meadows 1992:35). As discussed in the introduction, these accounts generally imply – or proclaim - that this 'birth' was the triumphal culmination of a protracted 'struggle' on the part of Aboriginal people against entrenched media opposition (see Molnar 1995, Bell 1994, Dowmunt 1993). I would not disagree with

the proposition that Aboriginal broadcasting 'came to fruition' in Central Australia, nor that this occurred partly in reaction to the negative coverage that sections of the Aboriginal community were receiving in the local press. However, many of the accounts cited above tend to make an uncomplicated distinction between 'the oppressed' on the one side, and 'the oppressors' on the other in discussing these developments. This necessarily produces what I would describe as 'a fictional Aboriginal speaking position' - or 'resistant voice' - that only serves to obscure the actual complexities surrounding these events.

Indeed, after examining the historical and political circumstances that produced these first Aboriginal radio programs in Alice Springs, one is hard pressed to discern the emergence of any singular 'voice' that could be definitively categorised as 'essentially' Aboriginal, let alone one moulded through a process of 'resistance'. One finds many voices - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - continually emerging in different versions, on the ebb and flow of political expediency, institutional power-play and a range of other indeterminate factors.

While it is certainly true that one can talk about 'resistance and struggle' within this process, there is little point in deploying crude binary logic to reduce these multifarious events to a contest between the dominated and the dominate, between the oppressed and the oppressor, between those who 'own the media' and those who don't. Indeed, there were many competing interests involved in the production and transmission of these programs. As Lawrence Grossberg suggests, we need to

> … move beyond models of oppression, both the 'colonial model' of the oppressor and the oppressed, and the 'transgression model' of oppression and resistance … Both models of oppression [are] incapable of creating alliances, and they cannot tell us how to interpolate various factions of the population in different relations to power into the struggle for change. (Grossberg 1996: 88)

Positive Conditions

In examining the emergence of any cultural phenomenon - including the coming to 'fruition' of Aboriginal broadcasting - we cannot simply accept as a 'given' the environment in which it occurred (as is the case with much of the literature cited above). As Foucault states:

> … it is not enough … to pay attention, to be aware, for new objects suddenly to light up and emerge out of the ground … it does not pre-exist itself, held back by some obstacle at the first edges of light. It exists under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations. (Foucault 1994:45)

Given the fact that the federal government had tried to establish broadcasting services for Aboriginals throughout the 1970's (see previous chapter), what were the 'positive conditions' that brought it 'to fruition' in Alice Springs?

The first and most obvious condition relates to the issue of population. For most of its known history, Central Australia had been solely occupied by Aboriginal people, although by the end of the 1970's the regional black-white community was almost evenly divided, as indicated in the 1981 census. It showed that 14,672 were non-Aboriginal, and 13,312 were Aboriginal, or 53% and 47% respectively (ABS 1982).The distribution of this diverse population is also important. Almost all of the region's non-Aboriginals lived in the townships of Alice Springs and Tennant Creek where they predominated, while most Aboriginal people lived in more than 150 small communities scattered throughout the more remote regions, where they were the majority. Nonetheless, close to 35% of the Alice Springs permanent and itinerant population was Aboriginal at this point in time (DAA 1980). The absence of any Aboriginal participation in the local media was therefore particularly obvious. Moreover, the local Aboriginal community provided a receptive audience-base for any potential Aboriginal broadcasting service.

The second, related condition concerns the availability of what I will term 'Aboriginal cultural tradition'. As we have seen, the government had always insisted that Aboriginal broadcasting should be established in regions where Aboriginal languages 'were still spoken'. For instance, when the ABC first began to take a serious interest in the development of such services in 1974, the ABC's General Manager, Sir Talbot Duckmanton, proposed that the main priority would be 'in determining the languages and dialects in which these broadcasts should be made' [4]. Further, in 1977, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner, presented a submission to Federal Cabinet seeking special funding to establish broadcasting services in several 'remote Aboriginal communities'. In that submission Viner noted that 'my immediate and sole interest is in indigenous language broadcasting; I am not interested in urban or rural English language broadcasting' [5]. Given the fact that the majority of Aboriginal people then living in Central Australia (including Alice Springs) spoke an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue (IAD 1992), it was obviously a prime location in which the government's long-term interests in Aboriginal broadcasting might find some congruity with local indigenous cultural forms.

Nonetheless, I will argue that the presence of Aboriginal languages did not, in itself, necessarily guarantee the establishment of these services. In 1975, the Interdepartmental Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting had attempted to implement a 'pilot Aboriginal community broadcasting station' at Bathurst Island or Milingimbi, both of which were situated in the remote regions of the Northern Territory (see previous chapter). Although Aboriginal languages were widely spoken in these locations, it did not lead to the successful establishment of the proposed community station. In other words, while the presence of Aboriginal languages was of fundamental importance in facilitating an alignment between state and Aboriginal aspirations, this was only one of several necessary conditions that precipitated the development of Aboriginal broadcasting. This brings us to the third condition.

As proposed in chapters Two and Three, the implementation of Aboriginal self-determination policy in 1972 inaugurated a particularly intense 'governmentalisation' of the Aboriginal population in Central Australia, where techniques designed to facilitate the production of 'self-determining' Aboriginal agency were applied with a vigor rarely seen in other regions. Here a unique kind of political and social environment, involving both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, arose as a direct result of this governmemtalisation process, which I have described as 'an Aboriginal administrative culture'. By 1979 it consisted of an extensive network of Aboriginal organisations, government departments, agencies and a substantial workforce that together constituted the largest single employment sector in the township (Crough 1989). As I have also argued, this 'hybrid assemblage' of governmental technologies facilitated the formation of an agency capable of developing the kind of broadcasting services that the state had been attempting to create since 1971.

Last, beyond the specific conditions relating to Central Australia there had been a number of developments in public broadcasting throughout Australia during the 1970's. Indeed, the proliferation of community radio stations during this period made it both technically and legally possible to insert a limited level of Aboriginal programming into public radio services. Although this meant sharing air time with a multitude of other community interests, there were some important precedents established outside of the Northern Territory that put further pressure on the federal government to support the development of Aboriginal broadcasting [6].

Having outlined the general positive conditions' that contributed to the development of Aboriginal broadcasting in Central Australia, I will now examine in detail the primary 'actors' involved in these events.

The Birth of Aboriginal Broadcasting: A Casual Encounter

In March 1979, an informal conversation took place in Alice Springs between John Macumba, an Aboriginal person, and Chris Majewski, a public servant of Polish extraction. At some point in their discussion, one of them began to talk about creating an Aboriginal radio program. Neither of them knew how such a program might work, nor how to put it to air; indeed neither of them had any experience in broadcasting. Nonetheless, it was this 'germ of an idea' (as Majewski put it) that eventually led to the production and transmission of The Aboriginal Half Hour a few months later.

At the time of their discussion, John Macumba had been living in Alice Springs for some five years. He was originally from Oodnadatta, South Australia, but had spent most of his childhood in Adelaide (see following chapter). He was working as a community liaison officer with the Tangentyere Council, a local Aboriginal organisation that provided housing for the Aboriginal 'town campers' who lived on the township's outskirts (see Heppell & Wigley 1981). Macumba recalled that he spent most of his time in this work collecting rent from the organisation's clients and rounding up and destroying their maimed and diseased dogs.

When they met, Majewski had only just arrived in Central Australia to take up a new position as Southern Coordinator of Adult Education with the Northern Territory Education Department. While he supervised adult education programs in many remote Aboriginal communities in the region, his primary interests were in working with the local Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs. He provided them with vocational training in such areas as health, child care, basic literacy and a range of industrial arts.

From lengthy interviews with Macumba and Majewski [7], it seems apparent that at least in the initial stages, the essential motivation in starting and then managing the program came from Majewski. He clearly had a professional interest in establishing some form of local Aboriginal broadcasting service, long before he arrived in Alice Springs. On the other hand, Macumba appeared to be motivated by more complex, personal desires, and, of course, he was Aboriginal (see following chapter). In this sense, Majewski brought to the project not

only the professional interests of a public servant and therefore, a certain governmental power, but he also brought his own political beliefs about how Aboriginal people should be assisted. As we shall see, these beliefs and his duties as a public servant eventually began to clash, producing dire consequences for Majewski.

On the other hand, I would suggest that the most important contribution that Macumba made to the project was, quite simply, his identity. Obviously, without his initial participation, the project would never have started. As argued in chapter Three, the formation of 'partnerships' between non-Aboriginals and Aboriginals in the pursuit of various projects on behalf of the Aboriginal community largely depended on the Aboriginal partner's willingness to provide his or her *authorisation* to undertake such projects on a *joint* basis. I have characterised this process as a situation in which the Aboriginal partner 'lent' his or her Aboriginality to the partnership in order to enable the white partner to act with authority. However, I have also proposed that by 'lending' his or her identity, the Aboriginal partner was also, in a sense, lending the collective identity of the Aboriginal community. As we shall see, the complexities involved in this procedure were to cause certain difficulties for Macumba and the project as a whole.

It was not, however, only a matter of Macumba 'lending his identity' to the development of The Aboriginal Half Hour. As described in chapter Seven, he had a particular talent as a radio presenter and indeed, was able to attract a wide listening audience within the Aboriginal community when he began working on the The Half Hour. Nonetheless, as will become apparent in the following chapter (which addresses Macumaba's reasons for becoming involved in the development of CAAMA), he was not, it seems, principally motivated by a desire to develop 'an Aboriginal voice in the media', although this certainly was a significant factor.

Linkages with Previous Attempts to Establish an Aboriginal Broadcasting Service

The origins of Majewski's interest are worth exploring since they were connected with previous governmental attempts to establish Aboriginal broadcasting services in the Northern Territory. Majewski was recruited by the Education Department via the Department's Coordinator of Adult Education, Reginald Bond. Prior to taking up his appointment in the Northern Territory, Bond had been working in Papua New Guinea as the national Head of Adult Education. While working there, he made extensive use of the

PNG Broadcasting Service to distribute adult education programs at the village level [8]. According to Majewski, Bond was extremely enthusiastic about the effectiveness of radio in delivering educational programs to pre-literate adults, and actively encouraged Majewski to pursue and develop similar services for Aboriginal people in Central Australia. Majewski believed that it was Bond's lengthy discussions about the use of radio in PNG that generated his original interest. And here we see the connections between these activities in PNG and the Northern Territory .

As we have seen, in 1973 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs sent one of its departmental officers, Kel Lewis, to Papua New Guinea to investigate the same broadcasting system used by Bond to deliver adult education services. DAA was of course interested to know whether a similar service might be developed for Aboriginal people in northern Australia. While nothing of any substance came of this venture, it certainly caught the attention of senior staff within DAA, including those in the Northern Territory. Whether or not DAA had discussed the PNG broadcasting service with Bond is unknown, although it is hard to imagine that he was not aware of DAA 's interest, since he was working in PNG with the local broadcasting service when Lewis conducted his study there. Further, a report on Lewis's investigations in PNG was published and widely circulated in the magazine 'Identity' (Lewis 1974).

It was not just his departmental supervisor that stimulated Majewski's interest in the possibilities of Aboriginal broadcasting. He was also well aware of the efforts that the Aboriginal community of Milingimbi (situated in the tropical north of the Northern Territory) had been making in trying to establish a local broadcasting service, from 1975 onwards. Indeed, just before he took up his position in Alice Springs, he was asked by the principal of the Milingimbi school, David MacClay, to work there as a local adult educator, which included the utilization of the proposed radio service. MacClay was a leading advocate of local radio in Milingimbi and was in contact with the Department of Aboriginal Affair's Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting. Doubtless, Majewski would have discussed with MacClay the machinations of the Working Party, which ultimately failed to assist Milingimbi. As we have seen, the Working Party was dissolved in early 1976 following the dismissal of the Labor government in late 1975, and was not reinstated by the Liberal government until several years later.

Conflicting Obligations

Having provided some indication of Majewski's interest in broadcasting, I would not want to give the impression that it was the primary focus of his work. As the Northern Territory Education Department's Southern Coordinator of Adult Education, he was of course involved in a number of other projects with several Aboriginal organisations during this period, as indicated above.

I would also point out that the Northern Territory Education Department was not in complete sympathy with his desire to work in association with Aboriginal organisations. Many of the senior staff in the department were still smarting from the rapid – and, in their eyes - disastrous changes that had occurred in relation to the provision of government service to Aboriginal people (see chapter Two). Only a few years prior, such services - including adult education - were controlled almost exclusively through the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration. For many of them, the new era of land rights, Aboriginal self-determination and independent Aboriginal organisations had not only destroyed years of dedicated work with Aboriginal communities, but spelt disaster for Aboriginal people themselves (see Coombs 1978, Rowley 1972). For some of these officers, Majewski's working relationship with Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs was problematical. Fortunately, his immediate supervisor, Bond (who was a relative newcomer to the department himself), supported him against what was often open departmental opposition to his work.

In the interview I conducted with Majewski, I asked why he wanted to develop projects with local Aboriginal organisations when faced with such hostility by his employer, the Education Department. He answered in part that

> Oh, I really believed that there was a lot of heavily institutionalised racism in the Territory ... and I don't think I had a very clear picture of where Aboriginal people wanted to take things themselves, but I felt that their power needed to be strengthened within the Territory ...so I just felt there was an imbalance of formal power … and organisations that were taking their direction from Aboriginal people needed to be supported at that time ...

While Majewski was able to find several local Aboriginal organisations with which to work on a number of other projects, there wasn't any Aboriginal media organisation with which he could work to establish a radio program.

This was indeed a problem, particularly given the fact that he proposed to create what would in effect be the first 'Aboriginal voice' on a local radio outlet, which would sometimes broadcast 'the views and opinions of local Aboriginal people'. It appeared that such a project could not proceed without some form of endorsement from the local Aboriginal organisations. Generally speaking, it was these organisations that represented the views of the local Aboriginal populace (which as we have seen, made up almost half the total population of the region). In other words, he needed a certain kind of 'authorisation' from these organisations, or failing that, a local Aboriginal person who could act to give the program both an Aboriginal identify and a degree of Aboriginal agency.

While Majewski believed, quite strongly, that the Northern Territory Education Department had a role in assisting in the development of the radio program, he was more than aware of the complexities involved in this task. On the one hand, despite the support he was receiving from his immediate supervisor - Bond - the senior authorities within the Education Department felt particularly uneasy about funding a radio program that would, in their opinion, present views of a political - or worse -defamatory nature. The department felt that unless it had complete control over the content of the program, it should not be supported. Further, the Department did not want the program to go ahead and then have to close it down due to potential problems with its content, because this would allow the Aboriginal organisations, who were already deeply hostile to the Northern Territory government - including the Education Department, to claim that it was trying to 'censor' the views of Aboriginal people.

On the other hand, the program would not be achieving its aims if it did not have a genuine connection with the local Aboriginal community and its organisations as noted above. Unfortunately for Majewski, most of these organisations were deeply suspicious of any activities connected with the Northern Territory government. Indeed, the government not only opposed the form in which Aboriginal people were to be granted land under the federal N.T. Land Rights Act, but had consistently refused to provide any substantial assistance in the development of Aboriginal organisations in central Australia [9].

To his credit, Majewski nevertheless pursued the proposal despite the twin difficulties he faced from within his own department and the general wariness of the Aboriginal organisations. In regard to the departmental problem, he continued to enjoy the direct support of his immediate supervisor, who Majewski claimed, 'protected' him from other

senior offices who did not wish to see the radio program go ahead. Unfortunately, when his supervisor, Bond, later became ill and resigned, Majewski immediately became the target of departmental manoeuvres to have him removed.

Seeking Aboriginal Endorsement

In terms of gaining the endorsement of the local Aboriginal community, Majewski decided on a course that would not necessarily involve an Aboriginal organisation. The organisations were, in any case, not established or equipped to deal with a broadcasting service, and were under enormous stains running a range of other programs. He simply thought of approaching a local Aboriginal person who might be interested in presenting and producing the program.

As outlined above, at some point in March 1979 Majewski happened to meet John Macumba on a social occasion in Alice Springs where the proposal for an Aboriginal radio program was discussed. Macumba was enthusiastic about becoming involved and expressed an interest in comparing the program. However, he told Majewski that they should first discuss the proposal with some of the local Aboriginal organisations before proceeding any further. Reluctantly, Majewski agreed, but told Macumba that it would be up to him - as an Aboriginal person - to undertake the difficult task of convincing the local Aboriginal organisations to endorse a project that would directly involve the Northern Territory government.

When Macumba eventually put the proposal to the board of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, (see CAAC 1991), he was greeted with a predictably negative, if not hostile response. While there was unanimous agreement that an Aboriginal radio program should be developed and put to air, some board members were completely opposed to any program that was associated, in any way, with the Northern Territory government. Nevertheless, the overriding concern was with the issue of representation.

The Aboriginal organisations of Alice existed in a difficult political and social environment, and sometimes there were struggles within - and between - organisations themselves over how the local Aboriginal community should be publicly represented, and more particularly, who had the legitimate right to represent their interests. A radio program that set out to communicate the views of the local Aboriginal community, or indeed, proposed to represent itself as 'a voice of the Aboriginal people of Central Australia', was bound to attract a

considerable degree of contestation and debate. There was also the problem of Macumba himself. He had not been born in central Australia, nor had he grown up there. In other words, he had no direct family affiliations through which he could claim to act on behalf of the local community, nor did he have any traditional attachments to the land in the immediate region. As discussed in the next chapter, his traditional associations were largely to be found in South Australia. Macumba recalls:

> ... they, [the Aboriginal organisations] were growing both politically and also individually as a power base...they were worried about Aboriginal people like me presenting their ideas through media because they couldn't afford to have different people getting on media presenting a different idea of things, except what was through the organisations because they wanted to present a united front….I was the new kid on the block. They didn't accept or appreciate what I was trying to do...so they put me over the grill…they said you can't do this and you can't do that….I was not to say anything that jeopardize the Aboriginal cause or it's development without their knowledge.. so when I came out of the meeting, I felt like chucking the whole lot in, but I saw Chris Majewski [later] who said no, it's a good idea, just keep going ahead with it, so we did…

Nonetheless, neither Macumba nor Majewski abandoned attempts to involve the Aboriginal organisations. They felt that while there was not a great deal of support from this quarter, it may perhaps change at a later point, as in fact it did. What is clear is that Macumba decided to work with Majewski in developing the project. This provided at least some level of Aboriginal authorization without which Majewski could not proceed. Majewski remembers that 'it was only after I had the go-ahead from John, that I began to think about how we could actually do it'.

Accessing the Airwaves

He assumed that Macumba would present the program and that he would pay him as a 'part time adult education instructor'. In terms of putting the program to air, there was only one real alternative: the local commercial radio station, 8HA [10]. At the time, the ABC did not have a fully operational radio station studio in Alice Springs, nor was there any community radio station in the town. On the other hand, 8HA did have facilities to insert local programs if required.

Initially, Majewski felt that the management of 8HA would not be sympathetic to the idea of an Aboriginal radio program going to air on their station and hoped that they may be amenable to providing the air time on a paid basis. As the above quote from Bryon Quiggley

suggests, there were certain antagonisms within Alice Springs at this time. Apart from the Aboriginal organisations, relations between various sections of the black and white community were plainly hostile. As Quigley also found, one of the areas that produced some of the most heated debate was in the reporting of Aboriginal issues through the local media, particularly on 8HA. There were few daily news bulletins emanating from the station that did not include at least one story about the local 'Aboriginal problem'. For example, a group calling itself the 'Citizens for Civilized Living' group, launched a campaign in 1980 to stop Aboriginal people living in certain sections of Alice Springs. Despite the racially-based intentions of this group, they were given prominent and broadly sympathetic coverage through the local press, including 8HA (see *The Centralian Advocate* 1980).

Again, despite these new difficulties, Majewski went ahead and approached the 8HA station manger with his proposal. To his surprise, the manager offered him air time at the first meeting. He was also given a tape on which to record the program. Majewski recalls:

> ... so I rang up [8HA] and said that I was interested in the possibility of putting an Aboriginal program on the air … I thought there would be a lot of difficult discussion and so on … [but] I got the warmest welcome … it was open doors, open arms, sounds like a great idea … and yeah, it astonished me because that wasn't the feel of Alice Springs generally in relation to things Aboriginal in 1979 …

As we shall see, Majewski's appreciation of 8HA's apparent largess was tempered somewhat when he discovered that the station was due to go before the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal to have its license renewed less than six months after they offered the air time. Given the fact that there was a large Aboriginal population within 8HA's official service area, and that up until then, 8HA had made no attempt to provide any kind of programming to this significant section of the community, an Aboriginal program would be a 'handy asset' if the Tribunal happened to ask, as it did, whether or not 8HA was doing something for its Aboriginal audience.

Following these preliminary negotiations with 8HA, Majewski went back to Macumba to discuss production plans, however, Macumba had been offered full-time employment with another Aboriginal organisation and declined to become involved in The Aboriginal Half Hour, at least for the time being. It is not clear why he took this course of action, perhaps he was concerned about offending the local Aboriginal organisations, or he simply wanted a job with more income since he was supporting a young family at the time.

Macumba nevertheless assisted Majewski in recruiting a local Aboriginal person by the name of Ronnie Golder to present the programs. Golder was a very different person to Macumba in that he was not considered an 'outsider' by the local Aboriginal community (see following chapter). He was a member of a well known family in Alice Springs with strong traditional links to the Central Arrernte Aboriginal group. Unlike Macumba, he was also bi-lingual, being a fluent speaker of both in his own language, Arrernte, and English. Apart from his impeccable community credentials, he was in a much better position, in terms of his local contacts and linguistic abilities, to generate the necessary material for the program and most importantly, give it a strong local legitimacy. (Unfortunately, in the course of my research, I have not been able to locate Golder and therefore do not have his account of events).

Going to Air

The first Aboriginal Half Hour went to air in July 1979 on a Sunday night at 9.45pm. This was not the most attractive of times, but it was a start. The program was produced at a local primary school on basic recording equipment during the weekends, and delivered to 8HA just before it was due to go to air. Essentially, Majewski operated the equipment, delivered the tape and provided the funding (through the Education Department), while Golder was responsible for gathering material from the local Aboriginal community. One of the most important aspects of the program was its extensive use of local Aboriginal languages. Majewski recalls:

> ….Walpiri, Pitjantjatjara and Arrernte were the three key languages to start with…and it was Ronnie [Golder] who lined up the speakers of these languages ..it was his job to run around and get various news items translated and other material…He took to it with some gusto and he did organise those first translators. At first it was a bit hard for him, I remember him putting a bit of pressure on me to find money to pay these people but I just didn't have the money because, you know, I had a fairly limited budget, and at that stage I was running quite a few projects around town already…but he got over that hump, and obviously people were found, people were willing to come forward and do a bit of translation work just as a community service..

At the time, there was very little Aboriginal music commercially available that could be used on the show. Majewski and Golder found a few albums by the Aboriginal country and western singer, Jimmy Little and a 'hit single' by the Aboriginal boxing champion, Lionel Rose entitled 'Thank you'. They also had an assortment of local Aboriginal gospel choir recordings and a few tapes of traditional music. Apart from this limited offering, the musical

diet of the program consisted of American country & western 'classics' (a form of music that is still popular with Aboriginal audiences throughout rural Australia).

The show's format was therefore extremely eclectic, if not completely postmodern. For instance, in the space of a few minutes, the listener might hear a rough, pre-recorded announcement about the problems of petrol sniffing, presented in Pitjantjatjara, followed by Tammy Wynette's 'Stand By Your Man', followed by a news item about a course in motor mechanics, followed by a rendition of 'The Old Rugged Cross' sung by an Aboriginal choir in Arrernte, and then an item from the hospital for expectant Aboriginal mothers, presented in a variety of different languages. The program nevertheless seemed to hang together, at least in a locally-specific sense. The best programs were multi-copied onto cassette tape and distributed to the local Aboriginal community. Indeed, when CAAMA was established in the following year, the practice of sending audio-tapes (and later, video programs) out to remote Aboriginal communities was to continue on a much larger scale.

While there was never enough funding to conduct a methodical survey of the program's listenership, anecdotal evidence provided by Macumba and Majewski suggest that it enjoyed a wide audience within the local Aboriginal community. Certainly, I myself was later to observe a kind of 'cult following' of the program mainly among Aboriginal people living in the town camps of Alice Springs, where the majority of Aboriginal language-speakers lived. This was particularly the case during the hot summer months when extreme temperatures generally meant that the campers lived out in the open, away from their non-air-conditioned dwellings. Without a TV set to watch, a battery operated radio - usually propped up in the fork of a tree - became a prime source of entertainment for most families in the camps. Further, hearing one's own language on radio for the first time was a riveting experience and contributed to the accumulation of what appeared to be a dedicated listening audience [11].

Approximately three months after the program went to air, Ronnie Golder decided to leave. According Majewski, he gave no particular reason for this move, he simply gave his notice and left. As far as I can determine, Golder never returned to broadcasting work again. Since the program was now a relatively well established operation, Majewski had fewer difficulties in finding a replacement for Golder. This was Lucy Lester, an Aboriginal woman who spoke fluent Yankuntjatjarra, (a dialect of the Western Desert language group), and English. Unlike Golder, Lester was not originally from Alice Springs, nor was her language or ancestry closely associated with the local area, yet she was well known for her work in local

Aboriginal organisations and was able to maintain an audience. The program went relatively well for a brief period of time until serious trouble between Majewski and the Education Department erupted over issues concerning both The Aboriginal Half Hour and Majewski's wider involvements in other Aboriginal organisations.

Departmental Politics

As already noted, senior staff within the Northern Territory Education Department were never entirely supportive of Majewski's direct working relationship with the Aboriginal organisations of Alice Springs, but there was one organisation that was not to be supported under any circumstances: the Yeperenye School (Yipirinya 1982). Yeperenye was established in the mid 1970's to provide independent schooling, primarily, for Aboriginal children living on the town camps. The parents of these children felt that regular departmental schools within Alice Springs did not adequately cater for the needs of their children, either in a general cultural sense, nor linguistically (such children usually spoke their own languages before English). Despite years of formal submissions, the Education Department flatly refused to fund or even recognise the validity of Yeperenye, even though it had secured some support from the federal authorities and received public accolades for its work. It seems that for the department, Yeperenye represented a real threat to the entire edifice of Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory. Majewski was therefore given strict instructions, in person, not to provide even indirect support to Yeperenye.

Regardless of these warnings, Majewski actually went about providing a level of covert support for Yeperenye. He did this by quietly directing departmental funds to teachers who were employed - officially - as 'adult literacy workers' on the town camps, but who were in fact based at Yeperenye, working not with the adults on the camps, but with their children. It was an extremely delicate manoeuvre and depended for its success on the discretion of the teachers involved. As we shall see, one teacher failed to understand the finely attuned nature of this arrangement and eventually undid Makewski's carefully orchestrated ruse.

In the meantime, the Aboriginal organisations had dropped their original reservations about The Aboriginal Half Hour and began to use the program as a way of passing on messages and general information to their community. This included Yeperenye. Inevitably, senior officials within the Education Department discovered that The Aboriginal Half Hour was carrying information about Yeperenye. Majewski was immediately contacted by one of these

officials and told that since the department was a part-sponsor of the radio program, all mention of Yeperenye must cease. He imposed - in effect - a direct ban on any such material. Majewski had no alternative but to inform Yeperenye that The Aboriginal Half Hour could no longer carry information about its activities.

All this came to an unfortunate head when, as anticipated, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (under the chairmanship of Bruce Gyngell) convened a public hearing into the renewal of 8HA's broadcasting license, in Alice Springs on the forth of October, 1979. Majewski was of course invited by the management of 8HA to present evidence before the hearing about the significance of The Aboriginal Half Hour. It was at this point that he understood why 8HA had been so forthcoming in providing air time for the program. Nonetheless, he provided 8HA with what they wanted and gave a glowing account of The Half Hour which indeed, impressed the Tribunal.

Unbeknown to Majewski however, one of the teachers that he had covertly funded at Yeperenye, decided to put in an appearance at the hearing, accompanied by her class of fifteen young Aboriginal children. After giving his evidence, (a broadly positive account of The Aboriginal Half Hour), those in attendance were asked if they had any questions for Majewski. The teacher from Yeperenye immediately proceeded to quiz him about his department's ban on having material about Yeperenye on the program. Majewski was therefore obliged to reveal that it was the Northern Territory Education Department that had imposed the ban. In the exchange, it also became apparent that the teacher was in fact funded by the Education Department, which as we have seen, was in direct contravention of departmental policy.

Following this debacle, there was enormous pressure within the department to rid itself of The Aboriginal Half Hour. Nevertheless, it managed to survive, perhaps due to the fact that the Broadcasting Tribunal had publicly praised it for supporting what was then the only Aboriginal radio program in the Northern Territory. Obviously, the department would have looked foolish if it terminated its support for the program at this point in time. It also seems apparent that the department's worse fears had come true, it was now deeply concerned about a possible backlash from the Aboriginal community if it was seen to be 'closing down' the program. The Aboriginal Half Hour therefore continued to receive the reluctant support of the department, if only to stop any further criticisms of its involvement in the project.

However, the outcome for Majewski was less positive. His employment with the department was terminated only a few weeks after these events. His attempts to work with local Aboriginal organisations had finally caught up with him. After his 'sacking', he left Alice Springs, never to live there again. In recalling this painful episode, Majewski said, 'the department basically saw me as subversive, and they were right; I was subversive'. Nonetheless, he might have drawn some comfort from the fact that he was the first in a long line of casualties, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, in the process of establishing an Aboriginal radio and television service in central Australia.

A week before Makewski formally quit the department, the compére of The Aboriginal Half Hour, Lucy Lester (see above), was offered full time employment and therefore gave her notice. Makewski decided to approach John Macumba again and asked him whether he would be interested in comparing the show as originally planned. Since Macumba was again seeking work, he took up Majewski's offer. This decision was of crucial importance, not only for Macumba, but for the establishment of CAAMA and the broader development of Aboriginal broadcasting throughout Australia.

Of course, Majewski also wanted to find someone to replace himself. As we have seen, he had worked as the general coordinator of the project. It was at this point that I became involved. Like Macumba, I was also seeking work in Alice Springs. I had just completed a three-year stint at the Aboriginal community of Papunya, located over 300 kilometers west of the township. For two of those years I had been employed by the Education Department as a teacher. I had met Majewski on various occasions in Alice Springs and had expressed an interest in The Aboriginal Half Hour. As a result, he contacted me a few days before he was to depart and offered me part-time work as an 'Adult Educator', coordinating The Half Hour. As we shall see in Part Three, this led to a close working relationship with Macumba, and consequently, the establishment of CAAMA.

Representational Politics

Given the obvious fact that The Aboriginal Half Hour was relatively harmless in a political sense, we might ask: why did the Education Department, and the board of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress appear to be so reluctant in supporting it? There are several possible reasons for their seemingly exaggerated concerns, but I would suggest that the wider conflicts between the Aboriginal organisations and the Northern Territory government (over

the issues of land claims, funding arrangements, legal rights, etc.) tended to magnify any anxieties that they might have had over The Aboriginal Half Hour.

In these various conflicts, I would argue that there was an underlying struggle over the public representation of Aboriginal interests and the recruitment of an Aboriginal constituency. Organisations such as the Central Land Council certainly had a head start in this struggle, if only because it had a statutory responsibility to represent Aboriginal people. However, the Northern Territory government quickly realised that it could not rely on the nebulous claim that it acted on behalf of 'all Territorians', including Aboriginals: it not only had to work on recruiting an Aboriginal constituency, but on the public representation of the 'true interests' of Aboriginal people if it was to have any hope of limiting what it perceived to be the growing power of the Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs in the late 1970's.

Of course the most expedient arena for the conduct of representational warfare is in the mass media. With the establishment of the weekly Aboriginal Half Hour, the Territory government and the Aboriginal organisations were bound to view its arrival with worried interest. In short, the mass media had the real potential to become a powerful vehicle in both the representation and the recruitment of an Aboriginal constituency.

In this sense, the political struggles between the Territory government and the Aboriginal organisations, was also a struggle over the representation of Aboriginal people and their 'true interests'. In order to authenticate their respective versions of these 'interests', it was necessary to work on constructing and nurturing a public Aboriginal speaking position, or a 'true Aboriginal Voice' that would act to underpin such claims and thereby further their respective political interests.

What is striking here is the enormous difference between the essentially home-spun, multi-vocal nature of The Aboriginal Half Hour, and the hard fought battles between the Territory government and the Aboriginal organisations over the representation of these interests and ultimately, over appropriate constructions of the 'Voice of the Aboriginal People'.

A 'Singular' Resistant Voice?

In listening to the old taped versions of The Aboriginal Half Hour, one hears a stream of community message about ordinary events; friendly jokes about local identities; poorly

recorded but enthusiastic local singers, and the all pervasive presence of American country and western music [12]. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how they represent an 'act of resistance' against the 'established media' as the literature cited at the beginning of this chapter argues. For example, in what way does an Aboriginal listeners' request to hear 'The Yellow Rose of Texas', constitute an act of resistance? What are we to make of a popular song, 'Old Bungalow Days', composed by a local Aboriginal singer that expresses a nostalgic longing for a childhood spent at a local institution for what was once termed 'half-caste' children [13]. Or the Aboriginal lay-preacher, who regularly went on air to praise the coming of Christianity into the lives of Aboriginal people? [14]. No doubt, there were the occasional information bulletins about land rights and government entitlements for Aboriginal people, but one listens in vain for any overt political rhetoric about the state of black - white relations.

I have tried to demonstrate here that while the 'birth' of Aboriginal broadcasting in central Australia is often depicted as the culmination of a 'long resistance' against entrenched powers to establish 'an Aboriginal voice in the media', it becomes apparent that such a 'voice' is neither a fixed, singular entity, nor that it was necessarily produced as a result of a binary 'resistance' of the oppressed against the oppressors, but rather, was always in a state of 'becoming', and more the product of institutional, political and personal stratagems. I am not suggesting that there is anything 'unethical' about the construction of a unified speaking position or 'voice'. As we shall see, the rhetoric of cultural essentialism not only conditioned the emergence of CAAMA but remain central to its survival. CAAMA actively enlisted innumerable versions of an Aboriginal 'voice', depending on the circumstances and political necessities of the moment. In truth, CAAMA and other Aboriginal organisations in central Australia, were infused with various strategic forms of cultural essentialism. Ultimately, I argue that because the formation of a speaking position, or 'voice' is a discursive process it will also be a strategic process, produced through rhetoric and negotiation and should always be viewed as such, and not as the an essential product of nature.

Conclusion: Towards the Formation of an Aboriginal Agency

As we have seen, Majewski wished to obtain a level of endorsement from the Aboriginal organisations of Alice Springs before putting The Aboriginal Half Hour to air. This would not only give the program a certain legitimacy, but encourage the public perception that it 'represented the views and opinions of the local Aboriginal community'. More importantly

perhaps, it would give Majewski himself some form of Aboriginal authorization. However, given the animosities that existed between these organisations and the Northern Territory Government - Majewski's employer - he sought the assistance of John Macumba to help in this process of legitimisation. However, when Macumba failed to secure the organisations endorsement, it was Macumba himself who became the primary conduit for this process of Aboriginal authorization. In this important sense, Macumba provided The Aboriginal Half Hour with a verifiable and acceptable Aboriginal agency that was indeed, a prerequisite for its implementation. As Majewski commented, 'it was only after I had the go-ahead from John, that I began to think about how we could actually do it'.

I would argue that in offering his Aboriginality to the project, Macumba was not only accepting a role in an elaborate kind of 'performance' - involving The Aboriginal Half Hour and its public representation - he was also associating himself - in a very tentative way - with a certain Aboriginal subject position. While the general parameters of this 'position' had been shaped by governmental changes associated with the polices of Aboriginal self-determination and other sociopolitical factors, I would argue that it was also delineated, to a small but important extent, by the government's eight year ambition to establish Aboriginal broadcasting services. As argued at the outset of this chapter, these ambitions had not only created the need, but the 'positive conditions' required for the formation of an Aboriginal agency capable of fulfilling these governmental desires. By contributing his Aboriginality to the development of The Half Hour - and thus providing it with an Aboriginal agency - Macumba was, I believe, establishing a connection between these earlier governmental plans and his own aspirations, although neither Macumba, Majewski, nor indeed the government could have been aware of this convergence at the time. As will become apparent in the following chapters, this connection was to be considerably strengthened with the foundation of CAAMA. In fact, I would argue that these governmental expectations (which had steadily accumulated throughout the 1970's) flowed - with some force - into the subsequent development and expansion of CAAMA: the first Aboriginal broadcasting service to be established in Australia.

It is important to understand, nonetheless, that those involved in the development of The Aboriginal Half Hour, particularly Macumba, were not simply performing in accordance with a set of predetermined 'subject positions' provided by government. Indeed, it seems to me that Macumba was acutely aware of the fact that he was 'lending his Aboriginality' to The Aboriginal Half Hour, and locating himself in a particular role or position that others

124

had a part in creating. As we shall see in the following chapter, Macumba had his own, very personal reasons for becoming involved in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting in Central Australia.

PART THREE:

PRIVATE POLITICS, PUBLIC STRATEGIES

A STRANGER IN MY OWN LAND

Introduction

In part three of this thesis I focus on the relationship that developed between John Macumba and myself when we began working together on The Aboriginal Half Hour and, more particularly, on the establishment of CAAMA. The analytical aims here are twofold. First, I wish to foreground the linkages between our own particular motivations - especially Macumba's - and the sociopolitical environment in which we worked. In other words, I want to investigate the circumstances that led to our involvement in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting. Here, I pose the following questions: to what degree did our private ambitions 'interact' with the broader inducements of Aboriginal self-determinationist policy? As we have seen, by 1980, the federal government had put in place a complex array of legislative, administrative and financial systems to foster the development of Aboriginal bodies and other related projects. This produced a burgeoning network of Aboriginal organisations in Central Australia with which both Macumba and I were quite familiar. To what extent then, did an alignment occur between our personal aspirations and those of the state?

Second, as discussed in chapter Three, I wish to show how Macumba and I worked together as a 'team' to produce certain 'performances' (in Goffman's sense of the term) in order to establish CAAMA. As we shall see, in staging these performances we presented different representations of the 'Aboriginal community', of 'Aboriginal culture' and of the 'Aboriginal self', as a matter of course, depending on the context in which the performances were staged and the objectives.

Given these analytical objectives, I have departed somewhat from the methodological approaches used in previous chapters. In the first section (chapter Six), I provide a relatively lengthy biographical account of Macumba's life leading up to his engagements in Alice Springs in the late 1970's. This is followed by a brief analysis in which I hope to show how Macumba's personal experiences found a degree of resolution and congruity in the work he took up in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting. In the following section (chapter Seven), I examine my own motivations and the nature of the working relationship that evolved between myself and Macumba.

Methodological Considerations

The following account of Macumba's personal history is based on a series of recorded interviews and open-ended discussions I conducted with him over a period of two days [1]. As far as possible, I have endeavoured to let Macumba tell his own story, with a minimum of editorial interference. Having said that however, as the transcript of the interviews amounted to over 30 pages, I have extracted various sections to maintain a consistent chronological narrative and have provided some linking passages, where necessary.

I would also add that a full transcript of the interviews as well as my edited version was presented to Macumba for his consideration and comments. Apart from a few minor alterations, he approved of both documents. Furthermore, I have also discussed with Macumba my analysis of his engagements in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting. Indeed, at the time of writing, Macumba was about to embark on the writing of a Master of Arts thesis [2], in which he will provide his own version of these events. He conducted an interview with me for this purpose.

Somewhere Over the Other Side of the World

John Macumba was born in 1955 in the South Australian town of Port Augusta. His mother, Maudie Macumba, was an Aboriginal woman of the Yankuntjatjara and Pitjatjantjara groups. His father was a white man, Joe Tapp, who worked as a bore mechanic and contractor on remote cattle stations throughout the region. Shortly after John's birth, his mother took him to Oodnadatta, located in the semi-arid regions of northern South Australia, where both his mother and father were then living.

John was born with cerebral palsy, a debilitating condition that has affected his physical coordination most of his life. Although his particular case was not severe, his mother and father decided to place him in an Australian Inland Mission home at Oodnadatta, where they felt he might get the attention he required. John recalls:

> ...my mother took me back to Oodnadatta, but because I had cerebral palsy...my father couldn't handle it…because he couldn't sort of look after me, because I wasn't quite physical as what he was... I was put in the Mission so I grew up most of the time, as a young lad there...

While it appears that his mother visited John at the Mission, his white father had little time for his son. John says that the person who he truly regards as his father was an Aboriginal

man by the name of George Macumba with whom his mother later formed a relationship:

> George Macumba was my father, he grew me up [while on the Mission], because my European father didn't have time for me. I recognise him as my father. He's passed away now.

At the age of five, John was removed from the Mission by the South Australian State Welfare authorities and placed with white foster parents in Adelaide. I asked him whether his mother had any say in his removal. He replied that

> … in those days, lots of [Aboriginal] people were just coming out of the bush and trying to get used to European culture, it's very hard to understand what was going on, legally … so when I was on the Mission, I was then taken away, because that's what the government wanted at that time, there was no explanation … they just took me away … and as far as my mother knew about me … her son was gone … somewhere over the other side of the world … I mean the distance and the name and everything just didn't matter … I was just gone …

Anything But Aboriginal

John was fostered out to George and Elsa Morgan who lived in the leafy Adelaide suburb of Magill. They were devout Christians and had one natural-born son. John says that they were

> ... really good people, full of gold, they taught me a lot, all I needed to know. As a kid growing up, all they did was shower me with love, and that's what I got, total love …

I asked him whether his foster parents talked about his Aboriginal mother, or ever took him to see her. He replied:

> No..[but] it was not their fault. It was because they didn't know, they didn't tell me because they didn't know themselves, so it was not their fault..

John further explained that his foster parents never tried to stop him from seeing Aboriginal people or from discovering more about his Aboriginal family and actually encouraged him to make contact with Aboriginal people in Adelaide. But, he says, he was 'embarrassed' as a child about who he was:

> At those times it was…'anything but Aboriginal'…because of so much of a negative attitude people had towards Aboriginals … to be Aboriginal in the 1950's and 60's was just a big reject, there was just no way. Anybody else, but no Aboriginals ... it was embarrassing to even go down … [the] street. It was embarrassing to meet other Aboriginal people … I got waves and was acknowledged [in the street]… and my white mother used to wave to them and get them to come up and talk to me … I didn't know, it was not my fault, it was just because of the trauma that I had in the past that brought back the pain, I was just totally confused, I didn't know who I was, I didn't know what I was …

As John grew older, he began to run into conflicts with his foster parents over the kind of expectations that they had of him:

> … I really couldn't live up to the Morgan standards … they built it so high that I just gave up … I said sorry, I can't do this, I'm black, I'm Aboriginal … I've just got dark skin, why can't you accept that? I can't wash my black skin off me and turn white … They said, 'you can't talk to me like that'. I said 'yeah, I'm just talking. Maybe you should stop expecting too much of yourself and too much of other people. Like you're a problem, maybe you're the black one. Maybe I'm the white one'.. That's what I felt … I was suffocating … they meant well but …you end up choking and you can't see your way out … But they were good … really holy people … it's just I couldn't live up to their expectations …

This is Me

In 1968, not long after his thirteenth birthday, John 'ran away from home'. At first he thought he would leave Adelaide for good and decided to hitch a ride across the border to Melbourne, where he spent a few stressful days trying to find a place to live. He eventually returned to Adelaide and made tentative contact with his foster parents, who had been deeply concerned about his disappearance and had contacted the State Welfare authorities. But he was determined not to live with them again, although they continued to provide a base for his comings and goings and the State Welfare authorities continued to monitor his whereabouts. It was at about this time that he decided to try and find his natural mother. With the help of his foster parents and a Welfare officer, he eventually traveled to Cooper Pedy, a township located a few hundred kilometers north-west of Oodnadatta, where his mother was then living. John explains what happened when he met her:

> … the only way I could recognise her, she was big, fat and cuddly, but I knew her so well, when I smelt her, and when I hugged her, I knew her, I said yeah, this is her, this is me …

There was a Lot of Movement

After staying a few days in Cooper Pedy with his mother, John returned to Adelaide where he continued to remain unsettled and confused. He was still a relatively young boy and as he says, 'still going through an identity crisis'. Although he was glad to have made contact with his mother, it did not seem to resolve his internal conflicts.

Relations with his foster parents deteriorated further and although he saw them very occasionally, he did not live with them on a permanent basis again. Instead, he 'found a new family' in Adelaide with whom he was to spend the next seven years. The family consisted

of an English woman who had recently immigrated from the United Kingdom with her two sons, both of whom had a Saudi Arabian father who remained abroad. They were to provide a haven for John while he attempted to sort himself out. This was in 1969, two years after the celebrated national referendum that gave the Commonwealth powers concurrent with the States over Aboriginal Affairs. John explains his move to his new home:

> When I went there I was fourteen. At the time there was a lot of movement around me in society, about sort of marijuana and ... anti-Vietnam war times and … people were trying to get away from racial prejudice … There was a whole movement …I was young and we were doing this and that … so we all made a connection and I lived there and I was part of the family. ...[they] influenced my outlook on other people, and on my own space …

Most importantly for John, his new family made him feel more comfortable about who he was:

> … because they were also strangers in a strange land, as I was a stranger in my own land … They were the ones that gave me ammunition to go back and say yes, this is me, this is who I am, so what? What are you going to do about that? I'm here, I'm not going to disappear, I'm in front of your face …

A few years after moving in with his new family, John was introduced to a South African who had recently migrated to Australia. He was working with Aboriginal people at the community of Mimili, situated relatively close to Oodnadatta. It transpired that he knew some of John's relatives. Although John had made tentative contact with them when he had first visited his mother, he had not returned to Oodnadatta during the intervening period. However, the South African encouraged John to join him on his regular trips to the Aboriginal communities and over the next few years he gradually came to know more about his natural family. He learnt that his white father, Joe Tapp, had actually had relations not just with his mother, but with her two sisters:

> My father, Joe Tapp ... ended up living with three sisters, which is my mother and her two sisters. That was the days when Aboriginal people couldn't buy alcohol, so he used to buy it for them and take it out bush and have a pub out bush and that's where we're wrong … well it's not wrong, it's just the way it is … he sort of run amuck with three sisters and I ended up having a half-sister and a half-cousin.

John's half-sister and cousin were also placed in the Australian Inland Mission at Oodnadatta and, like John, were later fostered out to non-Aboriginal families. His sister grew up in Port Augusta, and later worked on the Pitjatjantjara community of Ernabella, while his cousin married a building contractor and went to live in Fiji.

A Real Education

At the age of seventeen, John began attending courses in Aboriginal Studies and Social Work at the Aboriginal Community College and with the Aboriginal Task Force at the South Australian Institute of Technology in Adelaide. Although he became disillusioned with the courses, it nevertheless allowed him to make further contact with a wider circle of Aboriginal people living in Adelaide:

> … so I was doing my travelling around, then I thought I better get myself in school and get a real education. Spent one and half years there … but I didn't want to be a social worker ... I was still discovering my identity and my Aboriginality ... but because of the Aboriginal Task Force I met up with lots of Aboriginals … they also inspired me to go back to my own people …

During his stint with the Aboriginal Task Force, John met his future wife, Ellen Sultan, an Aboriginal woman originally from Alice Springs. He also met Freda Glynn, another Aboriginal woman from the same area who was completing a course in Community Development with the Aboriginal Task Force. As discussed in chapter Eight, Freda later worked on the development of CAAMA, although at the time, John and Freda were engaged in other activities and did not discuss the issue of broadcasting.

John gradually became more involved with the Aboriginal community of Adelaide and at the same time, more confident about his own sense of identity. He eventually left Adelaide and the Aboriginal Task Force and moved with his partner, Ellen, to Oodnadatta, where he took up employment with a local Aboriginal organisation, the Tantjapa Housing Society, as a laborer. More importantly, he began living with his mother and close relatives again:

> I went back to Oodnadatta … I was trying to get back my identity with the Aboriginal people… to give me back what I had lost over the last twenty years … I was trying to make up … and I lived with my mother and my stepfather … I sat there with Ellen and spent a long time with the old people …

It seems that John's new life at Oodnadatta was not without its difficulties. Although he enjoyed living with his mother, his attempt to integrate himself into the wider local Aboriginal community was problematic. Indeed, there were times when he felt, in his own words, 'rejected':

> … because I'd been away for so long, because I didn't grow up around the same campfire as they did, they were a bit sort of hesitant towards me, because I was one of them, but I wasn't … because I'd been taken away..

New Kid in Town

In 1977, about a year after returning to Oodnadatta, John and Ellen decided to move to Alice Springs. He had heard that he might be able to obtain work in the township and was, in any case, keen to leave Oodnadatta. Although he had re-established closer relations with his mother, he did not feel he had a future in the remote community. Ellen was also keen to return to her home town and visit her family. As discussed in the previous chapter, on arriving in Alice Springs, he secured work in several local Aboriginal organisations, in various capacities: first as a community development officer at the Tangentyere Council, then at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (the local medical service), and in other organisations. During this time, John and Ellen were married and had their first child, Marinka. He was enjoying life in Alice Springs and seemed to be moving beyond his childhood traumas.

In early 1979, three years after his arrival, John was again feeling restless and began casting around for a new project. He was holding down a second job at the Tangentyere Council, but was not entirely comfortable with his duties which included collecting rent from the Council's Aboriginal tenants who often vented their frustrations about the Council's services on him. But the most troublesome part of his job was the rounding up and disposal of diseased dogs:

> I was their first dog killer!…I used to have to drive up the main street in a ute with a cage on the back and pick up stray dogs, and the old women would see the car coming up the road and they would hide their favourite dogs under their dresses!

John wanted to do something that he believed better suited his talents and education. But he felt constrained, not by a confused sense of identity as he had in the past, but with the closed nature of the local Aboriginal community:

> ... I was the new kid in town … and because I had a new way of looking at things and seeing things, they couldn't appreciate what I was doing… If you were in with various family groupings it was all right. But if you were outside, from a distant area, it was pretty hard to break into the network and there was a real staunch network … so I just [went] my own way…

Making Waves

In March 1979, John happened to meet Chris Majewski. As we have seen (in the previous chapter), they struck up a conversation about the possibility of producing an Aboriginal

radio program in Alice Springs, and in July of the same year, The Aboriginal Half Hour went to air for the first time. Although John was not directly involved in the program for the first few months, it is clear that, along with Majewski, he provided the initial spark that helped get the program off the ground. In late 1979, he finally abandoned his employment as rent collector and dog catcher and took a job with the Education Department, presenting The Half Hour. Although he was officially employed on a part-time basis, his involvement in The Half Hour consumed most of his time.

Nonetheless, he was not entirely satisfied with the program. Apart from its brevity and the fact it went to air only once per week, it was broadcast late on Sunday nights at 9.45pm. Worse, the Education Department not only retained the right of veto over the program's content, but had little interest in its further development. It seemed to Macumba that he could either abandon The Aboriginal Half Hour completely, or try to turn it into something much bigger.

> I sort of felt, because of the education I had and the knowledge I was receiving at the time ... there was a need for me to … sort of … make waves… to be recognised in one form or another…I felt like I had to do something that would ... contribute to the situation of the Aboriginal people… I wanted to establish myself as an Aboriginal person … with a voice in a town that had rejected me …

> … the idea was to develop Aboriginal media so we could get proper representation for our own people. And also, to maintain a positive image that would reinforce Aboriginal culture and languages.

John continued to work on The Aboriginal Half Hour with Majewski up until late 1979. However, it was at this point in time that Majewski was made aware that he would be forced to resign from the Department (see previous chapter). Not only did this create doubts about the future of The Half Hour, but it left John without the necessary support to produce the program. Majewski therefore began to make strenuous efforts to locate someone who could provide such assistance. As we have also seen, it was at this stage that I became involved with John in the production of the program. The following chapters will examine our work on the establishment of CAAMA.

Commentary

In attempting to understand Macumba's motives in participating in the development of an Aboriginal broadcasting service, we need to move beyond the narrow conception of the

'Aboriginal self' that so often appears in scholarly and governmental literature on Aboriginal self-determination (see previous chapter). Having said this, Macumba's reasons for participating in these developments remain difficult to define. Indeed, he does not appear to be certain himself. Nonetheless, there is a recurring theme: his desire to find some sense of identity and 'place'.

As we have seen, Macumba had spent most of his childhood in a foster home in Adelaide. Although he was made aware of his Aboriginal ancestry from an early age, he had always felt a deep sense of uncertainty about his identity. As he recalled, 'I was just totally confused, I didn't know who I was, I didn't know what I was …'. When he later moved to Alice Springs as an adult, it seems he was attempting to find an environment in which he could perhaps strengthen his sense of Aboriginality. More particularly, he had an interest in taking up a leadership role in one of the town's Aboriginal organisations where he might, as he put it, 'establish himself as an Aboriginal' and be 'recognised' as such.

Indeed, when Macumba and I began working together in Alice Springs, most if not all of the major Aboriginal organisations in the township were led - at a managerial level - by Aboriginal people with remarkably similar backgrounds to Macumba's and, in some sense, he seems to have modeled himself on them. Moreover, most had formed 'partnerships' with various white managerial offsiders.

Like Macumba, some had been removed from their Aboriginal mothers at an early age and brought up with either white foster parents or in 'homes for half castes', as they were once termed (see Appendix 1). For example, Yami Lester, then the Director of the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) had also suffered from a physical disability (partial blindness) and, like Macumba, had been removed from a remote Aboriginal community and sent to live in Adelaide (see Lester 1993). Later in life, Lester returned to Central Australia where he helped establish IAD with his non-Aboriginal co-worker, Jim Downing (see chapter Two). A few years after creating this body, Lester made the following remarks about the kind of leadership role that people of mixed-descent sometimes assumed within the broader Aboriginal community:

> … the government made a policy that half-caste children had to be taken away and educated the whitefella way…When these part-Aboriginal children grew up and became educated, they began to speak-up … tribal Aborigines think differently from the city-educated Aboriginals. They do not read or write … they do not see and hear what white people are talking about concerning Aborigines … but these part-Aborigines know what is going on …They talk with

the white people in government departments … and know more about the problems and have the means and knowledge to speak up loudly about them. (Mullard 1974:13-14)

While Macumba would not perhaps have endorsed these exact sentiments, nevertheless it seems he did aspire to the kind of managerial positions that people like Lester and others helped create within the Aboriginal organisations of Alice Springs. More to the point, without the availability of these positions, Macumba's aspirations would have been more or less unthinkable.

Initially, Macumba was offered a number of lowly positions within the local organisations. Although he tried to have himself appointed to more senior roles, he remained in work that he felt did not match the education he had received in Adelaide. In other words, he failed to acquire the leadership role, and therefore, the 'recognition' he had hoped for. In the absence of any direct family connections in Central Australia or traditional attachments, he could not, it seems, penetrate what he described as the 'family networks' that dominated these bodies. Although he managed to establish some level of affiliation with the general Aboriginal community, he felt that the 'power brokers' in the Aboriginal organisations had not only blocked his wider acceptance and participation in this community, but had, ultimately, 'rejected' him. What this 'rejection' actually meant or how it was effected remains unclear. Nevertheless, as a result of his sense of alienation he eventually decided not to seek further employment in these bodies and took up work instead on The Aboriginal Half Hour (as we have seen, he had helped establish the program in 1979, but had not yet actually worked on it).

At first, Macumba enjoyed his work on the program, but when I began working with him in early 1980, he was again facing several difficulties. Like me, he was employed on a part-time basis on The Half Hour, but unlike me, he carried a number of responsibilities that the small income derived from this source barely covered. He was supporting his wife, Ellen, their two young daughters and they were expecting a third child. Also, their living arrangements at Basso's Farm were extremely basic. In fact, he had moved to this rent-free accommodation to save money. After a few months spent under these conditions, he had come under pressure from his family to find a better paid job and more acceptable living arrangements.

From the outset of our working relationship, we had both talked about establishing an independent Aboriginal broadcasting service. This appears to have been an attractive

proposition for Macumba. Such a project would perhaps relieve his financial difficulties and moreover, accommodate his long-term desire to be 'recognised', and perhaps serve to combat his sense of alienation from the Aboriginal organisations. By playing a leadership role in establishing an Aboriginal broadcasting service, he could acquire a certain level of legitimacy and authority and thus establish himself 'as an Aboriginal'. In sum, although Macumba certainly had an interest in broadcasting, I suspect that this was less important than his desire - in his own words - to 'make waves' in the Aboriginal community.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to show how Macumba's personal history and private ambitions eventually found some congruity with the technologies and instruments of government. Here, the policies of Aboriginal self-determination and the kind of practices they inaugurated, facilitated, I would argue, certain subject positions that Aboriginal people could occupy. Certainly, the 'Aboriginal administrative culture' that arose in Alice Springs as a result of these policies provided Macumba with an arena in which he could establish a sense of himself. Indeed, his participation in the development of CAAMA precluded any doubts about 'who' or 'what' he was.

A MUTUAL RECRUITMENT

> Since we all participate in teams, we must all carry within ourselves something of the sweet guilt of conspirators.
>
> Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*

Introduction

In this chapter I will focus primarily on the relationship that evolved between John Macumba and myself in the course of our joint work on the establishment of CAAMA. I am particularly interested in our respective motivations and how they were shaped by the political and governmental environment that we then inhabited. At another level, I hope to demonstrate how we devised and presented certain 'performances' (in Goffman's sense of the term) in order to accomplish this work. As will become apparent, these performances were designed for various ends: to recruit Aboriginal community support, to acquire government funding, to form alliances with other Aboriginal groups, etc. Moreover, the form and content of these constructions were largely delineated in accordance with the strategic requirements of a given situation, depending on the objectives that we wished to achieve. Of course, our individual motivations and personal interests also played a part in this process.

Up until this point, my 'authorial position' in this thesis has remained relatively hidden from view, especially in Part One. However, in this chapter I take up a very different positioning strategy (see Introduction on 'mobile positioning'). Here, I will be following in the methodological footsteps of anthropologists such as Renato Rosaldo, Jim Wafer and Michael Jackson (Renato 1994, Wafer 1996, Jackson 1996) and will henceforth assume a more autobiographical 'presence' in describing events and perspectives. As previously discussed, it seems to me that in attempting to describe working relationships in which one was personally involved, 'objectifying' strategies simply do not work, nor are they entirely necessary. For example, I could turn myself into a third person or use a pseudonym, but what precisely is to be gained through such grammatical tricks? (see Geertz 1988). Certainly, the only real loss would seem to be the comforting illusion of 'objectivity'.

I have relied on various primary sources to inform this account, including CAAMA reports and minutes of meetings, published news articles, my own diary entries and personal letters, as well as the main sources which are listed in the notes [1]. I also conducted an interview with John Macumba concerning our working relationship in 1997.

Getting Acquainted

In January 1980, I signed a contract with the Northern Territory Education Department to manage production of The Aboriginal Half Hour. I was told that an Aboriginal person, John Macumba, would be working with me as 'an assistant' and that he would 'probably need some supervision'. A few days after completing these formalities, I went to meet Macumba at Basso's Farm, an encampment situated a few kilometers north of Alice Springs [2]. He was sitting on the doorstep of a caravan, parked next to an old homestead. After a brief greeting, he offered me a can of beer and a place to sit.

Perhaps inappropriately, I opened the conversation with an attack on the Education Department. I said that I had no intention of 'managing' the production of The Aboriginal Half Hour, nor of treating him as 'an assistant'. On the contrary, I felt that we should work together as 'a team'. Macumba seemed amused by my outburst and told me to 'relax'. He was not concerned about these arrangements, nor did he want to talk about The Half Hour. After this brief exchange, we spent several hours consuming more beer and talking.

As the afternoon wore on and the conversation began to falter, I decided to raise the issue of The Half Hour again. I was anxious to discuss my plans to convert the program into something more substantial. I felt that it could be used as a basis upon which to build an independent radio station in Central Australia, owned and operated by Aboriginal people. While Macumba sat in silence, I talked at length about the benefits that such a service might deliver: Aboriginal views and opinions would be regularly heard in the media; they could speak their own languages on air; record and play their own music; be given training and employment, and above all, run the whole operation through a community-controlled Aboriginal media organisation.

Macumba did not respond to my ideas with any enthusiasm. He said that he had 'already thought about such things' but had subsequently 'lost interest'. Indeed, he had encountered 'a lot of hassles' from local Aboriginal organisations when implementing The Half Hour and had decided not to take it any further. He said that he was 'sick of the Aboriginal politics in

Alice Springs' and would prefer to do 'something different'. The Education Department had also 'been a problem', although he did not elaborate. In attempting to move beyond these difficulties, he had considered the idea of establishing a commercial radio station that would be run purely on what he described as 'a business-like basis'. While he remained 'interested' about my proposal, he said that he would 'think about it'. I drove back to Alice Springs, somewhat disappointed. Following this encounter, we had no further contact for over a week.

A few days before we were due to commence work on The Half Hour, I received a telephone call from him. He seemed like a different person. He was now excited about the prospect of establishing the proposed service and spoke animatedly about how we might go about implementing it. Moreover, he proposed that I 'set up camp' at Basso's Farm so that we might 'make a start on it as soon as possible'. Although I was at a loss to understand the abrupt change in his thinking, I immediately accepted Macumba's offer and moved out of Alice Springs a few weeks later. I was to spend the next eight months living with him and his family while we planned, and largely implemented, our project.

White Motives

Why was I so committed to working on the development of an Aboriginal broadcasting service? It would now seem simplistic, even banal, to suggest that I was driven by a 'burning desire' to 'advance the rights' of Aboriginal people. Yet, at bottom, this was indeed the case.

As noted in the previous chapter, I had worked at the remote government settlement of Papunya for three years before moving into Alice Springs in late 1979. During my stay in the community, I was employed as a literacy teacher with the Commonwealth Teaching Service for the first two years, and then as a 'community advisor' with the local Aboriginal council, helping to establish 'outstations' away from the main settlement [3]. My experiences at Papunya certainly gave tangible meaning to Fanon's famous term 'the wretched of the earth' (Fanon 1961).

The first encounter with Papunya in 1977 was confronting. Most of the Aboriginal population were living in nondescript dwellings made from discarded sheets of corrugated of iron propped up against old buildings in varying states of ruin. The entire area was littered with broken bottles, lumps of twisted clothing, plastic bags and other refuse. Here and there, packs of mange-infested dogs roamed around, scavenging for food, while groups of children

played in the bodies of abandoned motor vehicles. In sharp contrast, the white staff - then numbering fewer than 20 individuals - were mostly housed in recently constructed, air-conditioned bungalows, set behind barbed-wire fences. The community was also afflicted with a range of other, more pressing problems. Intoxicated 'petrol sniffers' often broke into the community store; the theft of motor vehicles and other property occurred on a routine basis and bouts of communal drinking (associated with the arrival of Social Security payments from Alice Springs each fortnight) often led to violent altercations affecting the whole population. In fact, during my three years at Papunya, seventeen Aboriginal people - mostly young men - died as a result of this interminable violence (see DAA 1977a).

These realities gave the political beliefs I had acquired as a student a solidity they had hitherto lacked. Henceforth, it would be difficult to return to the comfortable life in the city where Australia's indigenous minority remained well out of sight. I was now acutely aware of what I believed to be the perfidious underbelly of white Australia and felt a pressing responsibility to act, although I was uncertain as to what this might entail.

If anything, my experiences of Alice Springs simply reinforced the political views and beliefs I had acquired at Papunya. As the administrative hub of Central Australia, the town seemed to personify the power and arrogance of the white settler nation. Most of the Aboriginal people who once owned the land upon which the town was built, now lived in squalid 'fringecamps' surrounding the township. Here, as in the camps at Papunya, violence, alcoholism and chronic ill health were commonplace. More disturbingly, the town's white population appeared to despise the people who they had effectively dispossessed: diatribes against land rights, attacks on Aboriginal organisations and derogatory remarks about 'drunken blacks' regularly appeared in the editorial pages of the local press and on radio talkback shows [4]. Certainly, my disinclination to become a resident of Alice Springs and, alternatively, to live with Macumba and his family at Basso's Farm was partly motivated by my loathing of the dominant social order in Central Australia.

Quite apart from my desire to work in the advancement of 'Aboriginal rights', I possessed a strong interest in what might be described as the democratisation of mass media. I had read numerous books on communications, media and the advertising industry including Eric Barnouw's classic *Tube of Plenty*, Denis McQuail's *Communication* and Stuart Ewen's *Captains Of Consciousness*, the last of which had a particularly influential effect on my thinking (McQuail 1975, Barnouw 1975, Ewen 1976). I had also come across articles such

as Stuart Hall's *Deviancy, Politics and the Media* (Hall 1971). Of course, most of these works examined the media's role in the formation of political opinion, social consciousness and the perpetuation of hierarchical power structures.

To me, Central Australia provided a particularly glaring example of how the inequalities of media ownership supported the status quo. Although the Aboriginal community encompassed half the regional population, their participation in the local media was all but non-existent. As long as this remained the case, I felt that the views and opinions of Aboriginal people would always be misrepresented. Moreover, it would serve to reinforce what I then thought to be the 'institutional racism' in evidence throughout the Northern Territory. Beyond the issue of representation, there was also the problem of 'cultural imperialism'. While most Aboriginal people in the region communicated in their own languages, local radio and television services were presented exclusively in English. This, I felt, threatened the survival of these languages and moreover, prevented Aboriginals who spoke little English from acquiring information and news vital to their political and social well-being.

Beyond these motivational forces, I was influenced - and inspired - by the turbulent political environment of Central Australia. Throughout the 1970s, a complex network of Aboriginal organisations had emerged in Alice Springs, dedicated to improving the living conditions and rights of Aboriginals. As discussed in the previous chapter, a number of people - mostly white - had moved to the township to work for these bodies. They included lawyers, doctors, educationalists, anthropologists, administrators and a range of other personnel. The more prominent members of this group were extremely committed, energetic and shrewd political operators who I greatly admired. Through my association with them, I was able to observe how they organised Aboriginal community meetings, orchestrated political campaigns and dealt with government funding bodies. They also provided an example of how non-Aboriginals could form effective working relationships with Aboriginal people in the development and joint management of Aboriginal organisations.

In a curious sense, the presence of this group of whitefellas served to bolster my confidence in acting on behalf of blackfellas. During the initial stages of my work with Macumba, I was plagued by a number of doubts about my 'commitment' to the Aboriginal 'cause': did I have the right to make such a commitment? should I work for a 'cause' that was not my own? Was I simply a naïve romantic? By establishing an alliance with this group of whitefellas,

such doubts were largely extinguished. It must also be said that the possibility of joining a movement that seemed to be implementing real political change was an exhilarating prospect. Here one could become a champion of radical reform, an adversary of racism and an enemy of colonial oppression.

Yet, with such swollen enthusiasm, I tended to overlook the possibility that the intended beneficiaries of this 'radical reform' may not have shared the same passions or, indeed, even the same point of view. In pursuing these projects, my white colleagues and I presupposed a particular kind Aboriginal agency: a person who was forever 'struggling' to 'determine' his or her 'own affairs' in the face of entrenched 'white oppression'. Certainly, under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination, the construction of such a figure was a necessary prerequisite if one were to acquire the funding and political support in advancing one's particular project.

Now, however, having worked in close association with an Aboriginal person as complex Macumba, the notion that Macumba - or anyone else in his position – would buy into such a simplistic conception of himself seems ludicrous. It appears to me that Macumba was far too canny to see himself as simply the hapless victim of 'white oppression'. Indeed, he often said that he had no time for 'blackfellas who blamed whitefellas for their problems'. Doubtless he could play the 'self-determining Aboriginal' with consummate skill, but I do not think he ever considered it to be much more than a game. Moreover, he exhibited a healthy cynicism about the roles that people like myself encouraged him to adopt.

Working Up an Act

There were two basic objectives we had to accomplish in establishing the proposed broadcasting service. It was fundamental that we first gain the support of the local Aboriginal community, and most importantly, be seen to have this support. Second, we needed the assistance of the federal government and its agencies: substantial funding would of course be required to establish a fully functioning, independent Aboriginal radio station and we also needed a broadcasting licence.

To assist in fulfilling these objectives, it was imperative that The Aboriginal Half Hour continued to go to air. Not only would it serve as a useful tool in generating support from within the Aboriginal community, but it would also provide the governmental authorities with a working example of a successful (if limited) Aboriginal radio program. I will therefore begin with an account of our work on its production.

When I was appointed to produce The Half Hour, I was told that the Education Department wanted to exercise some 'limited control' over its content. However, from the very beginning, both Macumba and I agreed that we would sidestep the Department and produce The Half Hour in our own way. While we encountered some resistance to this approach, it soon became apparent that the Department had neither the resources nor the inclination to play a significant editorial role (by this stage Majewski had left Alice Springs). In fact, as discussed in chapter Five, it had been wanting to rid itself of the program for some months. As a result, we were more or less left to our own devices.

Above all, we wanted to convey the impression that The Aboriginal Half Hour was an all-Aboriginal show and therefore represented 'an Aboriginal perspective' (and not a governmental one). In other words, the program had to be presented in a way that would encourage the Aboriginal listening audience to *identify* with it and, in some sense, make it their own. This we felt was an important aim if were to build community support for a future 'Aboriginal-controlled' broadcasting service.

In producing The Half Hour, Macumba and I worked together as follows: I gathered the program's content (community news, interviews, musical items, and Aboriginal language translations) while he pre-recorded (with some assistance from me) all the spoken-word 'links' between the content items, including an introduction and a conclusion. I then edited the items and links onto a single audiotape. The tape was subsequently delivered to the radio station (8HA) for broadcasting each Sunday night.

As a result of this production process, I tended to assume a significant role in determining the program's content. This arose partly as a result of Macumba's disability (see previous chapter). He could not write effectively due to a lack coordination in his hands nor could he handle audio production equipment with any great facility. Moreover, he could only walk for relatively short distances. These limitations tended to preclude his active participation in the gathering and editing of program material. We would of course discuss potential content for the program, but circumstances would often arise in which this did not occur due to deadline pressures.

During the initial stages of our collaboration, I felt uneasy about these arrangements and, more particularly, about the substantial role I was playing in determining the program's content. However, such concerns did not appear to trouble Macumba. He seemed content

to act as the program's 'front man' and, in his own words, to 'fire the bullets' that I supplied him. Indeed, he was an extremely entertaining and engaging presenter and had an endless supply of anecdotes and jokes. Going on the number of 'requests' that he personally received from the Aboriginal audience, he played a significant part in building a dedicated following for The Half Hour [5].

A True Performance

Having characterised our 'team work' as such, I do not wish to suggest that the program's listeners would have been entirely unaware of the non-Aboriginal involvement in its production, nor that they were completely convinced that The Half Hour represented an authentic Aboriginal 'perspective'. As Goffman states, the extent to which a 'social performance' (in this case, The Half Hour) might be judged 'true' or 'false' depends on whether or not the audience is prepared to endorse the 'impression' that the performers are attempting to convey, regardless of how the performance is actually constructed (see Introduction). In fact, an audience may be cognizant of the contradictions or 'flaws' in a given performance, but will tactfully avoid drawing attention to its weaknesses. Here, the audience may have a vested interest - of a personal or political nature – in believing in the 'truth' of a performance, despite its flaws. In other circumstances, the performers themselves may respond, in an equally tactful way, to the doubts of the audience, and modify the 'show' to maintain its credibility. In this way, the program found its sense of identity within that fluid region between its point of presentation and its reception. In other words, its Aboriginal identity emerged from a particular kind of performance, rather than from an *a priori* 'Aboriginality'.

Obviously enough, Macumba and I engaged in a degree of deception in order to make The Aboriginal Half Hour sound like a 'radio program produced by Aboriginal people'. Nonetheless, I think we would have seen our work as 'strategic' rather than deceptive since such deception was a necessary means to achieving our objectives. Moreover, it seemed to me that once an 'Aboriginal-controlled' broadcasting service had been established, such manipulation would no longer be necessary. As Goffman also points out, the use of manipulative tactics in the pursuit of principled objectives is a common attribute of social interaction. Moral or ethical behaviour is therefore determined not by a preordained set of 'God-given' rules, but by a social process of a calculated and strategic nature.

Importantly, our capacity to present the 'impression' that the program was wholly Aboriginal-produced depended on the ability of Macumba and myself to accommodate the ambiguities within our working relationship. We both understood that during the pre-production stage of the program (which necessitated our joint collaboration), we contradicted this public 'impression' as a matter of course. In other words, we had to exercise a level of 'solidarity' to ensure that our 'performance' worked.

In some respects, this 'performance' resembled the standard relationship between a radio producer and presenter. However, the performance that we were obliged to present in gaining community and government support for our wider project, was of course, far more complex. While such performances were as carefully orchestrated as the radio programs we put to air, the 'solidarity' that we had to maintain to ensure that they worked often came under severe pressure. In fact, on a few occasions, we more or less 'broke ranks' and almost derailed the entire scheme. In the following sections I will examine our attempts to gain, in the first instance, the support of the Aboriginal community and secondly, that of the government.

Recruiting the Community

In late January 1980, we set about arranging a public meeting to discuss the possible establishment of the proposed broadcasting organisation. Initially, we hoped to form a 'working committee' to oversee the creation of the body. It was expected that Macumba would act as the organisation's Chairperson and 'Director', while I would work as his 'Deputy Director'.

With little direct experience in coordinating a 'community meeting', we hired a venue and placed an advertisement in the local newspaper, inviting 'the Aboriginal people of Alice Springs' to attend 'a gathering to discuss Aboriginal participation in the media' [6]. We also made several brief announcements through The Half Hour. Naively perhaps, we assumed that the Aboriginal community would be relatively keen about our project and therefore expected a reasonably good response to our announcements. In the event, no one attended the meeting, except Macumba and myself. Needless to say, this had a demoralising effect on both of us.

From my point of view, the apparent lack of interest in the proposed broadcasting service could be attributed to the fact that local Aboriginal people had grown so accustomed to not

having access to the media that the possibility of establishing an 'Aboriginal-controlled' broadcasting service did not easily enter their 'collective consciousness'. In other words, the operation of a radio station was perhaps seen as 'whitefellas business' and could not be readily accommodated within the realm of what counted as 'blackfella business'. I came to the realisation that if our project was to succeed, Macumba and I would need to devote our energies to a campaign of 'consciousness raising' within the Aboriginal community and vigorously promote the benefits of a 'broadcasting service run by and for the Aboriginal people of Central Australia'. On a more pragmatic level, I also recognised that in organising any further community meetings, we would have to seek the assistance - and expertise - of the established Aboriginal organisations.

Predictably, Macumba felt despondent about the poor showing and seemed to take it as a personal failure. For him, it appeared to confirm his apparent lack of connection with the Aboriginal community. It also appeared to give substance to his belief that the leadership of this community had, in some sense, 'rejected' him.

About a week after this event, Macumba announced that he was resigning from The Half Hour and moving to Oodnadatta in South Australia, where he had been offered a job as a community advisor, working with the local Aboriginal community. As we have seen, Macumba was born in Oodnadatta and had family affiliations in the town. Apart from the job offer, he said that he was tired of trying to 'work in' with the 'local blackfellas' in Alice Springs and that it was 'time to move on'. To my dismay, he had returned to the same kind of thoughts and feelings he had expressed at our first meeting. Initially, I made strenuous efforts to change his mind. I tried to convince him that the meeting had failed - not because of any inadequacies on his part - but because neither of us had put enough effort into 'educating' the Aboriginal community about our proposal, nor had we paid enough attention to organising the meeting itself. Nonetheless, he would not be moved.

This of course presented me with a serious dilemma. I could either abandon the project altogether, or find another Aboriginal person who might be interested in working on The Half Hour and on the development of the broadcasting service. Eventually, I decided on the latter option.

I told Macumba that I accepted his decision (I had little choice) and asked him whether he could suggest someone - an Aboriginal person - who might take his place. Curiously, he was

taken aback by my inquiry, but nevertheless provided me with the names of a few possible candidates. Whether this had any effect on Macumba's thinking is unclear, but he subsequently had a change of heart. To my surprise, he told me - a few days later - that he would not, after all, be moving to Oodnadatta. Apparently the job had 'fallen through' and as a result, he would be able to work with me for the 'time being'. I was of course greatly relieved.

In preparing for the next gathering, we took a much more active approach in its promotion and orchestration. We hand-printed several hundred posters with details of the meeting in English as well as the three main Aboriginal languages of Central Australia [7]. The poster's headline read: 'Aboriginal People Demand a Voice in the Media'. They were put on display in all the local Aboriginal organisations and pasted up on walls and fences throughout Alice Springs. A press release was issued, and a story about our project published in the local newspaper, featuring a photograph of Macumba at the controls of a broadcasting desk.

Despite Macumba's initial reluctance, we decided to approach the Tangentyere Council to assist us with the practical organisation of the meeting. At the time, Tangentyere was the largest Aboriginal organisation in Alice Springs, providing housing and other services to Aboriginal people living in the 'camps' or 'Aboriginal town leases' surrounding the township. Indeed, the 'towncampers' constituted the main target audience for The Half Hour. Here, a large proportion of people spoke an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue (at least half the program's line-up was presented in Aboriginal languages).

Like similar bodies, much of Tangentyere's decision-making centred around meetings of its Aboriginal clients and members. To ensure that people attended these gatherings, Tangentyere had developed a relatively efficient transport system to ferry people to and from the camps. One could say that it had perfected the art of the 'community meeting' [8]. To its credit, Tangentyere agreed to 'pick up' anyone who might be interested in our proposal, and take them to the meeting venue. Moreover, the non-Aboriginal Office Manager of Tangentyere, Bob Durnan, volunteered to attend the meeting and help with the formalities associated with the incorporation of the proposed new body. Finally, we asked the Institute for Aboriginal Development to provide Aboriginal language interpreters to make certain that those Aboriginal people who had difficulties with English would understand what was being said. As indicated above, for most of the 'towncampers', English was a second or third language and Macumba was not conversant in Aboriginal languages [9].

The meeting was held on the 27th of February, 1980. On this occasion, approximately thirty Aboriginal people attended, most of whom came from the towncamps (CAAMA 1980). Several representatives from various Aboriginal organisations were also present. I played a low-key role in the meeting and simply kept the minutes. It was largely left to Macumba to outline our proposal, and to hopefully generate enough interest on the part of those present to form the proposed organisation.

Although Macumba had been ready to abandon the project only a few weeks before the meeting, he provided an impressive performance. Indeed, whenever he was presented with an audience, he always rose to the occasion and assumed an engaging and convincing manner. Essentially, he reiterated what we had been discussing since our first meeting. He talked at length about the importance of the proposed service and the need for it to be owned and operated by Aboriginal people. He drew the meeting's attention to several outstanding instances in which Aboriginal people had been misrepresented in the local press [10]. He also pointed to the absence of any Aboriginal language programming on regional radio and television networks. Throughout the speech, he used The Half Hour as an example of what an Aboriginal radio station might sound like. In conclusion, he called for the formation of a working committee to oversee the establishment of an 'Aboriginal broadcasting organisation'.

Although Macumba had paused throughout his speech to allow the interpreters to translate his main points, the Aboriginal language speakers in the audience (who formed the bulk of the meeting attendees) failed to react in any way. Perhaps sensing that some response was in order, one of the interpreters decided to speak on their behalf. She explained that most people in the towncamps 'liked to listen' to The Half Hour and 'thought it was good' - especially programs in 'their own languages' - but they might want to 'think about the idea of an Aboriginal radio station' before becoming involved in its establishment. 'This is something that people haven't really thought about', she said (CAAMA 1980). In reply, Macumba suggested that he could organise 'special meetings' for the towncampers before going ahead with the formal establishment of the new body. This produced further discussions amongst the Aboriginal language speakers but no specific answer to Macumba's suggestion.

A representative from one of the Aboriginal organisations (who, like Macumba, spoke only English) said that there was 'no point in having any more meetings' and that a working

committee 'should be established now' so that it could go ahead and 'arrange the incorporation papers' for the new organisation. He said that it would be easier for a 'small group' to carry the project forward until another meeting could be called. This produced further debate among the attendees that continued for over an hour. However, no agreement was reached on how to proceed.

It appeared that most wanted more time to consider the proposal, while others wanted to act immediately. At this point, some of the people in the meeting began to leave. Fortunately, Tangentyere's Office Manager, Bob Durnan, took to the floor and suggested that he take the names of anyone who might be interested in becoming a member of the new organisation. He also proposed that a vote be taken on whether or not to establish the working committee. Most of those still remaining agreed to become members, but only a handful voted in favour of forming the committee. Nevertheless, no one voted against it.

As a result, a committee of four people was created, comprising Macumba and three representatives from the established Aboriginal organisations. I was to act as the committee's advisor. Macumba and I subsequently drew up a draft constitution for the new body and had it approved by the working committee. Another community meeting was arranged, again with the help of Tangentyere. Here, a formal list of members was created, the constitution accepted and office bearers elected (drawn primarily from the working committee). As planned, Macumba became the Chairman and Director of the new organisation, and I was appointed as his Deputy. In May 1980, the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association was formally incorporated under the *Aboriginal and Islanders Councils and Associations Act 1976.*

Having established a tentative 'community base' from which to work, Macumba and I set about acquiring the financial support of the government. As discussed in chapters Two and Three, under the funding guidelines applied by most government departments at the time, funds would only be provided to organisations that had been formally incorporated.

Government Engagement

At the time, there were a number of government departments – primarily federal - through which to acquire various forms of assistance [11]. However, our main target was the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA). It not only operated a well-established avenue of funding for local Aboriginal organisations, but administered the *Aboriginal Councils and*

Associations Act under which most of these bodies were incorporated. Of course, it was under this Act that we hoped to establish the proposed broadcasting body.

While producing The Half Hour, we immersed ourselves in an intensive lobbying campaign which encompassed not only DAA but also a number of other government agencies. In pursuing these activities, we assumed differing but interconnected roles: I arranged all the meetings, wrote submissions, completed funding applications, handled the correspondence, sought advice on various administrative and legal matters, etc. As with the production of The Half Hour, Macumba's primary role was in presenting the public face of this activity, including taking a lead role in meetings and negotiations, signing-off on the material I wrote and, at a later point, conducting interviews with the press. With the more important negotiations, we would carefully work out beforehand how to present a particular issue and what we should say. Indeed, I would always go through the written submissions associated with these meetings, showing Macumba what I thought should be given emphasis and what to play down (see following chapter).

Inevitably perhaps, a situation began to emerge in which I was playing a large role in orchestrating our public performances and planning strategic moves. I began to worry that I was playing an overly dominant role in our working relationship. Moreover, I sometimes felt that I was pushing Macumba to do things that he would have preferred not to do. Initially, Macumba did not appear to be affected by such concerns. Nonetheless, as our work became increasingly hectic, certain tensions emerged between us over our respective roles, and came to a head at a particularly critical moment.

A Rupture

At one stage, I had arranged an important meeting with the Regional Director of DAA (concerning funding issues). A few hours before the meeting, Macumba told me that he had 'family business' to attend to but that he would meet me at DAA in time for the meeting . However, after waiting for half an hour or more, Macumba had not arrived. Without him, I could not carry off the discussions with the Director and the meeting was canceled. Although this had happened on a few other occasions (at less important meetings), Macumba's failure to attend these particular negotiations was difficult to understand. In the weeks leading up to this meeting we had expended much effort in promoting the 'right' of Aboriginal people to a 'voice in the media' (this had included public addresses conducted by

Macumba). DAA was well aware of our activities and was, it appeared, prepared to give us a sympathetic hearing. The failure of Macumba to attend the meeting tended to make our public utterances look somewhat hollow and, I felt, threatened the project as a whole. More problematically, it seemed to rupture our carefully honed 'team work'.

A few hours after this disaster, I found Macumba at his home at Basso's Farm. Up until this point in time, we had never had any real disagreements, either of a personal or work-related nature. I was therefore guarded in my remarks and tried not to elicit a direct confrontation with him. Nonetheless, when I asked him why he had not attended the meeting, he shrugged his shoulders and said, 'I'm sick of playing Jacky-Jacky'. He did not elaborate, nor did I make any further inquiries, but I knew what he meant. It seemed he was tired of playing the role of the 'token black' in our dealings with government, and probably tired of my pushiness.

Nonetheless, I was puzzled by Macumba's suggestion that his work with me had been tokenistic. No doubt, he did perform the role of the Aboriginal representative of our ambitions, and indeed, had become a kind of conduit for ideas and stratagems that were largely mine. Yet, it was clear to me that he was entirely complicit in this game. In fact, nothing in our working relationship had suggested otherwise. We both knew that this game-playing was simply a means to an end and, as such, was only a temporary measure until our project to establish an 'Aboriginal-controlled' broadcasting service was achieved. Moreover, it was understood that my role in this developmental phase would eventually come to an end and that, like all whitefellas involved in similar projects, I would subsequently move on. On the other hand, Macumba could, if he so wished, remain in his position and potentially fulfill his personal and professional desires. Beyond such considerations, I had embarked on the project with the understanding that we were working for the benefit of the broader Aboriginal community. In this sense, I felt that the anomalies and contradictions within our working relationship were only a minor consideration when placed in this broader context.

Following this particular event, I seriously considered breaking with Macumba and withdrawing from the project altogether. It seemed to me that if he felt that I was 'forcing' him to participate in its development, there was little purpose in continuing. Indeed, such a perception of our relationship seemed to defeat the long-term ideals of the project itself: the body we were trying to establish was, in the end, meant to be 'Aboriginal-controlled'. As it eventuated, Macumba later apologised for not attending the DAA meeting and for

making his 'Jacky-Jacky' remark. Perhaps sensing that I was on the point of departing, he took up the role I usually played and made encouraging remarks about the importance of the project and the need to 'stick together'. A few days later, he resumed his cheerful composure and we were again working along the same lines as before. Nonetheless, these intermittent ruptures were to become a common feature of our working relationship.

In reflecting on this and similar occurrences, one could argue that I did indeed recruit Macumba - and his Aboriginality - into the project. While I think there may be some validity in such an assertion, it does not encapsulate the whole truth; it would be more accurate to say that we recruited each other. No doubt I was acutely aware of the fact that a scheme to develop an 'Aboriginal voice in the media' would need to be led - or seen to be led - by an Aboriginal person. Neither the funding bodies nor the Aboriginal community would have countenanced the notion of a whitefella acting alone in such a role. Indeed, without Macumba I could not involve myself in these plans at all. On the other hand, it seemed to me that Macumba could see definite advantages in working alongside a whitefella who possessed a near fanatical commitment to the development of a project through which he could reap definite benefits. In a sense, we made a trade: I would contribute my white zealotry if he was prepared to contribute his Aboriginality.

As we shall see in the following chapter, the 'teamwork' that Macumba and I had developed in establishing CAAMA was to evolve into ever more complex elaborations involving not just ourselves, but many other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal 'team players'. Perhaps because of the burdens involved in these elaborations - and the inherent contradictions in them - Macumba eventually resigned from his position as President and Director of CAAMA in June 1981 and did not became directly involved in the operations of the organisation again. He took up the job previously offered to him in Oodnadatta.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to show how Macumba and I worked together as a 'team' to produce certain 'performances' (in Goffman's sense of the term) in order to establish CAAMA. In staging these performances, we presented different representations of the 'Aboriginal community', of 'Aboriginal culture' and of the 'Aboriginal self', depending on the context in which the performances were staged (in public addresses, through The Aboriginal Half Hour, in government submissions, etc.). Moreover, these performances, and

the kind of representations we wished to present, were devised in a strategic manner to meet what we believed to be the expectations of various audiences (government, organisational, community, etc.). While the audiences may have varied, the performances themselves were largely delineated (or perhaps one could say 'scripted') by the requirements of the state's policies of Aboriginal self-determination. In other words, we were obliged to present 'selective' representations of Aboriginal culture and identity in order to fulfill what O'Malley has described as the 'administratively desired effects' of governmental rule (O'Malley 1996: 317). This leads to two important points, one specific and the other general. First, although the policies of Aboriginal self-determination are grounded in essentialist notions of the Aboriginal subject, I have attempted to show that they are in fact implicated in the formation of such subjects. Second, as with the application of all forms of governmental policy, there are linkages between the practices of government and the formation of differing forms of subjectivity, or, as Shore & Wright have noted: 'policy increasingly shapes the way individuals construct themselves as subjects' (Shore & Wright 1997: 35).

PART FOUR:

INSTITUTING AN ABORIGINAL VOICE

GETTING INTO BED WITH THE STATE

> The 'will to govern' needs to be understood less in terms of its success than in terms of the difficulties of operationalising it.
>
> Miller & Rose: *Governing Economic Life*

Introduction

When CAAMA was established in 1980 - the first Aboriginal broadcasting organisation in Australia - the federal government was not entirely prepared for the demands the new body began to place on its resources. Although the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) was formally responsible for responding to these demands, it was not equipped to deal with the wider issues relating to broadcasting policy, even though it had made steps in this direction in previous years (see chapter Four). Moreover, while an Aboriginal agency capable of establishing Aboriginal broadcasting had begun to emerge with the formation of CAAMA, such agency still lacked the broader capacities needed to create these new services.

In this chapter, I provide an account of the interactions that occurred between CAAMA and the federal government in their mutual attempt to establish an Aboriginal broadcasting service in Central Australia during 1980 and 1981. As we shall see, this engagement provided a point of reference around which the government gradually built a relatively coherent policy for the further development of Aboriginal broadcasting in other parts of Australia. Nonetheless, it was an extremely haphazard process that was driven more by accidental events and the interests of powerful political figures than by any careful deliberation on the part of the state.

I will argue that the formation of agency within the practices and policies of government should not be seen as a deterministic, one-way process in which the state creates policy and forces it on a group of predetermined subjects - who then act within the proscribed limitations of such policy. On the contrary, I hope to show that the relationship between the state and those it seeks to govern is a highly discursive one where the formation of agency is a mutually constitutive process. Further, this constructive process may occur as a result events beyond the control of either the state or of the governed. This was particularly the case with regard to the policies of Aboriginal self-determination, as demonstrated in the

example of CAAMA's development. Nonetheless, I also show that a certain Aboriginal agency did indeed emerged out of these haphazard events that possessed the capacities to establish CAAMA.

Early Manoeuvres

A few weeks after CAAMA held its first official meeting in February 1980, the fledgling organisation presented a funding submission to DAA in Alice Springs [1]. A total of $44,000 was sought from the government to purchase equipment and hire new staff. Letters of support from all the existing Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs were also attached. It was as much a polemical document as it was a practical guide to establishing the proposed service. It argued that

> Aboriginal people are continually bombarded with all forms of 'foreign' media …The effects of this on a culture of non-European origins should be obvious to anyone. A whole range of cultural activities suffer, from the language of that culture to such things as … knowledge of traditional law.
> … It is essential that … any community be aware and well informed about issues relating to itself. At the present time, dissemination of information within the Aboriginal community is difficult for a number of reasons, one is the problem of language …another is the high illiteracy rate ... the Aboriginal community must develop its own information system so that these problems can be minimised …[2]

The kind of arguments that appeared in the submission were not particularly antithetical to the federal government's own position on Aboriginal participation in the media. As we have seen, in November 1978 the then federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner, delivered a speech in Parliament House in which he proclaimed that his government would help Aboriginal people 'restore and rebuild their cultural identity' through the use of radio broadcasting.

CAAMA's submission was subsequently sent to the (next) federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Fred Chaney, and the federal Minister for Post and Telecommunications, Tony Staley [3]. A meeting was also held in Alice Springs with the Regional Director of DAA to discuss the submission's contents.

Entering a Governmental Discourse

The meeting with the Regional Director of DAA and the delivery of CAAMA's submission to the federal Ministers seems to have had an immediate effect on governmental thinking.

On the 6th of March 1980, Senator Chaney convened a conference to discuss the contents of the submission with several senior departmental advisors and two broadcasting industry representatives [4], who were Michael Law, then the President of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia, and Bryon Quigley, a Senior Lecturer from the Australian Film Television and Radio School (Quigley had produced a report for DAA on Aboriginal broadcasting in the previous year, see chapter Four).

As a result of the conference, a Ministerial submission entitled 'Aboriginal Radio Broadcasting' was issued on the 25th of March 1980 [5]. Attached to the report was a summary of previous government efforts to establish Aboriginal broadcasting throughout the 1970's (see chapter Four). Although the quote from Chaney's predecessor, Viner, was included in the report (where Viner gave strong support for the development of Aboriginal broadcasting in a speech to Parliament in 1978), Chaney was far less enthusiastic.

The report suggested that DAA could perhaps find some resources to assist with the development of Aboriginal broadcasting in Central Australia, as Quigley had recommended. However, Chaney decided to write to the Minister for Post and Communications, Tony Staley, regarding the issue. In the letter, he argued that Aboriginal broadcasting should be left, primarily, to other government agencies with more expertise in the area:

> The consequential role for my Department would be to concern itself with the training of Aboriginals to prepare for radio broadcasting, but not to fund, nor to be involved in the actual operations of a radio station, which should be the responsibility of either the community involved or the ABC [6].

In line with previous interdepartmental discussions, he expressed the view that it was in the remote Aboriginal communities where Aboriginal broadcasting should be implemented:

> There are some 430 communities ... throughout Australia where about 50,000 Aboriginals do not have access to radio and television. It would be preferable for about 30,000 of these to be able to receive some material in their own language ...[7]

At this point in time, CAAMA did not know how the government had reacted to its submission. Certainly, it was unaware that Chaney was reluctant to support its aspirations and was attempting pass on the responsibility for Aboriginal broadcasting to the Minister for Communications. Nonetheless, Chaney's reluctance was to have important consequences. A month after receiving the letter from Chaney, Staley made a significant decision that ensured a greater engagement between the federal government and CAAMA (see below).

Meeting the Ministers

In late March, CAAMA conducted a 'Media Study Tour' of the southern states [8]. One of the aims of the tour was to inspect the operations of various broadcasting services, but more importantly, CAAMA was intent on directly lobbying the government for support. The tour group of five included John Macumba, two Committee members of CAAMA, a representative from the Institute for Aboriginal Development, and myself. Meetings were arranged with a number of broadcasting organisations, government departments and politicians in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Canberra. However, the most important meetings were to be held with federal Ministers Chaney and Staley at Parliament House, Canberra.

The first appointment was with Staley. He gave the CAAMA party an enthusiastic welcome and immediately said that he was prepared to 'encourage and assist' CAAMA in whatever way he could. He proceeded to talk at length about previous attempts by the federal government to establish Aboriginal broadcasting services and noted that 'from now on, the door is open in a policy sense' to ensure that it would be developed [9]. While he was keen to see CAAMA established as a 'fully independent' broadcasting organisation, he expressed some apprehension as to how this might actually be accomplished. He spoke about the problem of interdepartmental coordination and the sorting out of responsibilities between different government agencies. Nonetheless, he gave the impression that this could all be resolved without too much trouble. Macumba and other CAAMA representatives spoke briefly about the problem of funding, licensing and other issues, but it appeared that Staley had already considered most of these matters, or at least that was the impression he gave. Towards the end of the meeting - which had continued for half an hour or so - Staley made a surprise announcement. He said that he was prepared to 'give' CAAMA a 'surplus ABC broadcasting studio' located in Alice Springs and that his department would pay for any necessary renovations.

The meeting with Chaney was held immediately following the one with Staley. After being offered the broadcast studios, the CAAMA party felt confident that Chaney would follow suit and offer further support.

The meeting with Chaney was very different. Although he expressed a willingness to support CAAMA 'in principle', it was clear that he did not share the same interest in Aboriginal

broadcasting as did Staley. In response to a direct question concerning DAA funding for CAAMA, he was evasive and said that 'CAAMA would have to wait' until his officers had considered CAAMA's submission. At one point he bemoaned the fact that 'DAA is already funding more than 1,400 individual Aboriginal organisations nationwide' and that 'government funding has its limitations'. He also suggested that CAAMA should first seek the support of other governmental bodies, particularly from the Northern Territory Government. After expressing some concern about his apparent reluctance to support CAAMA, it was noted that the Territory Government had demonstrated a consistent lack of interest in funding Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs and that it was doubtful that they would support CAAMA.

Curiously, when mention was made of Staley's offer of the 'old ABC studios' - assuming that Chaney would have been aware of it - his only response was to say that it was an 'interesting' development. In the absence of any evidence of an agreement between Staley and Chaney about the 'handing over' of these facilities, it seems certain that Staley acted unilaterally.

Following these meetings, Staley's office issued a press release concerning the Minister's offer of the 'surplus ABC studios'. It read in part:

> The broadcasting studios of a former ABC radio station at Alice Springs are to be made available to an Aboriginal broadcasting group. This was announced today by the Minister for Post and Telecommunications, Mr. Staley. The Minister said that the government would provide the … facilities to the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, CAAMA … they would use them for program presentation and training Aboriginal broadcasters [10].

The story subsequently appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* during the following week. Radio interviews were also conducted with CAAMA representatives on this 'historic decision' by the federal government.

A Ministerial 'Flap'

After arriving back in Alice Springs, an inspection was made of the 'surplus studio' facilities. Not only were they fully occupied by Telecom workers and their equipment, but the 'studio' no longer existed. In the room where it once belonged, Telecom had installed a large diesel-powered generator. Further, no one at the local Telecom office seemed to know about Staley's offer. Indeed, CAAMA's inquiries about the buildings were treated with some suspicion [11].

A 'telex' was immediately sent to Staley's office informing him of the problem with the 'studio' and a call was put through to his departmental advisor in which CAAMA's extreme disappointment was made abundantly clear [12]. It was also suggested that CAAMA might issue its own press release about the Minister's alleged 'offer'.

Obviously, in his haste to support CAAMA, Staley had made a blunder. Apart from the fact that the 'studio' was inoperable, the ABC did not actually own the buildings in which it was housed. While the ABC had used the facilities in previous years, it emerged that they had always been the property of Telecom. Indeed, at that point in time, Telecom owned and operated all ABC broadcasting facilities throughout Australia. Remarkably, the Minister and his advisors were not fully aware of this administrative arrangement - at least not in relation to the buildings in question - and as a result had not discussed the issue with Telecom. In other words, the Minister had given away property over which he had little or no jurisdiction.

After becoming fully cognisant of his error, Staley set about containing the potential damage to himself and his Department. He immediately contacted senior officials in the ABC and asked them to provide short-term assistance to CAAMA [13]. He also made arrangements to fly to Alice Springs where he intended to speak to CAAMA face-to-face.

A week or so before Staley was due to arrive in Central Australia, a curious but noteworthy event took place. The famous Afro-American singer Eartha Kitt visited Alice Springs. She had heard about CAAMA and was interested in meeting the people involved. A social event was organised for the entertainer where mention was made of the problems that CAAMA was experiencing with the federal government. She was most supportive and gave CAAMA a donation of $1000. She also promised to visit Staley in Canberra [14].

An internal minute circulated to senior officers within DAA on the 23rd of May provides an indication of the circumstances surrounding Staley's visit to Alice Springs and his discussions with Eartha Kitt.

> Michael Hanah of Post and Telecommunications 'phoned this morning. There is a 'flap' on as Mr. Staley is going to Alice Springs on Wednesday and does not want to go 'empty handed' as he will be meeting with CAAMA. [He] had promised a fully equipped studio to CAAMA but on inspection the studio was not equipped. Mr. Staley also met with Eartha Kitt on the 22nd May after her return from Alice Springs. She has reported that CAAMA are most depressed, after the promises have vanished [15].

Two days later, in another DAA internal minute addressed to Senator Chaney, the problem of the studio facilities was further discussed:

> There has been a certain amount of consternation in Post and Telecommunications [about the unusable broadcast studios that Staley offered to CAAMA]. The outcome has been that the ABC has found a vacant room and will be flying up from Adelaide some broadcasting equipment which it is believed will be more than adequate for CAAMA's needs. Our regional Director [in Alice Springs] was prevailed upon to give some ... help.[16]

On the 28th of May, Macumba, myself and several representatives from the CAAMA management committee met with Staley in Alice Springs. Chaney also arrived at the meeting even though he had not provided any notice of his attendance. Apparently he was in Central Australia on other business and decided, at the last minute, to join the meeting. The Director of Telecom Operations for the Northern Territory and South Australia was also present.

After briefly outlining developments since the meeting in Canberra, Staley announced that the problem with the broadcasting studio had been satisfactorily resolved. Telecom had agreed to vacate the buildings and his department would underwrite all the necessary renovations. He added that his colleague, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs was 'looking into' possible sources of funding for CAAMA .He also confirmed that the ABC would be providing some 'short-term' assistance to CAAMA. The Telecom official briefly remarked that he would need a few months to relocate his staff and equipment before the renovations could begin. Notwithstanding Staley's comments, Chaney remained cautious and repeated his 'in principle' commitment to fund CAAMA, subject to confirmation of the Northern Territory Government's attitude and the possible involvement of the ABC.

Not long after this meeting, CAAMA moved into the new ABC buildings located in the centre of Alice Springs. Apart from 'the vacant room' which was used for program production and training, a well-equipped administrative area was also made available. This was the first office and studio facility that CAAMA had been able to obtain. Up until then it had worked from a variety of temporary locations around Alice Springs provided by a number of local Aboriginal organisations (see O'Dwyer 1981).

Engagement with the ABC

In adhering to Staley's request and providing CAAMA with some assistance, the ABC made an historic decision: it furnished tangible support for the development of Aboriginal

broadcasting for the first time. As we shall see, this initial assistance drew the ABC into a substantial engagement with Aboriginal broadcasting, not just in Central Australia but throughout much of regional and remote Australia.

The timing of CAAMA's involvement with the ABC could not have come at a more fortuitous moment. As we have seen in chapter Four, on the 25th of June, less than three weeks after CAAMA had established itself in the ABC buildings, the Committee of Review of the Australian Broadcasting Commission was to hold a public hearing in Alice Springs. The Committee was formally established by the Fraser Government in the previous year to conduct a wide-ranging investigation into the ABC's operations and to provide recommendations on possible reforms [17]. As part of these investigations it conducted numerous public hearings throughout Australia. It was chaired by Alex Dix and became known as 'the Dix Committee'.

The hearing provided CAAMA with an opportunity to present its views on the ABC's past performance in relation to Aboriginal broadcasting, which had been less than exemplary. Significantly, apart from DAA, CAAMA was the only organisation to present a submission to the Committee on Aboriginal broadcasting and was given prominent coverage in the local press:

> John Macumba, President of CAAMA, called for the immediate provision of air time for Aboriginals on national radio and television. He said that the absence of air time for programs concerning Aboriginals was a disgrace. This was especially the case in the N.T . where more than one quarter of the population identified themselves as Aboriginal. Mr. Macumba said that Aborigines had an important contribution to make to the future of the N.T. and Australia and that this must be reflected in their participation in national broadcasting. CAAMA's submission went on to insist that the ABC train Aborigines as producers, journalists, commentators and correspondents. (*The Centralian Advocate* 1980a)

But it was not only the lack of air time for local Aboriginal programs that was addressed in CAAMA's submission. The first in a series of domestic telecommunications satellites was due to be launched under the AUSSAT program in 1984 [18]. The new service would deliver radio and television programming - for the first time - to all remote regions of Australia, and much of this programming would be supplied by the ABC. CAAMA argued that the unrestricted transmission of 'Western media' into isolated Aboriginal communities would have a 'devastating impact on traditional Aboriginal culture'. It was further proposed that the ABC had a special responsibility in lessening this impact since it would be the largest single user of the new satellite service [19]. CAAMA contended that although the ABC was

about to acquire a new and comparatively large remote Aboriginal audience via the new satellite, it had not only neglected to prepare specialised programming for them, but had given little if any thought to the cultural impact that the new broadcasting services might have.

CAAMA's arguments had a particularly influential effect on two senior ABC officers who attended the hearing. The first was John Hartley, who was then the ABC's Director of Corporate Affairs and the other was John Newsome, then Acting Controller of ABC Radio. Newsome later recalled that

> John Hartley and I had been involved in negotiating and planning the ABC's use of the future satellite system and we were strong advocates for the use of satellites to extend communications, particularly into remote areas of Australia … and it hit us like a bomb when [CAAMA] did that presentation … we had completely overlooked indigenous Australians in talking about satellite communications … both John Hartley and I started talking about how we should make some adjustments to our thinking and how the ABC might develop some policies towards actively supporting the aspirations of aboriginal people in the media. [20]

Not long after the hearing, Newsome and Hartley contacted the then Head of ABC Radio, Keith Mackriell [21], to discuss CAAMA's presentation and the ABC's future attitude to Aboriginal broadcasting generally. (Mackriell was not unaware of CAAMA's activities. He had been directly involved in providing the 'short-term' assistance to CAAMA requested by Staley's office in May and also knew that it would be presenting a submission to the Dix Committee) [22]. They informed Mackriell about the content of CAAMA's presentation and warned him that Dix would be making strong recommendations on the need for Aboriginal programming on the ABC. As a result, Mackriell established an ABC Working Party on Aboriginal broadcasting, which Hartley and Newsome subsequently led [23]. While they were only empowered to investigate and report on options relating to the ABC's possible involvement in Aboriginal broadcasting, they went well beyond this moderate brief.

They realised that if the ABC was to produce and broadcast Aboriginal programming on both a national and a regional basis, it could not undertake this task alone. Other federal and state authorities would need to become involved, particularly in relation to the provision of funding. They therefore embarked on a vigorous campaign to generate a commitment to Aboriginal broadcasting not just at the ABC, but within the federal Departments of Aboriginal Affairs, Post and Telecommunications, and Education. They also approached the Northern Territory Government and several governmental departments in a number of other States.

Importantly, they did not sidestep CAAMA in this process. On the contrary, they pursued their endeavours in close association with the fledgling organisation, as John Newsome later confirmed at a meeting held in Alice Springs in 1981:

> … the ABC had now recognised in CAAMA a newly-created, responsible, well-organised … body of people providing the catalyst needed to get the ABC's programs for Aboriginal people off the ground. The ABC had resolved therefore to move with CAAMA's advice and assistance … [24]

Again, I would argue that the ABC was able to 'recognise' in CAAMA the Aboriginal agency that had been absent in its previous attempts to 'get programs for Aboriginal people off the ground'. As we have seen, from 1970 onwards, the ABC had participated in the various interdepartmental working parties on Aboriginal broadcasting. Throughout this period, the ABC had remained largely noncommittal. Indeed, it produced a set of experimental Aboriginal radio programs in 1975 that Newsome, who was then the Director of Radio Resources in the ABC, decided not to put to air because they were produced without the involvement of Aboriginal people (see chapter Four). Clearly, Newsome and Hartley understood that the ABC would need to be associated with a 'recognisable' Aboriginal agency if its plans to develop Aboriginal programming were to succeed. In this sense, CAAMA was able to offer the ABC a certain level of legitimacy and the authorisation to pursue its plans.

Just as importantly, I would also propose that in the act of 'recognising' this Aboriginal agency in CAAMA, the ABC simultaneously imbued it with powers and capacities that it had previously lacked. In other words, by enlisting this agency in its project to develop Aboriginal broadcasting, the ABC also enrolled its own powers into the project to develop CAAMA. Indeed, Newsome and Hartley not only pursued the interests of the ABC in developing Aboriginal broadcasting, but actively lobbied federal and Territory government departments in support of CAAMA (25). Clearly, CAAMA had to become a fully operational organisation if it was to provide the ABC with the Aboriginal agency it lacked.

At a more pragmatic level, the ABC required CAAMA's knowledge of the Aboriginal community and its practical experience of making programs for an Aboriginal audience. This included, for instance, the selection and use of appropriate Aboriginal languages, the establishment of reliable contacts within the Aboriginal community (for information about local news and events), the observance of certain cultural protocols, the training of Aboriginal journalists, etc.

A Window of Opportunity

Hartley and Newsome wished to formulate an arrangement whereby CAAMA could broadcast its programs using the ABC's transmitters in Central Australia. This would not only assist CAAMA, but would also provide the ABC with an important test case that could (if successful) be used to implement similar arrangements in other regional areas.

By early August, they had developed a draft plan to implement these arrangements. A Pilot Program would be conducted over a period of twelve months, during which time CAAMA would produce three half-hour radio programs per week. The programs would be presented in the local Aboriginal languages of Central Australia and in English and broadcast through the Alice Springs transmitter on 8AL each week. It was also proposed that audiotape cassettes of the programs be produced and distributed to Aboriginal communities throughout the region. CAAMA would receive $42,000 for the programs and the cassette distribution service.

The proposal however presented several risks to the ABC. In the first instance, there were a number of worrying questions surrounding the control and regulation of programming content. If an Aboriginal spokesperson expressed an opinion on the program that proved to be defamatory, then the ABC (as the formal publisher of the program) would be legally responsible and could be sued. On the other hand, the ABC did not want to 'censor' Aboriginal people and their views. Indeed, the program would need the general support of the local Aboriginal community if it was to work. Secondly, CAAMA was still in a very embryonic state with limited experience in the production of regular radio programming. Apart from part-time Aboriginal trainees (funded through the Commonwealth Employment Service), those who actually managed CAAMA were still volunteers. Third, despite Staley's support and the basic facilities provided by the ABC, CAAMA did not have a secure source of income and possessed only the most rudimentary production equipment. Under these circumstances, how could CAAMA hope to fulfill its contractual obligations to the ABC? Finally, while the proposed contractual fee to be paid to CAAMA would assist in overcoming some of these problems, it would not in itself be sufficient, and neither did the ABC wish to be placed in the position of being CAAMA's sole funding source.

Although Newsome and Hartley were able to convince the General Manager of the ABC, Sir Talbot Duckmanton, to support the proposal in general terms (26), it was clear that the

ABC could not proceed with the plan if other federal funding bodies, particularly DAA, did not make a substantial funding commitment to CAAMA. Further, Duckmanton insisted that given the substantial risks, the ABC's Board of Commissioners would have to be thoroughly convinced about the importance of the project and provide its formal endorsement before it could be undertaken. A letter from the Minster for Aboriginal Affairs confirming DAA's support would greatly assist in this process.

The Cost of Aboriginal Self-determination

At this point in time (early August 1980), Chaney had still not made any firm commitment to CAAMA. As noted above, he had advised the organisation to first seek assistance from the Northern Territory Government. In accordance with the federal Minister's wishes, CAAMA representatives met with the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Paul Everingham, in late July. Everingham expressed a general interest in the development of Aboriginal broadcasting services in the Territory but, as expected, offered no support. He said that such a project was the responsibility of the Federal government. CAAMA immediately wrote to Chaney, informing him of this outcome.

Before receiving a reply from Chaney, Newsome and Hartley arrived in Alice Springs to discuss the ABC's proposed Pilot Program with CAAMA (27).Given Everingham's negative response and the absence of any word from Chaney, the ABC's offer was an encouraging development. However, both CAAMA and the ABC agreed that without the assistance of DAA, neither party would be in a position to proceed with the Pilot Program. Obviously, further pressure had to be applied to Chaney.

In late August, the federal Labor Party's Opposition Spokesperson on Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Susan Ryan, was approached. CAAMA asked whether she would direct a question to Chaney in the Senate about his position on CAAMA. Ryan readily agreed:

> Senator RYAN - Is the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs aware that the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, CAAMA, has been refused funding from the Northern Territory Government …? In view of the Minister's expressed support for CAAMA and the support expressed by his colleague, the Minister for Post and Telecommunications, can he inform the Senate whether CAAMA is to receive any Federal funding or is the Minister prepared to allow this Aboriginal broadcasting group to fold up?

> Senator CHANEY - I was aware that the Northern Territory Government had indicated that it did not propose to fund the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association ... At this stage my Department does not have funds budgeted for CAAMA … [however] I am hopeful

that arrangements can be arrived at which will enable it to contribute to Aboriginal broadcasting in Central Australia. (Hansard, Senate 485, 28.8.80)

With Chaney's public admission that funds had not been 'budgeted' for CAAMA it appeared that all previous efforts to gain government funding had come to naught. A long letter of complaint was subsequently sent to Chaney in which a detailed account of the events that had occurred over the previous months was provided, including Chaney's 'in principle' commitment to CAAMA. The letter concluded:

> The point we have been trying to make ... in endless meetings and submissions to various government bodies, including your own, is that if Aboriginal broadcasting is going to succeed, there must be an Aboriginal-controlled organisation to foster and develop it, only in this way will Aboriginal broadcasting have a chance of succeeding at all … for these reasons we hope that you and your Department will fully support CAAMA...if CAAMA does not receive funding then the cause of Aboriginal broadcasting … will sink, once more, into oblivion.[28]

Despite the strident tone of CAAMA's letter, Chaney failed to respond. After the Territory Government had made its position clear, he now wanted to ascertain the extent to which the ABC would support CAAMA and until this had been clarified, he would not make a firm decision on how - and if - DAA would fund CAAMA.

Throughout August, a series of meetings were held between Hartley, Newsome and senior departmental officers in DAA to determine their respective positions in relation to CAAMA. The available evidence shows that there were serious differences between both parties not just over the issue of funding, but about the broader policies of Aboriginal self-determination.

As outlined above, the ABC wished to purchase pre-produced radio programs from CAAMA. However, they argued that DAA would have to fund CAAMA to enable this plan to work since CAAMA did not, at this stage, have the appropriate facilities to produce the required programs. DAA countered that the ABC had a responsibility in providing programming to 'all Australians' including Aboriginals, regardless of DAA's support. On this point, the ABC raised the issue of policy. It reasoned that CAAMA could not remain 'independent' of the ABC if DAA did not provide it with the necessary funding. Indeed, the ABC was adamant that since DAA's primary responsibility was to foster Aboriginal 'independence' and 'self-determination', it could not possibly refuse CAAMA the necessary funds. During the course of these debates, DAA's Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, George Menham, played a significant role in establishing his department's position.

In an interview conducted in 1996, Menham made the following observations:

> The ABC said to me, "the ABC does not want to interfere with self-determination, Aboriginal people needed to run their own programs and its about time you learnt that concept"… this led to a lot of argument and heat with the ABC …[29]
> My argument was that self-determination of the kind we were thinking about … would cost us dearly if we didn't manage it properly. If DAA were to go down the track of funding these [Aboriginal broadcasting] organisations, we needed to know why we were funding them … I had a very strong view about the ABC and its lack of commitment and will … but when they seized on "self-determination", it meant that they could construct this wonderful policy of having Aboriginal broadcasters … not part of, but feeding into the ABC, yet someone would have to fund them, and it wouldn't be the ABC. [30]

At issue here was a fundamental difference over the meaning and practice of 'Aboriginal self-determination'. How should the state assign enabling capacities to CAAMA, while at the same time, ensuring CAAMA's independence?. The ABC argued that DAA should provide funding to CAAMA so that it could maintain its independence from the ABC. In other words, to become 'independent', CAAMA had to become dependent on the state. DAA realised this only too well and, perhaps understandably, tried to encourage the ABC to take up the bulk of these responsibilities.

Ultimately, a compromise was reached between DAA and the ABC on how it should proceed. At a meeting held between Chaney, Mackriell and Newsome in early September [31], it was agreed that DAA would provide 'interim funding' of $28,000 to CAAMA, but only for the duration of the ABC's twelve-month Pilot Program. Further, Chaney insisted that the project should be closely monitored by both the ABC and DAA. However, if the Pilot project proved to be successful, DAA would then consider further funding. CAAMA was informed of these discussions a few days later. Although not entirely pleased with the outcome, it had little choice but to accept it.

Following confirmation of DAA's funding, Newsome and Hartley had one further issue to resolve before they could implement the Pilot Program, and that was to gain the official approval of the ABC's Board of Commissioners. Because they had anticipated some resistance from the Board, particularly from the politically conservative Chairperson, Dame Leonie Kramer, they had discretely lobbied certain Commissioners who they felt would support the proposal [32]. As it eventuated, Kramer not only supported the project, but according to Newsome, spoke in its defence. As a result, the joint ABC-CAAMA Pilot Program was approved on the 17th October. This of course also meant that Chaney's promised funding would also became available.

In early December, 1980, CAAMA moved out of the ABC buildings and into the newly renovated 'studios' that Staley had offered earlier in the year. The DAA funds became available and were used to purchase further production equipment and employ part-time administrative staff. Several new trainee Aboriginal broadcasters were also engaged through further subsidies provided by the Commonwealth Employment Service and the Australian Film and Television School organised a series of training workshops [33]. On the 31st of March 1981, the first of the ABC-CAAMA Pilot programs was successfully launched. A few weeks after this historic event, CAAMA also began to transmit daily radio programs through the local public radio station 8CCC [34]. Along with the weekly program broadcast through commercial station 8HA (which it had taken over from the Education Department), CAAMA began to deliver more than fifteen hours of Aboriginal programs each week throughout the Alice Springs region.

By 1984 CAAMA was operating its own radio station, 8KIN FM: the first Aboriginal-owned broadcasting service established in Australia. As we shall see, the implementation of this service led to a number other precedents set by CAAMA in subsequent years. Moreover, DAA overcame its initial reluctance to support Aboriginal broadcasting and established policy and funding procedures that facilitated its rapid development (see (DAA 1984).

Conclusion

As argued in chapter Four, the government's long-term plans to establish Aboriginal broadcasting services throughout the 1970's came to a standstill due to the lack of an appropriate Aboriginal agency capable of realising these ambitions. As I have tried to show here, such an agency eventually appeared with the foundation of CAAMA in 1980. However, CAAMA did not integrate neatly with the government's previous plans. On the contrary, its incorporation into the technologies of government proved to be a haphazard process. For example, had Staley not made the mistake of offering the 'old ABC studios' to CAAMA (when he had no administrative jurisdiction over them), things may have taken a very different turn. Most importantly, he would not have prevailed upon the ABC, Telecom and Chaney to extricate himself from an embarrassing situation and thus, would probably not have forced these bodies to involve themselves with CAAMA.

Nonetheless, Chaney was extremely reluctant to fund CAAMA. Indeed, when asked by CAAMA representatives (at the Parliament House meeting) whether he would support the

development of Aboriginal broadcasting, he responded, 'DAA is already funding more than 1400 individual Aboriginal organisations nationwide'. No doubt, he was keenly aware of the efforts his department had previously devoted to establishing such services, particularly by his immediate predecessor, Viner, who had made an historic pronouncement in parliament about the subject. Moreover, he understood only too well that a decision to fund CAAMA would open up a whole new stream of funding that his government would have to accommodate. As we have seen, one of his senior advisors, George Menham, said that any support for CAAMA 'would cost us dearly' as indeed it did. Unlike Staley and the ABC, Chaney and his advisors were responsible for the state administration of Aboriginal self-determination and as such, they had a duty to assess the consequences of fostering this new form of 'self-determination'.

Yet by asking the government to support the right of Aboriginal people to 'determine their own affairs' (with regard to broadcasting), CAAMA was simply asking the state to act in accordance with its own policies. While Chaney tried to resist the simple logic of this argument, he ultimately acquiesced. Certainly, long before his ministerial appointment, successive Australian governments had invested a substantial amount of financial, legislative and moral capital into the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. How then could he refuse to support CAAMA?

As I have also attempted to show here, the relationship between the state and those it seeks to govern is a highly discursive one, where the formation of agency may occur as a result of actions and events beyond the control of either the state or of the governed. However, these interactive processes were of critical importance in shaping, channeling and enhancing the emergent Aboriginal agency embodied in CAAMA and, ultimately, giving it the capacity to build its services. Just as importantly, the provision of a 'recognisable' Aboriginal agency by CAAMA also gave the government's moribund plans for Aboriginal broadcasting a certain cohesiveness and direction. The formation of agency and the policies of government can therefore be seen as mutually constitutive.

CONSTITUTING AN EFFECTIVE ABORIGINAL AGENCY (ADMINISTERING ABORIGINAL DIFFERENCE)

Introduction

John Macumba and I were employed as Director and Deputy Director of CAAMA, respectively, during the events described in the previous chapter. However, in June 1981, Macumba resigned, for reasons outlined in chapter Seven. Although his departure produced a level of uncertainty within the organisation, a suitable Aboriginal candidate for his position soon emerged: Freda Glynn.

Unlike Macumba, Glynn was born and raised in Central Australia and had wide family affiliations in Alice Springs (see note 1 for a brief biography). She had attended the inaugural meeting of CAAMA in early 1980 and became an enthusiastic supporter. She was later employed and trained by the ABC to work in conjunction with CAAMA on the production of 'The Aboriginal Way' program, broadcast through 8AL in Alice Springs [2]. About a month after Macumba's resignation, Freda Glynn was offered the position of Director of CAAMA, which she readily accepted (and I remained in the position of Deputy Director). We subsequently worked together in our respective managerial positions for ten years - from 1981 to 1991.

During that decade, CAAMA's organisational structure and general operations grew exponentially. This included the establishment of the first independent Aboriginal radio station in Australia (8KIN-FM), a film and video production house (CAAMA Productions), three retail outlets (CAAMA Shop Pty. Ltd.), a music production and distribution company (CAAMA Music) and a commercial satellite television service (Imparja Television Pty. Ltd) (CAAMA 1989). Staff levels grew to over seventy full-time employees. A comprehensive account of CAAMA's expansion over this period would comfortably fill several chapters and is beyond the scope of this thesis (see Appendix 2). Rather, the primary focus here will be on the emergent corporate and managerial operations of the organisation and the extent to which this facilitated the formation of what I will term 'an effective Aboriginal agency' within CAAMA.

The formation of Aboriginal agency within organisations established under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination is often depicted in essentialist terms, both in popular and scholarly literature (see chapter Five). However, I wish to show that the production of such agency was largely facilitated through the effects of governmental technologies. More importantly for the purposes of this chapter, I wish to examine the specific means by which this agency was constituted within CAAMA.

An Effective Aboriginal Agency

As indicated in chapter One, in using the term 'effective Aboriginal agency', I am referring more to collective forms of human agency rather than to agency centred in a single individual, (although I would argue that individual and collective forms of agency are closely connected). In other words, I am interested in the type of agency that is constituted through collectivities or institutions, whether in private businesses, government departments or community organisations such as CAAMA and other bodies. I am also interested in the way in which these forms of agency require certain capacities to operate effectively. For instance, a private business usually requires a number of individuals with various capacities in management, accounting, marketing and other areas of expertise. Together, these capacities will constitute - along with other abilities - the collective agency of the business, which enable it to operate effectively. The same can be applied to CAAMA.

In order to achieve its objectives, it was necessary that CAAMA recruit a range of staff - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - with capacities in such areas as broadcast engineering, administration, radio and television production, training, radio presentation, etc. Collectively, they provided CAAMA with the necessary agency to accomplish its goals. Similarly, CAAMA's formal identity - as 'an Aboriginal Corporation' - was determined not by traditional Aboriginal organisational structures, but by the state's *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976*, under which it was incorporated. In this important sense, I will argue that the 'collective Aboriginal agency' that emerged within the institutional framework of CAAMA was constituted through the contributions of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals and a mix of governmental and indigenous forms of social organisation.

Notwithstanding the multidimensional and ambiguous nature of this agency, it was incumbent upon CAAMA to be seen to embody a singular Aboriginal agency. Indeed, like other Aboriginal organisations formed under the policies of Aboriginal self-determination,

most of CAAMA's government funding depended on its ability to demonstrate that it was indeed propelled by such agency (as described in chapter Three, government concerns about Aboriginal organisations being overly influenced by non-Aboriginal staff led to the adoption of governmental procedures that would ensure the eventual 'Aboriginalisation' of Aboriginal organisations).Yet, it was not only governmental expectations that necessitated the constitution of an Aboriginal agency within CAAMA. It was important that members of the wider Aboriginal community saw CAAMA as the embodiment of Aboriginal aspirations. Aboriginal staff within the organisations also needed to feel as though they were working for an 'Aboriginal-controlled' body, as did the non-Aboriginal staff.

Therefore, CAAMA faced a dilemma. On the one hand, it was legally constituted via non-Aboriginal legislative structures and had to rely on non-Aboriginal staff to achieve its objectives. On the other hand, it had to be seen by both government and its Aboriginal constituency as an institution infused and propelled by an undiluted Aboriginal agency. The accommodation of this ambiguity within the institutional framework of CAAMA and the formation of an institutional agency forms the primary field of investigation in this chapter.

The Annual General Meeting

I will argue that one of the primary means by which Aboriginal agency was constituted within CAAMA was through its incorporation under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976.* As discussed in Part One, the availability of such legislation not only invited the establishment of bodies such as CAAMA, but facilitated the formation of particular forms of Aboriginal agency. Indeed, when CAAMA became incorporated under this Act in 1980, it was automatically subject to a set of regulations that would ensure, in accordance with the Act, complete 'Aboriginal control' over its operations.

Under the Act, Aboriginal organisations were required to form an all-Aboriginal executive body. In CAAMA's case, this body was called 'the CAAMA Governing Committee' (see CAAMA 1980e). The Committee consisted of twelve Aboriginal people elected at CAAMA's annual general meeting (AGM) by the membership of CAAMA (under the Act, only 'members of the Aboriginal race of Australia' can become members of an Aboriginal corporation). Throughout most of the 1980's, CAAMA's membership consisted of between sixty and seventy Aboriginal people who generally lived in and around Alice Springs (CAAMA 1989). Following the election of the twelve executive members at the AGM,

174

a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer were elected from the executive.

Like other organisations established under the Act, the Annual General Meeting served as the key event where CAAMA acquired its legitimacy as an 'Aboriginal-controlled' organisation. Here, a direct interface occurred between CAAMA and that all-powerful but perhaps indeterminate entity 'the Aboriginal community' (the membership of CAAMA being open to 'any member of the Central Australian Aboriginal community'). I would also argue that it served as the central source from which it acquired Aboriginal agency. How then did an AGM work in practice?

The rhetoric surrounding the policies of Aboriginal self-determination would suggest that CAAMA's AGM would have been a spontaneous and voluntary affair. This was not entirely the case. On at least two occasions, CAAMA's AGM had to be cancelled due to poor attendance. Indeed, it was only through careful and energetic planning by CAAMA staff that an AGM would succeed. Transport had to be arranged for members without private vehicles, food and refreshments prepared, promotional materials distributed and other arrangements made. Nonetheless, the most important aspect of the AGM was the timing: it was imperative that the meeting not clash with gatherings planned by other Aboriginal bodies.

A seemingly endless round of meetings beset the Aboriginal community of Alice Springs when CAAMA came into existence. In the year of its incorporation (1980), there were over twenty Aboriginal organisations established in the township (DAA 1980). Not only did these organisations hold at least one AGM each year ('special AGM's were also called intermittently), but the executive council meetings of these bodies were usually held each month. With twenty AGM's per year, and twelve monthly executive meetings per organisation, an Aboriginal person based in Alice Springs could - in theory - be asked to attend 260 meetings in the course of a single year. Indeed, the problem of having to attend so many gatherings was a real issue, not only for members of the local Aboriginal community, but for the Aboriginal organisations that depended upon their attendance. Certainly, most of CAAMA's members were also involved in other bodies. This meant that whenever CAAMA held an AGM, it had to compete with these bodies to attract the appropriate numbers.

CAAMA was therefore obliged to engage in an active process of solicitation in order to acquire legitimacy as an Aboriginal organisation, under 'Aboriginal control'. The practical

coordination of this process was indeed one of the primary preoccupations of management. Needless to say, the fulfillment of this obligation was central to CAAMA's corporate existence.

Solicitation

As we have seen, the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act,* under which CAAMA was incorporated, was instituted by the federal government in the early 1970s to accommodate what were perceived to be the aspirations of Aboriginal people (see chapter One). Nonetheless, I have argued that this was part of a wider governmental attempt to manage - and govern - Aboriginal difference (as opposed to eliminating it). Moreover, as Rowley originally proposed, the creation of 'independent' Aboriginal organisations provided the state with a means by which it could encourage Aboriginals to partake in the mechanisms of government, rather than 'avoiding' such engagements (as Rowley put it). In this sense, the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act* can be seen as part of a broad project of solicitation that sought to enrol Aboriginal people in their own governance. As an organisation constituted under this Act, I will argue that CAAMA was also obliged to partake in this same project of solicitation in order to constitute an effective Aboriginal agency.

I will now turn to an examination of the CAAMA Governing Committee. To understand how the committee worked, it is important that we focus, in the first instance, on the composition of its membership. As I hope to show, the cultural and social differences between committee members informed the operation of CAAMA and, moreover, the formation of a particular kind of Aboriginal agency.

The CAAMA Governing Committee

Although the composition of the committee varied from one AGM to another, it consistently reflected the social diversity of the local Aboriginal community. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this diversity was the linguistic differences between individual members. Some (usually the majority) spoke at least one of the Aboriginal languages of Central Australia as a mother tongue (see below), while others had little if any knowledge of these languages and spoke English only. Similarly, some continued to participate in ceremonial ritual (usually on visits to remote communities outside Alice Springs), while others had no desire to involve themselves in these traditional practices. These cultural and

linguistic differences were not the only point of divergence among members; socio-economic factors were also pronounced.

The Aboriginal language speakers on the committee generally lived in the 'fringe camps' (or 'Aboriginal town leases') surrounding Alice Springs. Here, poverty, violence and extreme disadvantage was commonplace (see Heppell & Wigley 1981). Alternatively, those members who spoke only English tended to live in the urban township where living conditions were relatively better, although here, too, levels of disadvantage were higher than in the wider non-Aboriginal community (see Rowse 1998). The differences between the towncampers and the town-dwellers were widely recognised within the Aboriginal community itself. Here, issues of descent also came into play. In a public speech delivered in 1974, the one-time Aboriginal General Manager of ATSIC, Patricia Turner, opened her address with an unswerving delineation of these differences:

> I've been asked to talk to you … giving my point of view as an Aboriginal born and raised in this town … I shall be talking about the part-Aboriginal people who have lived in the town all their lives as citizens of this community. I have used the term 'part-Aboriginal' as this is an exceptionally widely used term in the Northern Territory, to distinguish between the full-blood Aboriginal living more in the camp situation, as opposed to the part-Aboriginal living in houses in the town … I have presented here a distinction between two Aboriginal groups who live quite differently from each other… Part-Aboriginal people belong to neither the full-blood Aboriginal nor the whites … we are different and we know it … (Australian Frontier 1974:13-14).

How then did this internal differentiation within the local Aboriginal community inform the workings of the CAAMA Governing Committee?

In most cases, the towncampers on the committee spoke relatively poor English and had levels of literacy that were at best rudimentary (although there were some important exceptions). In my frequent observations of committee meetings, it became obvious that the towncampers experienced difficulties in understanding the business at hand, which was always conducted in English. Indeed, a certain amount of effort was expended by CAAMA management in trying to convey information in an understandable fashion. Occasionally, an interpreter (or mulit-lingual staff person) was asked to help in this endeavour. Apart from language difficulties, the formalities associated with meeting procedures - largely imposed by the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act* – appeared only vaguely comprehensible to most of the towncampers. (It is worth noting that the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs recognised this problem and ran courses for towncampers on meeting

procedures, see chapter Two). However, such problems were less of an issue for the town-based committee members, all of whom spoke English. Indeed, some had tertiary training and were entirely conversant with the procedures of formal meetings.

As a result or these variable capacities, the town-based committee members tended to dominate proceedings. This is not a criticism. Rather, the relatively complex matters that came before the committee (official correspondence, policy proposals, financial reports, project plans, draft submissions, etc.), necessitated an ability to understand these issues. In other words, overseeing a complex organisation such as CAAMA presupposed a familiarity with standard managerial procedures, common to corporate bodies within the wider, non-Aboriginal world. For the most part, it was the town-based members who possessed such capacities, and not the towncampers. It was perhaps inevitable that the town-based members would assume prime responsibility for decision-making on the committee.

Nonetheless, the towncampers on the committee possessed what might be described as 'cultural attributes' that were integral to the objectives of CAAMA. For instance, throughout the 1980's, approximately sixty per cent of programming on CAAMA's broadcasting network, 8KIN-FM, was presented in Aboriginal languages, and a large proportion of listeners were based in the towncamps (CAAMA 1989). It was therefore important that the towncampers have a presence on the CAAMA committee in order to represent the interests of this large listenership. In fact, CAAMA management made strenuous efforts to ensure that towncampers were well represented in the CAAMA membership (and could thereby elect committee representatives at AGMs).

More significantly, the location of the towncampers in Alice Springs had played a fundamental role in the establishment - and funding - of CAAMA. In its first submission to government, CAAMA had argued that Aboriginal broadcasting could play a primary role in combating the 'destruction of Aboriginal languages', and more generally, 'support the maintenance of Aboriginal culture' (see previous chapter). Here, CAAMA had pointed to the various Aboriginal languages and traditions 'still practiced' in the towncamps of Alice Springs. Fortunately for CAAMA, the argument that radio could help 'maintain' Aboriginal tradition was in close alignment with the government's own position on Aboriginal broadcasting. Indeed, Ian Viner (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Fraser government) said in an internal Ministerial memo that he had 'no interest' in funding Aboriginal broadcasting services that were presented 'in English' (see chapter One). Thus, while the

towncampers certainly had difficulties with the corporate procedures of CAAMA, their presence on the Governing Committee was fundamental to the organisation's purpose and, indeed, the continued support of the government.

Accountability and Tradition

In chapter One, I argued that the policies of Aboriginal self-determination facilitated the formation of differing and sometimes contradictory Aboriginal 'selves'. This included an 'administratively competent' Aboriginal self (ruled by western forms of accountability) and a culturally authentic 'self' (ruled by 'Aboriginal tradition'). Certainly, in the case of CAAMA, it was imperative that it act with both western forms of 'administrative competency' and Aboriginal forms of 'cultural competency'. As I have tried to show here, although the composition of the CAAMA Governing Committee was diverse, its members nevertheless possessed - on a collective basis - both administrative and cultural competencies that enabled it to meet these governmental requirements. Paradoxically, although the towncampers and town-dwellers within the Aboriginal community of Alice Springs lived 'quite differently from each other' - as Turner put it - these governmental technologies brought them together to construct a singular Aboriginal agency.

Managerial Practices

While the Governing Committee formed the primary basis upon which CAAMA acquired its Aboriginal agency, it was the senior management that drove the organisation in an operational sense. One could say that the main function of the Committee was to endorse the activities of management, and provide it with the authority to act on behalf of the Aboriginal community. This included the initiation and development of projects, the acquisition of funds and the coordination of negotiations with government. Of course, all management-inspired projects were presented to the Committee for approval, and all significant financial, legal and corporate documentation was signed-off by relevant committee members. In effect, the CAAMA Governing Committee delegated its primary Aboriginal agency to the senior management who, in turn, re-directed it to other staff within the organisation. I will now provide a brief description of the managerial and operational structure of CAAMA, as it evolved from 1980 to 1990. As I hope to show, a complex mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff - working in differing managerial relationships - began to emerge.

As we have seen, throughout the 1980's, CAAMA's senior management consisted of Freda Glynn and myself. During the early stages of the organisation's development, we were involved in practically every aspect of the organisation's operations. However, as CAAMA grew, separate areas of activity emerged with their own discrete managerial requirements. Eventually, with increased levels of funding, we were able to shed certain managerial responsibilities and delegate them to middle managers. CAAMA's radio network, 8KIN-FM, was eventually placed under the control of a Station Manager, who worked with a variety of radio staff including technicians, presenters and journalists. CAAMA Video Productions was placed under a Coordinator, working with camera operators, video editors, production managers, etc. A similar process occurred with the development of CAAMA's retail business and with its music recording label.

During the first few years, the managers running these separate departments were non-Aboriginal, and were employed on the basis of their professional expertise and previous experience. Hence, the Station Manager came with a background in the broadcasting industry, the Video Unit Coordinator had worked in mainstream television, the Retail Manager in private business, etc. (CAAMA 1989). However, most of the staff working under these managers were Aboriginal. By the end of the 1980's the organisation was employing approximately seventy staff of whom 20-30% were non-Aboriginal and 70-80% Aboriginal (see CAAMA 1989). CAAMA therefore developed an organisational structure that consisted of (i) an all-Aboriginal Governing Committee, (ii) a senior management team consisting of an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal, (iii) a middle-management level consisting of five non-Aboriginals, (iv) an administrative section consisting primarily of non-Aboriginals, and (v) a broader staff component which was almost exclusively Aboriginal.

A large proportion of the Aboriginal staff were initially engaged as 'on-the-job trainees'. In other words, while employed on a full-time basis, they would also undertake 'on the job' training. To expedite this process, an agreement was established with the Australian Film and Television School (based in Sydney). Under these arrangements, Aboriginal trainees completed a series of short courses provided by the School while working at CAAMA. In most cases, these arrangements extended over two to three years, after which the 'trainees' would be converted to substantive staff (see CAAMA 1983). Such an approach proved relatively successful, with most of the first trainees completing their courses. Some later took up managerial positions within CAAMA while others left to pursue careers in non-

Aboriginal bodies such as the ABC or in commercial organisations. Twenty years after CAAMA's establishment, the number of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal staff remained at approximately the same ratio as in previous years, although with a slightly increased number of Aboriginals (ATSIC 2000).

Thus, a variety of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people worked for CAAMA, with varying capacities and expertise. Collectively, they constituted a collective agency that enabled CAAMA to achieve a variety of projects.

Administering Diversity

In the final section of this chapter, I will focus on certain aspects relating to the development of CAAMA's radio station 8KIN-FM. Of all the activities in which CAAMA involved itself, its broadcasting service was perhaps the most significant in terms of its impact on the Aboriginal community.

As discussed above, the membership of the CAAMA Governing Committee reflected the heterogeneous nature of the Aboriginal community in Alice Springs. I argue that this diversity was largely subsumed as a result of the governmental requirements that the Committee had to meet. I also argue that this facilitated the formation of new forms of Aboriginal agency that enabled CAAMA to operate as a relatively effective body. Here, I wish to show how a similar process occurred in CAAMA's attempts to provide a viable broadcasting service for 8KIN-FM's diverse audience.

In 1984, CAAMA conducted an audience survey within its broadcasting service area in order to streamline its radio program delivery (CAAMA 1984a). At this stage, the service area not only included the township of Alice Springs, but also three outlying Aboriginal communities: Hermannsburg, Ali Curung and Santa Teresa, where CAAMA had installed radio translators (see Appendix 2). The survey indicated that approximately 35% of its Aboriginal audience spoke English as a mother tongue, while 65% spoke a variety of Central Australian Aboriginal languages. These languages consisted of the three predominant language groupings in the region and their dialectical variations: the Arandic (Eastern, Western, Southern and Central Arrernte, Anmatyerre, Alyawarre and Kaytetye); Western Desert (Pitjatjantjara, Yankuntjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra, Luritja, Pintupi and Kukatja) and Ngarrik (Walpiri and Warlmanapa).

In devising a coherent programming schedule for this audience, it became apparent (from the survey results), that each Aboriginal language grouping had their own specific community interests that did not generally overlap. For instance, they appeared to be more attracted to news and information about their particular communities (or language groupings) than in general news from external sources. Similarly, those sections of the audience who spoke English only had very different needs and interests. Indeed, their programming concerns centred around their own particular English-speaking community to the virtual exclusion of the Aboriginal language-speakers. They also had a much greater interest in news and events beyond Central Australia.

The difficulties in servicing this complex audience were partly resolved through the segmentation of CAAMA's daily broadcasting output into various programming blocks. Each language group was allotted a certain amount of air time, depending on the number of people in their target audience. For example, the Arandic group encompassed over 50% of the of the total Aboriginal language-speakers in the audience, and were thus provided with the predominant amount of daily air time (in 1986, this amounted to approximately 6 hours per day out of a total air time on 8KIN-FM of 15 hours per day). Here, three Arandic language-speakers were hired and trained in radio announcing and basic production techniques (in most cases, they had reasonably good English). They were then given discrete program allotments on 8KIN-FM to fill. A similar process occurred for other segments of the audience.

However, this was not entirely satisfactory for several reasons. CAAMA had established a separate news production service (in 1986), run by a former ABC radio journalist who worked with several Aboriginal cadet journalists (all of whom spoke English only). These staff produced a twice-daily news bulletin which went to air in English. The bulletin was subsequently translated into Aboriginal languages by the Aboriginal language announcers, and rebroadcast the following day. This meant that the Aboriginal language announcers were not only required to put their own programs to air, but undertake the tedious task of translating the news. They were therefore expected to take on roles and responsibilities quite different to the English language presenters, although they worked under the same conditions and rates of pay. Moreover, as CAAMA began to develop its video and television production area, the same announcers were asked to perform further translation work in video production. This began to create significant inter-staff tensions that had to be resolved through the development of new administrative structures.

In 1987, a 'Language Services Department' was established. It comprised six full-time staff and a number of part-time employees, all of whom were responsible for providing translation and other Aboriginal language-based services to other departments within CAAMA. The 'Language Services Department' had its own coordinator and worked as a separate entity within the broader organisation.

The point to be made here is that CAAMA was faced with the problem of providing a service not to a single, undifferentiated 'Aboriginal community', but to one that was multi-lingual and multi-cultural, with highly divergent capacities and needs. Ironically, in creating a broadcasting service that would 'give the Aboriginal people a voice in the media', the management of CAAMA found itself preoccupied with the task of imposing an administrative order on this 'voice' in order that it be heard.

Conclusion

As we have seen, in much of the literature on Aboriginal broadcasting there is little discussion of the role played by the state in the formation of 'an Aboriginal voice in the media', nor on the constitution of the Aboriginal subject within the policies and practices of government (see Michaels 1986, Molnar & Meadows 2001, Dowmunt 1993). More problematically, many of these accounts tend to construct a singular, undifferentiated 'Aboriginal voice' struggling against the media establishment. I have argued that this approach simply replicates the rhetoric surrounding the state's own policies of 'Aboriginal self-determination' and, moreover, masks the complex operations of government itself (chapter One). It also assumes the pre-discursive existence of a particular kind of Aboriginal agency, without giving adequate consideration to the specific conditions that gave rise to it.

In this chapter, I have attempted to show that 'the Aboriginal community', as such, can be a complex and extremely variegated entity, and is not the singular body that the policies of Aboriginal self-determination tend to presuppose. This was particularly the case in Central Australia, where linguistic and socio-economic differences within the Aboriginal community are pronounced. I have also tried to demonstrate that the corporate and managerial structures that these policies impose on Aboriginal people have the effect of subsuming this internal differentiation and creating new forms of Aboriginal agency. Thus, while these policies promote the 'self-determination' Aboriginal people, they in fact solicit the formation of new Aboriginal 'selves', or agencies that will ensure the effective operation of these governmental practices.

UNINTENDED OUTCOMES

Introduction

In 1984, CAAMA submitted a bid for a commercial satellite television licence which would enable it to deliver television and radio programming over an area the size of Western Europe. The region encompassed numerous townships in the Northern Territory and South Australia. It also took in more than 200 remote Aboriginal communities (ABT 1986).

CAAMA's decision to apply for the licence set in motion a turbulent train of events that extended over four years (1984-1988). It involved two closely contested Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) hearings, two appeals to the Federal Court of Australia (one to the Full Bench) and generated heated ministerial clashes between the Federal and Territory governments. It would also briefly engage one of the main players in the Australian commercial television industry, Kerry Packer.

When CAAMA applied for the Central Remote Commercial Television Service (RCTS) licence, it possessed none of the 'financial' assets or 'technical' expertise to operate the facility, as required under the Tribunal's licensing criteria. Nonetheless, CAAMA eventually succeeded in its bid.

As I will demonstrate, CAAMA was able to overcome its initial shortcomings on the basis of a single argument: that it possessed a superior 'understanding' of the 'nature' and 'interests' of the Aboriginal audience within the Central RCTS zone (Aboriginal people making up 38% of all viewers). As we shall see, this argument not only convinced the Tribunal that CAAMA had the ability to provide the Aboriginal audience with 'a more adequate and comprehensive' service than the other licence applicant (Territory Television Pty.Ltd.), it also gave CAAMA the capacity to acquire the material assets it initially lacked. Moreover, the Tribunal concluded that CAAMA also had the requisite 'skills' to develop 'culturally appropriate' programming for the Aboriginal viewers (which the Tribunal considered to be 'vital' in any programming service for the Central RCTS).

While CAAMA's 'understanding' of Aboriginal people and their culture certainly played a central role in determining the outcome of the RCTS licence, CAAMA nevertheless failed

to provide any regular television programming for the indigenous population within the RCTS zone. Indeed, the television company that CAAMA established after winning the licence in 1987 - Imparja Television Pty. Ltd. - continues to operate as a standard regional commercial television station. Throughout its fifteen-year history, the all-Aboriginal Board of Imparja has been content to allow the station to be run primarily by non-Aboriginal management and staff with expertise in the commercial television industry.

In this chapter I wish to examine CAAMA's original motivations in applying for the licence, the ABT licence hearings and the development of Imparja Television during the first few years of its operations. In presenting this account, I will not attempt to explain - in any detail - why the Board of Imparja has thus far failed to deliver on promises made to the Tribunal; such an endeavour is beyond the scope of a single chapter. Rather, my interest lies in examining the nature of CAAMA's 'understanding' of the 'Aboriginal audience' and how this 'understanding' led to its winning the RCTS licence. Moreover, I will argue that the disjunction between this 'understanding' and subsequent outcomes raises the question of how certain Aboriginalities are produced within governmental processes. I will show that some 'Aboriginalities' were produced to achieve particular ends, while others were unintended consequences of these governmental processes.

'Understanding' Aboriginal Culture

The Tribunal determined that CAAMA had a better 'understanding' of 'Aboriginal people' than its rival for the RCTS licence. I will argue that to demonstrate this understanding, CAAMA was obliged to stage a certain 'Aboriginality' that the Tribunal could recognise and believe in. By inciting CAAMA's staging of this 'Aboriginality', the licensing process itself contributed to its re-shaping and re-affirmation.

In chapter One, I showed that the administrative technologies associated with the policies of Aboriginal self-determination necessitated the discursive production of numerous overlapping Aboriginalities. They included an 'administratively competent' Aboriginality, a 'culturally authentic' Aboriginality, a 'politically resistant' Aboriginality and, most importantly, a broad-based 'collective' Aboriginality. Such Aboriginalities not only emerged within CAAMA's presentation before the Tribunal, they also propelled it.

For example, a 'resistant' Aboriginality infused much of CAAMA's presentation and underpinned its decision to bid for the licence. Certainly, this kind of Aboriginality had

been well established long before the advent of the Tribunal hearings. The Aboriginal organisations that emerged in Alice Springs following the implementation of the policies of self-determination in 1973 had nurtured and articulated it in the years leading up to CAAMA's establishment in 1980 (see chapter Two). CAAMA re-staged this 'resistant Aboriginality' in the Tribunal hearings. Numerous letters of support from Aboriginal organisations accompanied CAAMA's licence application, underlining the need for 'remedial action' against the 'uncontrolled' delivery of satellite television into remote Aboriginal communities. Resistant Aboriginality therefore possessed a certain quantifiable history and structure that the Tribunal recognised and legitimised.

In his article *Aboriginal Content: Who's Got It - Who Needs It?* (Michaels 1994), Eric Michaels clearly recognised that CAAMA recruited various Aboriginalities in its bid to win the RCTS license. However, he argued that this process had the effect of 'authorising' these Aboriginalities and, moreover, that it represented a 'false ... ascription' of 'traditional' Aboriginal culture. He predicted that the depiction of these 'Aboriginalities' in programs foreshadowed by CAAMA was 'likely to destroy Aborigines', since they would not be based on what he described as the 'Dreaming Law' as manifested in 'localised' Aboriginal communities such as at Yuendumu (where his research was based). In this argument he seems to have highlighted what he believed to be a conflict between a 'pan-Aboriginalist' perspective and a local one.

I will argue that Michaels misses a fundamental point here. As indicated above, CAAMA did indeed mobilise a range of Aboriginalities including a 'culturally authentic' Aboriginality to win the licence. However, he wants us to believe that this particular kind of Aboriginality - based on 'the dreaming law' - has an 'authenticity' that makes all other forms of Aboriginality 'false'. In other words, Michaels' argument requires him to postulate an essentialised template of Aboriginal culture against which other 'Aboriginalities' can be measured for their authenticity. My account of CAAMA's 'Aboriginalities' makes no such comparison. Rather, I wish to show the kinds of Aboriginalities that emerged through the Tribunal processes and to make the point that Aboriginal people were either willing or unwilling to endorse them.

A Relentless Bombardment

In 1978, the federal Department of Post and Telecommunications (DP&T) announced plans to launch Australia's first national telecommunications satellite, AUSSAT. According

to the Department, the new facility would deliver 'a range of innovative telecommunications services' across Australia and bring television to many remote communities for the first time (Goswinkel 1986). In August 1981 - four years before the proposed launch of the satellite - CAAMA presented a submission to the Department concerning its implementation (CAAMA 1981).

It argued that the transmission of non-Aboriginal television into remote Aboriginal communities could be 'just as destructive of Aboriginal culture as other technologies have in the past'. It also noted that there were over 200 Aboriginal communities scattered throughout remote Australia that would be subject to 'a relentless bombardment of foreign languages, foreign values and an alien culture' via the satellite. CAAMA was not advocating a blanket ban on these services - rather, it proposed that 'an indigenous satellite broadcasting network' be established to provide 'culturally appropriate' programming for the Aboriginal people living in the satellite transmission zone. Moreover, it argued that Aboriginal people 'have the right, under the policies of self-determination, to exercise a level of control' over such services.

The submission appeared to have an influence on the then Head of the DP&T, Robert Lansdowne. He appears to have given little consideration to the likely 'cultural' impact of satellite telecommunications on Aboriginal communities. Consequently, he wrote to his erstwhile colleague, H. G. 'Nugget' Coombs for advice [1]. Coombs replied to Lansdowne suggesting that a 'study … be commissioned as soon as possible to gather base-line data' on the possible impact of AUSSAT on remote Aboriginal communities. He argued that:

> To proceed with the introduction to Aborigines of TV and … satellite services, without information on its possible effects, is to leave the way open for accusations of racism and cultural imperialism [2].

Although there is no direct evidence that Lansdowne heeded Coombs's advice, the DP&T did send officers to a number of remote Aboriginal communities to discuss the forthcoming satellite. Nonetheless, these discussions did not appear to have any effect on the Department's subsequent approach to the introduction of these services.

CAAMA's Dilemma

In 1983 the new federal Labor Minister for Communications, Michael Duffy, issued a long-awaited policy statement on AUSSAT. He announced that all radio and television services

transmitted via the new service (other than the ABC) would be delivered through four 'footprints' (or service areas) which would be run by separate, regionally-based, commercial TV companies (excluding the national commercial TV network channels 9,7 and 10) (Duffy 1984). These footprints were to be called 'Remote Commercial Television Service' areas or RCTS zones. The four zones would operate over (i) Western Australia, (ii) Queensland, (iii) New South Wales/Victoria/Tasmania and (iv) Northern Territory/South Australia.

The Minister further stated that the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) would determine, through a process of public hearings, the commercial operators who would control each of the four zones. Under this scenario, any commercial television company (apart from the larger TV networks) could apply for the licences. However, once a decision had been made by the Tribunal, community groups wanting access to any zone would have to negotiate an arrangement with the successful commercial licencees. This meant that commercial interests would have a large measure of control over all non-government telecommunications services on AUSSAT, including community TV services.

CAAMA was primarily concerned with the Central RCTS zone where approximately 38% of the potential viewing audience was Aboriginal (see CAAMA 1984). Moreover, the Central RCTS would deliver direct television programming to all the remote Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory and South Australia, where the majority of Aboriginal people spoke their own languages [3]. Nonetheless, with Duffy's decision on AUSSAT, it seemed that CAAMA's long-standing desire to deliver programs to these communities via satellite had been denied. Although CAAMA could try to negotiate an access arrangement with whichever commercial company won the Central RCTS licence, it seemed highly unlikely that such access would be forthcoming. In fact, once the commercial operators had been awarded their licences they would not be obliged to provide access to anyone (Duffy 1983). However, there was a possible solution to this dilemma.

A Strategic Move

In late 1984, Freda Glynn and I arranged a special meeting of the CAAMA Governing Committee to discuss a possible approach to this problem. We proposed that CAAMA establish a commercial television company - on paper - and apply for the Central RCTS licence. While we knew that there was little prospect of a successful outcome to this

endeavour, we felt that CAAMA would at least have the opportunity to argue for some limited access to AUSSAT during the licence hearing. Indeed, CAAMA would have to raise $6.5 million to purchase the necessary equipment to establish the service, and generate a further $4 million - each year - to operate it (CAAMA 1984). Needless to say, CAAMA did not have access to this level of finance, nor did it have the experience to run a commercial satellite television service. The Governing Committee subsequently supported our proposal and preparations were made to submit an application [4].

While the initial decision to make a submission was only a strategic bid to secure access to AUSSAT, some unexpected decisions by the Tribunal during the licensing process influenced CAAMA to attempt to win the licence.

The Application

To assist with its application, CAAMA hired a communications consultant, Brian Walsh, in November 1984. Walsh was a specialist in public broadcasting development and had been loosely associated with CAAMA since 1982, when he organised a meeting between CAAMA representatives and a group of indigenous broadcasters from Canada [5]. He had also worked as a consultant for AUSSAT Pty. Ltd., producing a technical study on the provision of satellite services to remote Aboriginal communities [6]. To employ Walsh, CAAMA sought and received a grant from the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC).

A two-volume application was subsequently submitted in December 1984. It provided a competent plan for the technical implementation of the Central RCTS and, to some extent, fulfilled the minimum requirements of the Tribunal's pro forma specifications, but it was more a work in progress than a comprehensive application (CAAMA 1984). For example, it proposed to finance the RCTS service through government funding bodies, commercial loans and leasing agreements that were 'yet to be confirmed'. Moreover, a Proprietary Limited company required to hold the licence was still 'in the process of formation'. Nevertheless, a name had been devised for the proposed company: 'Imparja Television', which appeared in the application as a body 'sponsored by CAAMA'. The only real strength in the application lay in the programming proposals, which included

> a daily Aboriginal news bulletin, broadcast in English and in the three major languages of Central Australia; special programs for particular Aboriginal communities; a daily Aboriginal educational program to be developed in association with the Federal Department of Education [7], and a number of shorter programs such as Aboriginal musical segments, 'health

information spots', social security information and live debates. Moreover, the application included a detailed plan (including preliminary architectural drawings) for a major 'Aboriginal television production centre'. This would 'provide a production facility in the heart of Australia which will foster creative talent, employment and training … for Aboriginal Australians' (CAAMA 1984:15).

The only other applicant for the Central RCTS was an existing commercial television company, Territory Television Pty. Ltd., which operated a TV station in and around Darwin (NTD8). It proposed to provide an extension of its current service through a subsidiary company, Television Capricornia Pty. Ltd. However, it would provide little new programming for the audience outside of Darwin and no special programs for the Aboriginal population. The management and staff of Territory Television had many years of experience in commercial television and, unlike CAAMA, possessed the financial resources to establish the service. As Wendy Bell has argued, Territory Television's sole interest was in using the technical capabilities of the RCTS to increase its advertising market (Bell 1994: 239).

The Northern Territory Government took a close interest in the Central RCTS licence hearing, promising that whoever won the licence, it would consider buying $2 million worth of air time on the new service to distribute 'educational and other government programming' to remote communities. However, during the hearing process, the Territory Government changed its mind and instead, offered to buy air time on the new service only if the NTD8 won the license (see below).

An Adequate and Comprehensive Service

Under section 83(6) of the *Broadcasting and Television Act 1942,* the Tribunal was required to award the RCTS licences after testing applications against certain criteria, including :

> Whether [the applicants] have the financial, technical and management capabilities necessary to effectively provide the RCTS ...

Unlike Territory Television's application, CAAMA's rested on weak organisational and financial foundations. CAAMA therefore concentrated on the other significant criterion:

> Whether [the applicants] have the capabilities ... to provide an adequate and comprehensive service ... having regard to: the nature of the community to be served [and] the diversity of interests of that community ... (ABT 1986: 17)

On this criterion, a persuasive case in CAAMA's favour might be constructed. It could argue that the RCTS operator would be obliged to provide an 'adequate and comprehensive' service for the Aboriginal audience, which constituted 38 per cent of the RCTS audience[8]. Not only commercial television fare, but 'culturally appropriate' programming would be needed to take into account the 'nature' and 'interests' of this particular audience. CAAMA would claim that it was the only applicant with the capacity to provide such programming, making two related arguments. First, as an organisation with wide Aboriginal membership, it effectively represented the needs of the Aboriginal viewing audience within the Central RCTS zone, and, as such, had a unique understanding of the 'interests' of this audience. Second, as an organisation 'run for and controlled by Aboriginal people', CAAMA possessed a superior knowledge of the 'nature' of Aboriginal culture. Claiming to be the only applicant capable of producing 'culturally appropriate' programming for the indigenous component of the Central RCTS, CAAMA would point out that Territory Television had failed to meet the second criterion.

While these arguments did not address CAAMA's inadequacies with regard to the first criterion, they created the necessary leverage (and time) to tackle these difficulties at a later point in the licence hearings.

Recruiting a Collective Aboriginal Agency

There were, however, certain problems with the above strategy. Most significantly, CAAMA would have trouble convincing the Tribunal that it 'represented the needs' of the Aboriginal audience throughout the Central RCTS zone, since CAAMA's area of operations extended only to Alice Springs and three outlying communities[9].

Indeed, the Aboriginal population within the Central RCTS zone was so diverse, both linguistically and culturally, that any claim to represent its 'needs' as a singular entity was open to challenge. As indicated in CAAMA's own application, the central transmission zone encompassed almost 200 Aboriginal communities in urban and remote settings, situated within both the semi-arid regions of the south and the tropical rainforests of the north. Further, over thirty Aboriginal languages were spoken in this extensive area. CAAMA had to represent this heterogeneity as a collective entity, that is, to recruit this population, and to be seen to represent it.

Before the licence hearings commenced, CAAMA asked a number of Aboriginal organisations throughout the RCTS zone to join its 'yet to be formed' company, Imparja

Television. Each invitee was offered a single 'A class' share (at one dollar a share) which entitled them to appoint a Director to the Board and cast a single vote at Board meetings. CAAMA would hold the majority of shares and voting rights [10]. Most of the organisations agreed to join Imparja on an 'in principle' basis, depending on the outcome of the hearing.

These organisations included the Central and Northern Land Councils (established in 1977 under the *NT Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976)*, the Pitjatjantjara Council (established under the *Pitjatjantjara Land Rights Act 1981* (SA)), the Kokatha Peoples Committee Inc (based in northern South Australia), Maralinga Tjarutja (a South Australian Aboriginal land trust), the Warlpiri Media Association (based in Yuendumu, Central Australia), the Pukatja Community (the community council of Ernabella, South Australia) and an individual shareholder, Mr.Wes Lanhupuy, representing the Tiwi Land Council, based on Bathurst Island, north of Darwin (also established under the *NT Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976*) (ABT 1986: 23).

The combined membership of these bodies encompassed representatives from almost every Aboriginal community located in the remote regions of the Northern Territory and South Australia [11]. Through these means, CAAMA acquired a certain collective Aboriginality that could be used in the licensing bid, and perhaps convince the ABT that this entity did represent 'the collective will' of the Aboriginal people within the Central RCTS zone. Whatever the case, it would weaken the position of the opposition, Territory Television, who had made no provision for Aboriginal representation within its company (at least in its first attempt at gaining the licence).

An Understanding of Aboriginal Needs and Interests

The first licence hearing was convened by the Tribunal in Alice Springs on the 6th of August, 1985. The three Tribunal members to sit on the hearing were: David Jones (Chairman), Dr. Russell Perry and Julie James-Bailey. Jones had chaired the inquiry into CAAMA's radio broadcasting licence (8KIN FM) in the previous year and was thus well attuned to CAAMA's broad objectives and purpose (see chapter Nine). Perry previously worked in the commercial television industry and had an academic background in science. James-Bailey was an experienced television producer and a former Head of Research at the Australian Film and Television School (Bell 1994). She had published an article in 1981 entitled *The Australian Domestic Satellite System: A National Communications Network or an*

American Broadcasting Takeover? (James-Bailey 1981). In it, she left no doubt about her strong support for locally-produced television and deep concerns over the concentration of media ownership [12].

CAAMA employed a substantial team to put its case to the Tribunal. Legal counsel was led by David Catterns, a Sydney-based barrister (specialising in communications law), assisted by CAAMA's full time solicitor, John Corker. Brian Walsh presented most of the technical and financial evidence and worked with CAAMA staff in coordinating a total of 24 witnesses (ABT 1986: 102). Among these were several prominent non-Aboriginals including Dr Fred Hollows, Dr H.C. 'Nugget' Coombs and the then Minister for Education in the South Australian government, Lynn Arnold (later to become the Premier of that State) [13]. In his opening address to the Tribunal, CAAMA's legal counsel, David Catterns said,

> … it is one of the fundamental premises … that traditional Aboriginal culture has to be respected and enhanced by the RCTS service … This is an obvious imperative for the Aboriginals who live in the service area but it is also an imperative for all Australians because the loss of this cultural richness would be a tragedy for all of us … That's what makes this a particularly important inquiry ….
>
> Our submission will be that an understanding of Aboriginal needs and interests is a prerequisite for the grant of this licence … and the demonstration of that understanding is relevant to the … capabilities in section 83(6) [of the Broadcasting and Television Act]. (ABT 1985/86 2940-1)

An Uneven Performance

Although CAAMA presented a wide range of arguments and evidence during the hearing to support its bid (e.g. on its financial and technical capabilities, etc.), the main thrust of its presentation was to demonstrate, in several ways, 'understanding of Aboriginal needs and interests'.

For example, CAAMA argued that it possessed the 'special managerial expertise' required to operate the Central RCTS service ... Its sensitivity to 'cultural protocols', its 'understanding' of Aboriginal community governance, its knowledge of Aboriginal languages and a host of other skills were essential parts of CAAMA's managerial expertise. Only 'Aboriginal-controlled' bodies possessed these abilities, CAAMA argued, and more importantly, they exercised these abilities with the 'authority' of the Aboriginal community.

Witnesses who substantiated these assertions included Vince Forrester, representing the Combined Aboriginal Organisations of Alice Springs. Forrester described himself as an Aboriginal 'community leader' who had worked in the establishment 'of nearly all the major [Aboriginal] organisations' in the township (ABT 1985/86: 3282). He discussed the functions of these bodies and how they had created a range of 'culturally appropriate' services for Aboriginal people through a long process of opposition and intervention. Yami Lester, representing the Institute for Aboriginal Development, underlined the importance of preserving and maintaining Aboriginal languages, arguing that only 'Aboriginal-controlled' bodies had the ability to undertake this task. Finally, Allan Clements, Director of the Joint Aboriginal Management and Information Service, discussed the 'special needs' of Aboriginal organisations in relation to financial and resource management.

In the course of this presentation, CAAMA's strategy of demonstrating that it had a superior understanding of the 'needs' of the Aboriginal audience appeared to work. Certainly, these witnesses were well aware of the kind of evidence that CAAMA required and were able play their parts very effectively.

However, CAAMA was less persuasive in arguing that satellite-delivered television would have detrimental 'effects' on Aboriginal languages and culture. The witnesses called to substantiate these claims were drawn exclusively from the more remote communities within Central Australia. They spoke their own languages as a mother tongue and although most spoke passable English, a few required the assistance of interpreters. These witnesses could not be relied on to talk about the 'destructive' effects of television on Aboriginal languages, nor did they express a strong desire to resist these pressures. For instance, when Johnny Stuart (Vice-Chairman of the Kokatha People's Committee) was asked to describe the 'effects' that television would have on his people, he said:

> I do not think any affect on our people. It is all over the world that is going to be affected, see. I think it will not affect our people and our country. It is pretty hard for me to explain. I think is okay.... I am just here to give a hand to CAAMA ... I am a bit touchy with these phones - all this here - the microphone I am talking to; talking to you I mean but I really glad to be here - this is all I can say (ABT 1985/86: 3117)

Similarly, when Hughie Windlass from Oak Valley Outstation (in South Australia) was asked if television would have a negative impact on his community, he simply said 'No' and repeated this assertion on several other occasions.

On the other hand, Francis Tjupurrula Kelly, representing the Walpiri Media Association (based in Yuendumu) and Ginger Wikilyiri, representing Ernabella Video and Television (based in Ernabella), gave somewhat stronger performances in support of CAAMA's arguments. The organisations they represented had been offered seats on the Board of Imparja. Moreover, Eric Michaels had worked with Francis Kelly in establishing a 'pirate' TV service at Yuendumu in April 1985, while Rex Guthrie (a former teacher) had helped create a similar facility at Ernabella with the help of local Pitjatjantjara people like Wikilyiri (Michaels 1994, Turner). Needless to say, they were more au fait than Stuart and Windlass with CAAMA's requirements. For example, when Wikilyiri was asked to explain what proportion of programming broadcast in his community was locally-made, he replied, through an interpreter:

> All through the week they show what they make themselves - a few hours of dancing and corroborees and whatever they do, they make themselves. Then they show a movie and then they might show kids' programs … they like to have Pitjatjantjara [local language] programs but then they really want the younger generation, the children, to learn more of the English rather than just Pitjatjantjara … (ABT 1985/86: 3010)

CAAMA called thirteen Aboriginal witnesses before the Tribunal. While the majority competently conveyed the kind of Aboriginalities that CAAMA's arguments presupposed, some appeared to be at odds with such presuppositions. Nevertheless, as Goffman has argued, the success or failure of any social performance depends less on the quality of its actors than on the extent to which the performance will be 'credited or discredited' by its intended audience - in this case, the Tribunal. As Goffman also suggests, an audience may have its own interests in ensuring that a performance 'works' and will therefore ignore its 'flaws' (see Goffman 1959).

A Difficult Decision

CAAMA could not show that it had the 'financial capabilities' to operate the service. It suggested that if it were granted the licence, it would be in a position to acquire the necessary funds to establish the RCTS. Although Brain Walsh presented detailed evidence on this point, Catterns best summed up CAAMA's position when he declared that CAAMA's finances were in the 'chicken and egg' category, and that 'we can only be certain in getting these finances when we have the licence' (ABT 1985/86: 2942).

For the most part, the evidence presented by Territory Television reflected its original intentions of simply running a standard commercial service out of Darwin. It provided a

detailed set of financial projections and operational plans that appeared sufficient to establish the proposed service. Its only real concession to producing programming outside of Darwin was a plan to establish a 'news desk' in Alice Springs, run by a single journalist, who would also double as an advertising salesman (ABT 1986). In marked contrast to CAAMA, it did not present one Aboriginal witness.

Closing the nine-day hearing on the 15th of August, the Chairman of the Tribunal, David Jones, was reported as saying that 'the decision would be one of the most important and difficult the Tribunal has had to make' (*The Centralian Advocate* 1985: 13).

Treasure Hunt

In late November 1985, the Tribunal brought down a 'preliminary' finding not to award the licence to either applicant. CAAMA's general lack of experience in commercial television, combined with the absence of any verifiable finance, meant that its application was

> … high on "theoretical" content and … is therefore notional in many respects. It could be said that the applicant in presenting these notions is asking the Tribunal to take it on trust - that a butterfly in the shape of a practical commercial television service will emerge from the cocoon of a theoretically based application. (ABT 1986:110)

However, the Tribunal was 'impressed' with CAAMA's programming proposals and its 'comprehensive' understanding of the 'diverse' audience needs. It noted that

> 'The ability to travel on Aboriginal land, speak and understand Aboriginal languages, and be respectful of Aboriginal law and etiquette were … necessary qualities in an RCTS licencee … CAAMA has demonstrated that it has all these skills' (ABT 1986: 102).

With regard to Territory Television's application, the Tribunal expressed serious misgivings about 'the manner in which [Territory Television] programming policies were formulated'. It continued:

> … decisions were made in the absence of an adequate knowledge of the service area needs and interests, and …. overlooked the requirements of the substantial … Aboriginal minority … (ABT 1986: 149).

Although Territory Television possessed the financial, managerial and technical capacities to operate the RCTS service, as the Tribunal conceded, it failed to qualify for the licence due to its 'inadequate' programming proposals and its poor understanding of the RCTS audience. In a paper entitled 'Further Issues' (ABT 1985), the Tribunal asked the two

applicants to consider the 'relative merits and disadvantages' of forming a 'consortium' to share the Central RCTS licence. The Tribunal postponed proceedings for six months ...

As Eric Michaels suggested at the time, the Tribunal sent both applicants on a 'treasure hunt': 'CAAMA had to dig up six million dollars', while Territory Television had 'to unearth some Aboriginal content' (pers. comm.). They were also competing over who had a better 'understanding' of the Aboriginal audience. This 'understanding' became a highly prized artefact, the possession of which would ultimately deliver the RCTS licence. It was now up to Territory Television to construct such an artefact and have it tested before the Tribunal.

Imparja's Benefactors

Following this decision, CAAMA organised an intensive round of meetings with several government Ministers and funding bodies. While CAAMA initially had few expectations that it could secure the licence, it now seemed a real possibility. Certainly, the Tribunal's decision had substantially improved CAAMA's prospects of receiving government support.

The first substantial backing for CAAMA's bid came from the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC), a body established by government to fund the development of Aboriginal business enterprises. In late 1985, it promised to provide $1.8m in capital funding, subject to CAAMA winning the licence (ADC 1985). In a subsequent press release, the Chairperson of the ADC, Shirley McPherson, said

> … [the CAAMA service] provides the foundation for developing a total package of remote area communications services - including education, health and welfare services for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians … (ADC 1985)

Not long after this announcement, the South Australian government agreed to guarantee a $1 million renewable loan, subject to the same proviso. Fortuitously, the Australian Bi-Centennial Authority (ABA, established in 1983 to co-ordinate bicentennial celebrations) had set aside substantial funding for 'nationally focused' Aboriginal projects. As CAAMA discovered, the idea of an Aboriginal-owned satellite television service appeared to fit the bill. Following protracted negotiations, the Authority agreed to provide $2.5m to CAAMA, subject to approval by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, then Clyde Holding, and to the granting of the licence [14]. Further, two community radio stations in Canberra and Melbourne (2XX and 3CR) ran a joint telethon, raising over $15,000 to support CAAMA's continuing licence bid.

Hostile Manoeuvres

The second hearing was to be held on the 17th of March 1986, again in Alice Springs. The Chairman of the first hearing, David Jones, had left the Tribunal in the interim and was replaced by Ray Waterson, a former lawyer and lecturer in media law at the University of Newcastle (Bell 1994: 212).

A few days before the hearing was due to commence, the Federal Minister for Communications (Michael Duffy) and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (Clyde Holding) called for a delay in the proceedings. Both Ministers had been attacked in The Senate over their 'handling' of the licensing process. Some government MPs had expressed disquiet at the prospect of a 'taxpayer-funded' commercial TV service (Corker 1986). The Ministers directed CAAMA and Territory Television to discuss sharing the licence, as suggested by the Tribunal. They sent two senior departmental officials to Alice Springs to assist in the negotiations: George Menham (an Assistant Secretary of DAA) and Roger Smith (an Assistant Secretary of DoC).

CAAMA subsequently proposed that a new company be formed to operate the RCTS and that both parties own an equal share (with an annually rotating Chairperson appointed by each organisation respectively). Territory Television rejected this model and instead offered CAAMA a 25% share in Territory Television's majority-owned company, Television Capricornia Pty. Ltd. This in turn was rejected by CAAMA. Following the collapse of negotiations, the second hearings finally opened.

Apart from securing potential funding of $4.3m and a further $1m in guaranteed loans, CAAMA had also sought to bolster its 'capabilities' in the managerial and technical areas. A few months before the second hearing, the Golden West Network (GWN) was asked whether it would assist CAAMA in establishing and operating the Central RCTS.

GWN, based in Bunbury, Western Australia, had been awarded the Western RCTS licence in May 1985 and had experience in the operation of RCTS facilities. CAAMA discussed the mutual benefits of a business partnership with the General Manager of GWN, Paul Bendat. It was agreed that if CAAMA secured the licence, GWN could provide a 'package of services' under contract. While such an arrangement would remain 'flexible', it meant that GWN could possibly provide most if not all of the commercial television programming for

CAAMA's proposed service, they could manage the sale of advertising and assist in the establishment of the technical facilities required to operate the Central RCTS. This would allow CAAMA to devote its main energies to the production of Aboriginal programming. These arrangements would also improve the financial position of CAAMA's service, as it would be sharing operational costs with GWN. In return, GWN would receive either a fee or a proportion of the advertising revenue.

Territory Television had also been working to address issues raised by the Tribunal. In order to develop 'adequate and comprehensive' programming to meet the 'needs' of the Aboriginal audience, it hired the services of an organisation called Remote Area Media, or RAM, based in Darwin. RAM was a private video production company owned and operated by a non-Aboriginal journalist, Matt Peacock (previously employed by the ABC) and his Aboriginal partners, Marie and Richard Bennett (see Corker 1986). RAM was to undertake an extensive 'ascertainment' of Aboriginal programming needs in the Central RCTS and to produce a 'comprehensive' plan for the development of Aboriginal programming for Territory Television. In a closely related move, RAM also formed a company, 'United Australia Television', which took up a 25% share in Territory Television's subsidiary, Television Capricornia Pty. Ltd. (on the same terms and conditions that had been offered to CAAMA). Shares in UAT were to be sold to Aboriginal people only, at $5,000 per share. Marie Bennett and several other Aboriginal people sat on UAT's Board, while Matt Peacock assumed the position of General Manager.

In this way, Territory Television hoped to 'unearth some Aboriginal content'. Aboriginal equity in Television Capricornia could undermine CAAMA's claim to be 'uniquely' placed to produce an 'adequate and comprehensive' service for the Aboriginal population within the RCTS service area.

It became clear during the hearing that RAM had failed to accomplish most of what it had promised Territory Television. Its 'ascertainment' of the Aboriginal audience in the Central RCTS zone had included trying to recruit shareholders to UAT. By the time the hearings opened, RAM had managed to attract only one paid-up shareholder in its company (see Corker 1986).

Perhaps sensing that RAM had failed to deliver what had been required of it, Territory Television made much of the fact that the Northern Territory Government would be purchasing $2 million worth of air time on the new service to distribute programs relevant to the Aboriginal community. NT Government officials presented evidence that this would

be so. Furthermore, the Government stated that it would purchase air time on the RCTS only if Territory Television won the licence (as we have seen, it had previously promised to buy air time regardless of who won).

The second and final hearing into the Central RCTS came to a close on the 21st of March 1986. One of CAAMA's last witnesses, the Minister for Education in the South Australian government, Lynn Arnold, concluded by saying:

> 'It is our view that [CAAMA's application] deserves support from Federal, State and Territory governments as it has the potential to be a national flagship for all Aboriginal people … ' (ABT 1985/6: 9398).

On Balance

In August 1986, twelve months after the Tribunal began its hearings, it decided that both applicants qualified for the licence but, on balance, CAAMA proved to be the better candidate due to its superior programming proposals, particularly in relation to the Aboriginal audience. It stated:

> [CAAMA's] program proposal offers an innovative development in Australian commercial television and is clearly based on the applicant's perception of the needs of the RCTS area .... The program proposal of [Territory Television] changed considerably through the course of the inquiry and its adequacy for the Aboriginal population of the service area is debatable ... on balance the Tribunal concludes that [CAAMA's] programming proposals will provide a more adequate and comprehensive service than those of [Territory Television]. (ABT 1986:152-153)

CAAMA's strategy had worked. Its argument that the grant of the Central RCTS licence depended on an 'understanding of Aboriginal needs and interests' (as stated at the outset of the hearings) had been accepted by the Tribunal. Indeed, the force of this argument had overcome all obstacles: CAAMA's complete lack of finance, the absence of any experience in television, and even Territory Television's belated attempt to rival CAAMA's claims to an 'understanding' of these 'needs and interests'.

It is also clear that the governmental machinery surrounding the licensing process itself gave this argument the power it eventually assumed. The Tribunal 's decision to delay proceedings for six months not only gave CAAMA the time to find the missing finance, but also to put pressure on the Federal Government to comply with its own policies of Aboriginal self-determination and fund an 'Aboriginal-controlled' television service.

More importantly, CAAMA's ability to demonstrate its 'understanding' of the Aboriginal audience - through the construction of an Aboriginality acceptable to both the Tribunal and government - was, I will argue, the linchpin in its success. As we shall see, however, there was little connection between this 'understanding' and the service that Imparja Television eventually delivered.

Final Assault

The Tribunal 's decision produced a near hysterical response from the Northern Territory Government. The then Chief Minister of the NT, Ian Tuxworth, said in the NT Legislative Assembly

> ... I do not accept the [Tribunal's] decision, and I can speak for another 100,000 Territorians who think this is a joke. The Tribunal has made a fool of itself ... To be giving a television signal that covers one-third of the Australian continent to a group in the community that is incapable, incompetent and unfinancial, is madness.'
> (NTLA Hansard 1986: 609 - 611)

The response from the Federal Labor government was, of course, very different. The Minster for Aboriginal Affairs, Clyde Holding, said in a subsequent press release that:

> … the Tribunal has recognised CAAMA's special relationship with and knowledge of … the needs of the Aboriginal people in the Central zone … more than 30 per cent of the population in the service area is Aboriginal and the Tribunal concluded that these people have special … needs … (DAA 1986)

But this was not the end of the matter. In September 1986, the N.T. Government and Territory Television launched a joint appeal in the Federal Court to overturn the Tribunal's decision. Using the administrative appeals provision in the Broadcasting Act, it argued that the Tribunal had erred in its interpretation of the criteria for assessing the applicants. The appeal was subsequently rejected by Justice Wilcox in a fifty-page decision issued in December 1986 [15]. He also ordered Territory Television to pay all costs. Nonetheless, the N.T. Government and Territory Television issued a fresh appeal to the Full Bench of the Federal Court in February 1987, to be heard in late April that year.

At this point, something entirely unforeseen occurred. A few weeks after the lodgment of the new appeal, Kerry Packer's company, Australian Consolidated Press, bought a controlling interest in Territory Television and became the operator of its television service in Darwin, NTD8.

In early April, a legal team representing Packer flew to Alice Springs to hold discussions with CAAMA. It proposed to call off the appeal if CAAMA agreed to enter into a 'service agreement' with Territory Television, similar to the one offered by GWN. CAAMA declined to discuss any such arrangements until after the appeal.

Two days before the Full Bench appeal was to commence, Territory Television and the NT Government withdrew their joint action (Corker 1986). In the absence of any further impediments, CAAMA had finally won the right to distribute Aboriginal television programming via AUSSAT.

In the second half of this chapter, I will briefly examine Imparja's first few years. As we shall see, differences began to emerge within CAAMA over how Imparja was to meet its largely unprofitable obligations to the Aboriginal audience, while remaining commercially viable.

The Imparja Implementation Taskforce

The CAAMA Governing Committee had overseen the CAAMA staff and its consultants during the licence bid, endorsing staff decisions and thus authorising them to act on behalf of the Aboriginal community (see chapter Three on the issue of 'authorisation'). This began to change after the Tribunal issued the RCTS licence in January 1987. Imparja Television Pty. Ltd. was also officially incorporated and an inaugural Board meeting was held with representatives of all the shareholders Although the CAAMA Governing Committee controlled the majority of shares in Imparja, the Imparja Board began to take on a separate identity and to take over direct responsibility for overseeing Imparja.

An 'Imparja Implementation Taskforce' was also created [16]. The group mostly consisted of the CAAMA staff and consultants who had worked on the licence application, including Brian Walsh (Project Manager), Freda Glynn, John Corker and myself. Two new recruits, Andrea Philipp (television producer) and Dion Weston (broadcast technician) were also hired.

Initially, CAAMA had until mid-1987 to have the service up and running, but this was later extended by the Tribunal to early 1988 [17]. In other words, the Taskforce was given a little over twelve months to put Imparja on air. Regardless of what CAAMA had presented to the Tribunal, Imparja's development was still open to discussion. It was one thing to construct

what Walsh had described as a 'design model' for Imparja within the rarefied context of the Tribunal hearings, but quite another to implement this model.

One option, canvassed in the first hearings, was to recruit professional staff with expertise in commercial television and build the station on a 'stand alone' basis. An alternative option was to form a partnership with an existing television company to assist in the development and perhaps the long-term operation of Imparja. The Taskforce was divided over which option to take.

Freda Glynn and I preferred the second option - an agreement with GWN - believing that it would allow CAAMA to achieve its original objectives more effectively. With a large proportion of the commercial and technical components of Imparja contracted out to GWN, Imparja could commit the bulk of its resources to the production of Aboriginal programming. The audience would receive a standard regional commercial TV service - provided largely through GWN - but with regular Aboriginal programming inserted at various times throughout the viewing week, as described in CAAMA's original application. This would also have commercial advantages for both GWN and Imparja: the viewers in both zones could be sold as a single, aggregated market, making it more attractive to advertisers.

We wanted CAAMA to remain faithful to its original intention of producing and distributing Aboriginal programming via AUSSAT. We thought that it would be worth exchanging a measure of control over the commercial satellite service in return for open access to this service and a good percentage of the profits. CAAMA had never intended to become a commercial television operator. It seemed to us that the most important point about CAAMA's licence win was not that it gave CAAMA the right to establish a commercial business, but that it put CAAMA in a commanding position in determining the basis upon which it would access AUSSAT. These and other arguments were subject to exhaustive debate within the Taskforce, before we agreed that a joint-operation approach, or something similar, should be adopted.

Up until mid-1987, Brian Walsh, as the Consultant Project Manager within the Taskforce, had played a significant role in coordinating the project. Walsh was based primarily in Melbourne, travelling to Alice Springs as the need arose. As the launch date for Imparja drew closer, Glynn and I felt that Walsh should become a full-time member of staff at CAAMA and thus direct his entire energies to the project, on site. He declined to take up this

proposal, although he continued to provide consultancy services to CAAMA until June 1987.

As an interim measure, the Taskforce's Technical Development Officer, Dion Weston, was appointed to the position of Project Manager. Weston had previously worked as a broadcast technician in public radio and had overseen the installation of CAAMA's radio network in 1985 [18]. He had shown himself to be a competent and energetic individual who had quickly familiarised himself with the complexities associated with satellite communications technology. It appeared that Weston had the capacity at least to maintain the momentum of the project until a suitable person with more experience in television could be found. Weston, a few months after his appointment as Project Manager, began to dispute with other members of the Taskforce (including Freda Glynn and myself) over the way in which Imparja was to be established. The outcome of this dispute determined the current status of the station.

An Impasse

After investigating the technical feasibility of a joint arrangement with GWN, Weston concluded that a 'stand alone' approach was more appropriate [19]. This was due in part to the technical problems associated with uplinking the service from GWN's base in Western Australia [20]. However, Walsh had previously argued that these technical problems could be solved without great difficulty [21]. Others made the point that the Tribunal had looked favourably on an agreement between GWN and Imparja [22].
To resolve this impasse, a special meeting of the Imparja Board was convened at the end of June 1987. It was around this time that the Imparja Board began to play a more active role in the development of Imparja.

With Freda Glynn as acting Chairperson of the Imparja Board (and thus maintaining her impartiality), it was left to Walsh (still in the position of consultant) and myself to present the arguments for a joint arrangement [23]. Walsh suggested that any arrangement with another company could remain flexible enough to accommodate future changes including a 'stand alone' approach.

Weston began his presentation by discussing the technical problems that Imparja would encounter in working with another television operator. However, the main thrust of his argument was that CAAMA should not trade off any part of its licence to an outside

company since it ran counter to the general philosophy of Aboriginal self-determination [24]. He underlined the fact that throughout the licence hearing, CAAMA and its witnesses had consistently maintained the need for 'Aboriginal control' of the RCTS service. Now that CAAMA had won this 'control', Weston argued, it should not be 'lost'. He acknowledged that the 'stand alone' approach would oblige Imparja to become commercially viable for its long-term survival. In concluding, he called on the members of the Imparja Board to 'keep Imparja Aboriginal-owned' [25].

By linking notions of Aboriginal self-determination to the argument for a 'stand alone' approach, Weston made his position almost invulnerable to criticism (at least within the context of the Board meeting). Any deal with a non-Aboriginal television company, according to his arguments, would undermine the principle that had informed much of the evidence presented by CAAMA at the licence hearing.

Board members representing the Central and Northern Land Councils [26] were particularly supportive of Weston's arguments and voiced their steadfast opposition to any dilution of Imparja's control over the RCTS service. Perhaps because of the powerful influence that the Land Councils exercised within the wider Aboriginal community, these two members persuaded the Board to abandon any joint arrangement with another company and to establish Imparja on an independent basis. Moreover, while the Board agreed that Imparja would need to produce some level of Aboriginal programming, it nevertheless proposed that Imparja's commercial solvency had priority. Although there were a few dissenting voices, these measures were put to the vote and adopted as Board policy.

This decision disappointed Glynn and myself. Establishing Imparja on a 'stand alone' basis, we continued to believe, would make it more difficult for Imparja to meet its obligations to the Aboriginal audience. It seemed to us that most of the station's operational and capital resources would now be devoted to running a commercial business.

Imparja Goes to Air

During the latter half of 1987, the Taskforce, led primarily by Dion Weston, devoted considerable energy to the arduous task of establishing Imparja from scratch. This included the location of a studio and office complex, the installation of a satellite uplink dish, the purchase of commercial television programming, the installation of transmission and production equipment and a range of other tasks. By the end of the year, Imparja had a staff

of 28, drawn primarily from existing regional commercial services. All were non-Aboriginal except for two secretaries [27]. Furthermore, the Imparja Board decided to appoint Weston to the position of Station Manager.

On the 15th of January, 1988, Imparja Television went to air. Charles Perkins, then Head of DAA, officially launched the station from its studio complex in Alice Springs before a crowd of 500 guests. In a subsequent press interview, Freda Glynn said 'After all the hard work, this is a proud moment for our mob' (*The Centralian Advocate* 15.1.88). A representative of the Australian Bicentennial Authority, Philip Morrissey, declared that 'Imparja will preserve Aboriginal culture … and create self-awareness and pride' (*The Centralian Advocate* 20.1.88).

The first few hours of transmission were devoted to Aboriginal programming and included Aboriginal music segments, a documentary on the history of CAAMA and Imparja and other material (Brands 1988;1). However, over the following eighteen months, serious internal differences emerged between Imparja's Board and management. I will now focus on the issue of Aboriginal programming and its production, where the conflict between commercial necessity and social obligation came to a head.

Aboriginal Programming

Although most of Imparja's capital funds had been spent on transmission equipment, a large studio was also built [28] for the production of commercial material (local advertisements and other promotional segments) and Aboriginal programming, as agreed by the Board. However, because Imparja was exclusively committed to running a business, the responsibility for actually producing the Aboriginal programming fell to CAAMA's Video Unit.

The Video Unit had been established in 1984 to train Aboriginal people and produce video material relevant to the Aboriginal community. By 1988, the majority of staff in the Unit were Aboriginal and over the previous years they had gained substantial experience in a wide range of production work. The Unit was also staffed by several non-Aboriginal television producers [29].

At the time of Imparja's launch, the resources available to the Unit were not adequate to meet both its existing commitments and the production of weekly Aboriginal programming on Imparja. It would need to use the new studios and production equipment at Imparja.

To complicate this station, the Unit was co-located at CAAMA's radio broadcasting site, a few kilometers away from the Imparja studios (Imparja's facilities were not large enough to accommodate the Unit). In an attempt to remedy some of these problems, limited funds were sought and acquired from DAA, while a contribution from Imparja's advertising income was diverted to the Unit.

During the first eighteen months of Imparja's on-air operations, the CAAMA Video Unit managed to produce a substantial amount of programming. This consisted of two separate weekly half-hour programs: *Urrpeye* ('Messenger') and *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* ('Ours').

Urrpeye was a current affairs show presented in English. It featured news and information relating to the Aboriginal community as well as interviews and debates on topical subjects. *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* was presented in the three primary Aboriginal languages of Central Australia and focused on news and events in the Aboriginal communities of the RCTS zone. It also provided a translation of the week's main news items. Apart from these programs, the Unit produced a number of short community service segments on Aboriginal health, welfare services, legal aid, nutrition, child care and the problems of alcohol abuse (CAAMA:1989). The half-hour programs were broadcast on Tuesday and Thursday nights at 7.30 pm, while the short segments were distributed throughout Imparja's general programs. Despite some initial setbacks and limited resources, the Video Unit steadily streamlined its production techniques and developed a reasonably efficient production routine. However, serious problems began to emerge relating to the use of Imparja's studios.

Social Obligation *Versus* Commercial Necessity

By late 1988, Imparja was attracting a substantial amount of commercial production work from local retailers, tour operators, real estate agents and other paying customers who all wanted advertisements made to promote their businesses on Imparja's new service. Aboriginal programming vying for the same production facilities began to retard the expansion of this lucrative work. Imparja's management gave the commercial work priority over the Video Unit, in accordance with Board policy, so that the Unit had steadily decreasing time to produce its Aboriginal programming. By mid 1989, the Unit staff were working late at night or, more often, into the early hours of the morning, since all other available time in the studios had been taken up with commercial work. On some occasions, the studios were booked out completely.

This antagonised not only the Video Unit staff, but also some members of the Imparja Board. Glynn and I believed that management had to allocate the production facilities so as to strike a balance between Imparja's commercial priorities and its obligations to the Aboriginal audience.

The Imparja Board hotly debated this issue [30]. Those members promoting the commercial viability of Imparja made the undeniable point that Aboriginal programming was not only expensive to produce, but made little if any income for the station [31]. They proposed that once Imparja had begun to return a profit, it could then concentrate its efforts on the further development of such programming.

Not surprisingly, those on the other side of the debate argued that the primary reason for establishing Imparja had been to provide the large Aboriginal audience within the Central RCTS zone with relevant television programming. To deploy most of Imparja's facilities in the production of commercial material for non-Aboriginal businesses was, for them, unacceptable. In the main, the representatives of the larger, town-based Aboriginal bodies favoured the commercial viability approach, while the representatives from the remote Aboriginal communities argued for an expansion of Aboriginal programming and, therefore, greater access to the production studios for the Video Unit. Ultimately, the former group prevailed, and the Board reaffirmed its earlier policy of making Imparja commercially viable as a first priority. In other words, there would be no alteration to the management of Imparja's facilities.

Predictably, this decision had an extremely demoralising effect on the Video Unit staff and several resigned. Neither Glynn nor I felt that we could direct the remaining Video Unit staff to work under what were almost impossible conditions. In an attempt to improve these circumstances, the output of the Unit was drastically reduced. *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* - the most time-consuming program to produce - was dropped from Imparja's schedule. Although the current affairs program *Urrpeye* continued to go to air for a longer period, this too was eventually discontinued. By 1990, the Unit had returned to its original focus on training and the production work unrelated to Imparja [32]. Imparja, of course, continued to devote its production resources to commercial work.

Had the Board chosen to form a partnership with an established commercial television company, it seems certain that the bulk of Imparja's production resources could have been devoted to making Aboriginal programming. Indeed, most of the commercial production

work (advertisements) could have been undertaken by the commercial partner. Many other operational costs could have also been shared. Nonetheless, whether such a partnership would have worked effectively in the long run is difficult to determine. No doubt it would have faced certain difficulties. Whatever the case, in deciding to establish Imparja on a 'stand alone' basis, the primary focus of the organisation shifted towards commercial viability and away from social obligation. As a result, the operations and internal economics of Imaprja became fixed around commercial imperatives and any later moves towards the production of Aboriginal programming were perhaps made structurally difficult. In fact, by 1996 Imparja was making a reasonably good profit [33]. Yet it did not re-direct these financial resources to the development of Aboriginal programming. Rather, they were used to expand Imparja's service area to acquire a larger commercial market [34].

Terminations

Except for this relatively brief period in the early stages of the station's development (from 1988 to1990), Imparja has thus far failed to broadcast any regular programs for its Aboriginal audience. In fact, for most of its broadcasting life, it has delivered a service almost identical to that proposed by Territory Television. Moreover, while the Tribunal had stated that the 'successful applicant [Imparja] should … actively co-operate with Aboriginal communities interested in retaining control over an "imported" service, both in the establishment and operation of the RCTS' (ABT 1986: 173), this has not occurred.

The demise of Imparja's Aboriginal programming and a number of other related issues eventually brought Glynn and myself into direct confrontation not only with the management and Board of Imparja, but with our formal employers, the CAAMA Governing Committee. Ultimately, our position became untenable and we both resigned in 1991.

A few weeks before our departure, a visiting student from Nigeria came to Alice Springs to inspect Imparja. He had learnt that it was the only Aboriginal-owned television station in Australia, and that the Federal Government had given local Aboriginal people more than $10 million to establish and run the service since its inception. He was of course keen to see how it worked and in what ways it differed from mainstream television. He was somewhat perplexed to discover that the station employed only four Aboriginal people out of a total staff of 32, and that Imparja's programming line-up contained little, if any, Aboriginal programming [35].

Conclusion

As we have seen, CAAMA succeeded in winning the RCTS licence by demonstrating that it possessed a superior 'understanding' of the Aboriginal audience within the RCTS zone and was therefore better equipped to provide it with an 'adequate and comprehensive' service. In order to demonstrate this 'understanding', I have argued that CAAMA was obliged to stage a certain kind of 'Aboriginality' during the licence hearings (as was the other applicant), which the Tribunal could examine in order to make a judgment about this 'understanding'. I have further argued that the Tribunal's subsequent endorsement of this Aboriginality was the lynchpin in CAAMA's success.

Yet, if this Aboriginality was so effective in winning the licence, why did it fail to ignite the development of 'culturally appropriate' programming for Imparja's Aboriginal audience? More specifically, why were the formal agents of this Aboriginality - the Aboriginal members of the Imparja Board - unable or unwilling to transform it into programs for Aboriginals (even after Imparja became profitable)? Was this Aboriginality simply a sham and its 'cultural and political' attributes deliberately fabricated by CAAMA to win the licence? Indeed, was Eric Michaels right to suggest that CAAMA's presentation entailed a 'false ... ascription' of 'traditional' Aboriginal culture?

To speak about 'fabricated' or 'false' ethnicities implies that there are 'genuine' or 'pure' ethnicities that can be uncovered if we look hard enough, or use the 'correct' criteria, as Michaels seemed to suggest. Nonetheless, as argued in the introduction of this chapter, ethnicities are not rigid formations fixed in essentialised social spaces that can be isolated and precisely quantified according to a set of pre-ordained principles. On the contrary, they emerge in specific historical and institutional sites, delineated by particular modes of power and are produced discursively. In other words, an ethnicity may acquire its shape and form in accordance with the way in which it is used in a given context, as indeed occurred during the Tribunal hearings.

Therefore, it was not a matter of CAAMA presenting either 'fake' or 'genuine' notions about Aboriginal people before the Tribunal. Rather, I will argue that it was more a case of CAAMA, the Tribunal and CAAMA's government funding bodies, all acting in accordance with a commonly accepted 'understanding' of a particular kind of Aboriginal ethnicity (at least 'common' to these parties). As we have seen, this Aboriginality certainly acquired a high

level of currency within the specific site of the Tribunal hearings. Indeed, it was powerful enough to propel CAAMA's bid from a hopeless beginning to a highly successful conclusion. What interests me here is not whether this Aboriginality was 'genuine' or 'false', but how it assumed such power.

As argued throughout this thesis, the source of this particular kind of Aboriginality and its power can be found, primarily, in the state's attempts to govern the Aboriginal population through the policies of Aboriginal self-determination, and the extensive governmental machinery that grew around these policies. While there are innumerable variations on this Aboriginality, my concern has been with the development of Aboriginal broadcasting under these policies and how it precipitated the formation of related forms of Aboriginal ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

When the Federal Government began to discuss Aboriginal broadcasting in 1970, there was no expectation that Aboriginal people would run these services themselves - nor that such facilities would play a role in 'maintaining Aboriginal culture'. Broadcasting was seen as a tool for 'informing' Aboriginals about 'plans for their future advancement' [1]. Fifteen years later, the state was funding 'Aboriginal-controlled' media organisations throughout the country in order 'to restore and rebuild' Aboriginal 'cultural identity' [2]. It was also preparing to underwrite the launch of an Aboriginal-owned commercial satellite service covering a third of the Australia continent. What had led to this remarkable change in government thinking?

In this thesis, I have not sought to construct a 'resistant' Aboriginal 'voice', struggling against 'the media establishment and the state' to explain these transformations. Although such a voice routinely appears in the literature on Aboriginal broadcasting, I have argued that this approach simply replicates the rhetoric surrounding the state's own policies of 'Aboriginal self-determination' and, more problematically, masks the complex operations of government itself. It also assumes the pre-discursive existence of a particular kind of Aboriginal agency, without giving adequate consideration to the specific conditions that gave rise to it.

My aim has been to understand the nature of this agency and the extent to which it was constituted through the technologies of government. Here of course, I have focused on the emergence of Aboriginal broadcasting in Central Australia in examining this constitutive process. In other words, I have sought to uncover the linkages between the formation of Aboriginal subjectivity and the operations of the state.

In taking this approach, I have adopted one of Michel Foucault's primary objectives, that is, to examine the ways in which the human subject is constituted through relations of power, and have attempted to respond to the following set of queries he poses:

> How was the subject established, at different moments and in different institutional contexts, as a possible, desirable, or even indispensable object of knowledge? How were the experiences that one may have of oneself and the knowledge that one forms of oneself organised according to certain schemes? How were these schemes defined, valorised, recommended, imposed? (Foucault 2000: 87)

Towards the Government of Aboriginal Difference

As shown in Part One, the 'different institutional contexts' in which the subject of Aboriginal self-determination was 'established' - or at least had its early beginnings - can be traced to the early 1960's. Here, a new kind of governmental knowledge about Aboriginals began to emerge that eventually produced a radical reconstitution of the Aboriginal subject within the mechanisms of government.

From 1953 to 1964 the *Welfare Ordinance (NT)* gave the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration substantial powers over Aboriginals. Under its provisions, the majority of Aboriginal people in the Territory were denied citizenship rights and consigned to the status of 'state wards'. Only after 'attaining' the cultural and social 'attributes' of 'all other Australians' would they be granted such rights (see Hasluck 1988). Here, 'cultural difference' was used as an administrative technique to generally discipline the Aboriginal population. However, throughout the 1960's this restrictive regime began to unravel.

The *Welfare Ordinance* regulations were not only difficult to administer but were seen as unjust. Its anomalies were made particularly apparent when the celebrated artist, Albert Namatjira, was caught up in its contradictory regulations in the late 1950's. Although an Australian citizen, Namatjira was charged with 'supplying alcohol' to his relatives and detained for six months on a remote community, dying shortly afterwards. Given his national profile, his death received wide coverage in the press (see Batty 1976). The Ordinance was further eroded in 1962 when the federal government introduced voting rights for Aboriginals. This had the effect of making the *Welfare Ordinance* all but redundant, since 'wards of the state' were defined as 'those persons not entitled to vote' (see Donovan 1988). Moreover, it seemed that many Aboriginal people wished to retain aspects of their own cultural traditions, despite the pressure to 'assimilate'. As a result of these pressures, the Northern Territory Legislative Council was compelled to overturn the *Welfare Ordinance* in 1964.

But there were other factors that forced the pace of change. Following the 1967 referendum, the Federal government was encouraged to consider national indigenous policies for the first time. Moreover, the emergence of movements for national independence throughout the third world in the 1950's and 60's had the effect of generating greater international awareness of the restrictive policies imposed upon Aboriginals by Australian governments, particularly in forums such as the United Nations.

By the end of the 1960's, Aboriginal people could no longer have their citizenship rights withheld because they were culturally different. Nonetheless, the 'problem' of 'Aboriginal difference' remained a central preoccupation of government. Aboriginals not only required 'special' welfare assistance - especially in remote communities - but it became increasingly apparent that their status as an indigenous people perhaps entitled them to 'special rights' beyond the rights of ordinary citizenship - particularly with regard to the return of traditional lands.

If the elimination of Aboriginal difference was no longer an option, then the state would need to find ways of accommodating - and indeed 'recognising' - this difference in any future policy. This also implied that Aboriginal people themselves would have to play a role in their own governance. Surely, only Aboriginals could determine the parameters of their own difference. It was at this juncture that a shift in the governmental constitution of the Aboriginal subject began to occur.

The Aboriginal Self and the State

With the election of the Labor Whitlam government in 1972, this new direction in Aboriginal policy was taken to its logical conclusion. The Aboriginal 'self' would be elevated to the centre of its own government under Labor's policy of 'Aboriginal self-determination'.

In accordance with this approach, the state would no longer act directly on Aboriginals as it had in the past, rather, they would be invited to act on themselves in managing programs proffered by the state. Through these means, the Aboriginal self became a vital element in the operations of government. However, since this self would now be expected to carry out the work of the state, it also became the object of intense scrutiny.

A multiplicity of governmental technologies subsequently emerged that served to regulate the Aboriginal self, albeit at an appropriate distance from the state. Such technologies encompassed a complex assemblage of legal, institutional, legislative and administrative instrumentalities that were implemented throughout the 1970's under both the Labor and the Fraser Coalition governments. In this study I have focused primarily on the development of the 'incorporated Aboriginal association' or, less formally, the 'Aboriginal community-controlled organisation'. Such bodies not only grew to become one of the primary institutional technologies of Aboriginal governance, but facilitated the birth of CAAMA and hence the development of Aboriginal broadcasting.

Incorporating Aboriginal Subjectivity

The Aboriginal association largely originated in the work of the policy intellectual Charles Rowley, who proposed their establishment in response to the failures of assimilation at the end of the 1960's. Rowley believed that Aboriginal self-governance and the state governance of Aboriginals might be more effectively linked within these associations (see Rowley 1972c). His proposals were later taken up by 'Nugget' Coombs, who- as a member the Council for Aboriginal Affairs - had a significant influence on the Whitlam Labor government. According to Coombs, Labor 'seized' on the idea of the incorporated Aboriginal association because they provided what Whitlam thought was an ideal vehicle for 'carrying out the policies decided upon by my government' (Whitlam 1973). It was the Fraser government however that formally enabled Aboriginals to form themselves into the kind of associations envisaged by Rowley when it passed the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976.*

The Act was unique in Australian legislative history: it stipulated that only 'members of the Aboriginal race of Australia' could become members of associations formed under its provisions. Yet it made no attempt to define this 'race', nor did it point to any specific cultural or biological attributes that might make a person 'Aboriginal'. Nonetheless, by remaining silent on such a pivotal issue, it only served to make the question of Aboriginal identity the object of a far more intensive process of verification and contestation, not so much within government, but in the broader social polity, particularly within the Aboriginal community itself. In this way, the state was not only able to sidestep the dangers associated with strict racial categorisation, but more importantly, it could distance itself from its role in constituting a calculable and governable Aboriginal identity. As O'Malley has proposed in relation to the policies of Aboriginal self-determination :

> ... liberalism is attracted to technologies of rule which distance the process of regulation from the forms or images of coercion ... Thus one of the particular attractions of the language of 'community' in advanced liberalism is precisely that it locates rule in the everyday, voluntary interaction or commonalties of interest of private individuals ... (O'Malley 1996: 313)

By encouraging Aboriginal people to fix or make calculable their identity, the state not only began to play a role - if indirectly - in attempting to determine the outlines of such identity, it also established a powerful link between itself and its production, more so because of the invisibility of its involvement. As Foucault has suggested:

215

> ... power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms. (Foucault 1990:86)

These legislative and administrative procedures therefore helped fuel a powerful normative process that sought to locate, identify and construct what Hall has termed 'markings of difference and exclusion' (Hall 1996: 4). Here Aboriginal people would be impelled to act on their individual and collective selves in order to construct 'cultural attributes' which would not only render them recognisable within the law, but amenable to governmental administration.

Thus, in restoring to Aboriginal people 'their lost power of self-determination', the state gave Aboriginals - through these institutions and other technologies - a regulated freedom, to be determined by 'the rationalities of accountability' and 'markings of difference and exclusion'. At the same time, it created an institutional framework through which it could constitute a competent and verifiable Aboriginal agency. Here, the state necessarily began to play a burgeoning role in both reifying and giving legitimacy to this agency and, therefore, shaping Aboriginal subjectivity.

It was not however simply a matter of 'forcing' Aboriginals to respond positively to the state's demand for such agency. It was only through a gradual process of trial and error that these associations - and other governmental technologies - solicited a degree of Aboriginal participation and become established sites of Aboriginal governance. Moreover, the governmental technologies developed to accomplish specific projects were not always immediately successful. As I have shown in Part Two, this was particularly the case with the development of Aboriginal broadcasting.

A Convergence of Governmental Ambitions

From 1970 through to 1978, successive federal governments attempted to establish broadcasting services for Aboriginal people, primarily in northern Australia. Despite the implementation of numerous feasibility studies, special reports and at least one 'pilot program', these efforts encountered persistent setbacks and were eventually left in abeyance. Nonetheless, these protected deliberations - involving several government departments as well as the Australian Broadcasting Commission - generated an expectation that such an agency would eventually arise. This also began to create the need - and therefore the conditions - for the formation of such agency.

During the period in which the government had attempted to establish these services, an expansive administrative network rapidly emerged to support the policies and practices of Aboriginal self-determination. Indeed, in the four years between 1972 and 1976, Commonwealth expenditure in Aboriginal Affairs increased from $29 million to $186 million (see Altman & Sanders 1991).This inaugurated an intense governmentalisation of the Aboriginal population, particularly in the Northern Territory. It was perhaps in Central Australia where these administrative techniques, designed to facilitate the production of a 'self-determining' Aboriginal agency, were applied with the most vigor. Here, a unique kind of political and social environment arose as a direct result of this process. By 1979 it had grown into an extensive mix of Aboriginal organisations, government departments, welfare agencies and a substantial workforce that together constituted the largest single employment sector in the township (see Crough, Howitt and Pritchard 1989).

It was within this 'administrative culture' that an Aboriginal agency capable of developing an Aboriginal broadcasting service finally emerged. In other words, a powerful congruency was established between the government's long-term plans to create such services and the state's far broader project of Aboriginal self-determination.

Performances

In examining the nature of this administrative culture - and the extent to which it facilitated the formation of such agency - I have focused on the partnerships that emerged between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people involved in the development of Aboriginal organisations in Central Australia. These black-white teams worked as significant sites of cultural and administrative mediation, both delineating and channeling the aspirations of Aboriginal people and government. As such, they helped generate various forms of Aboriginal agency capable of operationalising the policies of Aboriginal self-determination in this and other regions. In analysing these partnerships, aspects of Erving Goffman's work was employed.

Along with Foucault, Goffman subscribed to the view that the 'self' is a social product that 'occurs within the confines of an institutional system, whether a social establishment or a complex of personal and professional relationships' and that 'this special kind of institutional arrangement does not so much support the self as constitute it' (Goffman 1961:168). He further proposed that the self is produced through 'performances' which are

217

'staged' by individuals in a given social situation and that 'the crucial concern is whether the [performance] will be credited or discredited' (Goffman 1959: 252-3). For the most part, these social 'performances' involve the cooperation of 'teams' who work together to orchestrate 'impressions' which are presented to a specific 'audience' within a given social situation.

As shown in chapters Five and Seven, the 'correct staging' of 'performances' by these black-white teams was of fundamental importance in achieving their various objectives. Here, the construction of differing representations of the 'Aboriginal community', of 'Aboriginal self-determination' and the 'Aboriginal self' occurred as a matter of course. Moreover, the 'impressions' these performances conveyed were devised in a strategic manner to meet the expectations of various audiences including government agencies, Aboriginal organisations, community gatherings, etc. Nonetheless, while the audiences may have varied, the performances themselves were largely delineated by the requirements of the policies of Aboriginal self-determination. Here, the performers were obliged to present 'selective' representations of Aboriginal culture and identity in order to fulfill what O'Malley has described as the 'administratively desired effects' of governmental rule (O'Malley 1996: 317).

In other words, although the policies of Aboriginal self-determination were grounded in essentialist notions of the Aboriginal subject, they were in fact implicated in the formation of such subjects. As with all forms of governmental policy, linkages emerged between the practices of government and the formation of differing forms of Aboriginal subjectivity, or as Shore & Wright have noted, 'policy increasingly shapes the way individuals construct themselves as subjects' (Shore & Wright 1997: 35).

Governing Difference

Nonetheless, the way in which the policies of Aboriginal self-determination have shaped its Aboriginal subjects has proved to be a somewhat restrictive process. This is perhaps the inevitable outcome of any attempt to govern a community that is deemed to be 'culturally different'. Not only will these governmental processes tend to overlook internal differentiation, they will also valorise specific 'attributes' deemed to form the 'common' basis of that 'community'. Moreover, because these 'attributes' will be shaped directly or indirectly by a variable mix of governmental aims, they will also tend to lack any long-term

consistency and, in certain contexts, seem mutually exclusive. This is due to the fact that such 'objectives' will be subject to changing policy prescriptions and conflicting political aims, which in turn lead to anomalous outcomes at a programmatic level.

During the era of Aboriginal self-determination, the state has sought to constitute a range of differing and sometimes contradictory Aboriginal subjects. This has included the 'administratively competent' Aboriginal subject (ruled by accountability), the culturally authentic subject (ruled by 'traditional custom'), the 'resistant' subject (ruled by freedom) and a number of other subjectivities that interact and overlap in various ways. In other words, these governmental processes have produced a range of Aboriginalities that might be adopted or disdained by their intended recipients.

As shown in this thesis, the emergence of Aboriginal broadcasting in Central Australia can, in many respects, be attributed to the emergence of these differing Aboriginalities. For example, the government had always insisted that Aboriginal broadcasting should be established in regions where 'traditional' Aboriginal languages 'were still spoken' [3]. Here, the state's 'culturally authentic Aboriginal subject' established a foundation for the development of CAAMA. On other occasions, CAAMA deliberately exploited these various Aboriginalities to achieve its objectives. This was particularly the case with regard to the campaign to win the Central RCTS licence where the 'resistant' Aboriginal subject played a key role. As argued throughout this thesis, the source of these kinds of Aboriginalities- and their power - can be found in the state's attempts to govern Aboriginal cultural difference.

As stated at the outset, I have not sought to demonstrate whether the policies of Aboriginal self-determination have or have not achieved their apparent objectives. Nor have I sought to mount a case about how these policies should work, or how they might work. Rather, I have attempted to understand how they work in practice. In other words, the primary aim was to understand how such policies work as a technology of governance and, moreover, how this produces 'culturally different' subjectivities. Nonetheless, if this work contributes in some way to a fundamental revaluation of these governmental practices, so much the better.

Introduction

1. CAAMA Governing Committee minutes 22 February, 1980

2. In 1963, Hasluck provided the following definition of the assimilationist policy:

> The policy of assimilation means that all Aborigines and part-Aborigines will attain the same manner of living as other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes, loyalties as other Australians. Any special measures taken for Aborigines or part-Aborigines are regarded as temporary measures, not based on race, but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to protect them from any ill effects of sudden change and to assist them to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their social, economic, and political advancement. (Hasluck 1988: 93)

3. Both Aboriginal people and government often refer to 'Aboriginal community-controlled organisations'. For example, the representative body entitled the 'National Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisations' (NACCHO) encompasses over 100 Aboriginal community health bodies throughout Australia.

4. Nick Mansfield provides the following useful outline of the term 'subjectivity', to which I generally adhere:

> 'Subjectivity' refers … to an abstract or general principle that defies our separation into distinct selves and that encourages us to imagine … or to understand why our interior lives inevitably seem to involve other people, either as objects of need, desire and interests or as necessary sharers of common experience. In this way, the subject is always linked to something outside of it - an idea or principle or the society of other subjects. It is this linkage that the word, 'subject' insists on … One is always subject to or of something. The word subject, therefore, proposes that the self is not a separate and isolated entity, but one that operates at the intersection of general truths and general principles. (Mansfield 2000: 3)

Chapter One

1. See chapter Four for a detailed description of this development.

2. There were two Interdepartmental Working Parties on Aboriginal Broadcasting: the first was convened in 1974 by the then Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Cavanagh, and met up until 1976 (composed of the ABC, DAA, the Department of the

Media, and the Australian Broadcasting Control Board). The second was established in 1978 by then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner.

3. To gain some appreciation of how expansive these new programs were, it is worth noting governmental expenditure during this period. In the financial year 1971/72, total spending by the Commonwealth on Aboriginal Affairs amounted to only $29 million. In just four years, it had increased to $186 million and by 1989/90, it had reached a total of $917 million - an average increase of approximately $50 million per year. If all Commonwealth, State and Territory funding of Aboriginal affairs is taken into consideration, it is estimated that in 1989/90, approximately $1,800 million was spent by Australian governments on Aboriginal people, or $29,000 for each Aboriginal family of four (See Altman & Sanders 1991).

4. See Note 2 in the Introduction.

5. Rowley was particularly enthusiastic about the work of the Reverend Jim Downing, who had been developing models for Aboriginal organisational structures in Alice Springs in the mid 1960's. Downing assisted in the establishment of the Central Australian Aboriginal Social Club in 1965, which, I would suggest, established an important precedent for the future formation of Aboriginal organisational networks in Central Australia.

6. The Chifley Labor Government lost office in the federal election of December 1949. Successive Coalition governments held office under Menzies (1949-66), Holt (1966-67), McEwan (1967-68), Gorton (1968-71) and McMahon (1971-72).

7. Labor won office on the 2nd of December, 1972.

8. The Council of Aboriginal Affairs was established by Prime Minister Holt in 1967 and consisted of H.C. Coombs, B. Dexter and W.E.H. Stanner.

9. Subsection (3) of section 61 of the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act, 1976* states that:
    (3) Subject to sub-section (5), where -
    (a) the Governing Committee of an Incorporated Aboriginal Association fails to furnish an explanation in accordance with sub-section (1);
    (b) the Register considers an explanation furnished by the Governing Committee of an Incorporated Aboriginal Association under sub-section (1) is not satisfactory; or
    (c) the Governing Committee of an Incorporated Aboriginal Association fails to comply with a requirement served under sub-section (2),

the Registrar -

(d) may petition the court that the Association be wound up; or

(e) may commence an investigation under section 68 into the conduct of the affairs of the Association.

[10.] The 1918 version of the Aboriginals Ordinance defined an Aboriginal person as follows:

(a) An aboriginal native of Australia or of any of the islands adjacent or belonging thereto; or

(b) A half-caste who lives with such an aboriginal native as wife or husband; or

(c) A half-caste who, otherwise than as wife or husband of such an aboriginal native, habitually lives or associates with such aboriginal natives; or

(d) A half-caste child whose age does not apparently exceed sixteen years shall be deemed an aboriginal within the meaning of this Act and every Act passed before or after this Act, unless contrary intention appears.

[11.] Under the Native Title Act 1993 section 62, subsection (1) it states in part:

(i) the native title claim group have, and the predecessors of those persons had, an association with the area; and

(ii) there exist traditional laws and customs that give rise to the claimed native title; and

(iii) the native title claim group have continued to hold the native title in accordance with those traditional laws and customs.

[12.] DAA Internal memorandum from J.P.M. Long (Deputy Secretary, signed by Charles Perkins) to Minister (Fred Chaney), 1979. See National Archive Ref: DAA Series: A2354/16 Item: 78/1489 PT.2.

Chapter Two

[1.] In 1989, the Combined Aboriginal Organisations of Alice Springs (CAOA) commissioned ANU academic Greg Crough to '… assess the size of the Aboriginal contribution to the Central Australian economy' and, in their subsequent report entitled 'Aboriginal Economic Development in Central Australia', they concluded that '... Central Australian Aborigines contributed a total of at least $184 million to the Central Australian region in 1987-88. Given an estimated size of the Central Australian economy of about $550 million in the same year, it can therefore be said that about one third of the Central Australian economy derives from the Aboriginal sector.' (CAOA 1989:3). In defining 'the Aboriginal sector', the report's authors listed five separate areas of economic activity involving the Aboriginal community, which were: (i) Aboriginal organisations, which contributed one-fifth of the total 'sector' ($32 million) and together were the largest single employer in Central Australia, with a total workforce of 650 people, (ii) Citizenship Entitlements to Aboriginals

contributed 56% ($104 million), with the major part of this category ($56 million) relating to Aboriginal use of public services, (iii) Grants to Aborigines, through various government Departments, contributed 25% ($46 million) and (iv) Aboriginal Earned Income, made up of funds earned either by Aboriginal organisations or individuals, contributed 17% ($31 million).

2. Much of the information regarding these developments derives from an interview I conducted with Jim Downing in 2000.

3. In his autobiography *Yami*, Yami Lester recalls the establishment of IAD in the following terms: 'One idea that the Uniting Church had - it came from Jim Downing - was to start what they called the Institute for Aboriginal Development … The IAD had three aims, or that's what it seemed to me - Jim Downing might have had others. One was to run the Mother and Babies Health Centre. They had a white sister come from Yirrkala, in the Top End, to help set it up … The second aim was *tjilpi* Downing's idea. He thought it was very important to have language classes, so doctors, nurses, welfare workers and police could learn some Aboriginal language. I took that over from Jim, along with Nyiinga Stuart and his wife. The third aim was community development, and that's what Jim was doing'. (Lester 1993:106, 109)

4. The circumstances surrounding the formation of the Central Australian Social Club were described by Rowley as follows:

> [Downing] formed a committee of sixteen, of whom eleven were Aborigines. This committee assessed the prime need to be a place for Aboriginal social activities in the towns other than the hotel bar as an answer to the problem of hard drinking. The formulation of the needs, as an agreed basis for future action, took months, partly because of the divisions within the committee, on which the five linguistic groups were represented ... Church premises were rented. Some additional building was needed. Downing was restrained here and left the decision of how and when to the committee and their people. The work was eventually done. A cash collection, in the town, from a mission out of town and from Amoonguna was enough to found a small bank account. The committee disciplined its own members for heavy drinking. In 1967 it was maintaining strict cleanliness and discipline in its accommodation and by mid-year the club was well established. According to Downing, there was a feeling among the committee that it *had* to succeed; that here was a problem in which the government or church could not really help … the faction fights in this group, often with violence, were giving way to self-imposed discipline. (Rowley 1972c: 53)

Chapter Four

1. Some of these studies and reports include DAA Submissions to: the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts' Inquiry into Broadcasting and Television (1973); to the ABC on the establishment of a national half hour radio program for Aboriginals (1975); to the Green Inquiry (1976); to the ABC on the development of a separate Aboriginal broadcasting unit in the ABC (1976) and to the National Satellite Task Force (1976). Other documents include reports (commissioned by DAA) on the development of indigenous broadcasting services in Canada, the USA and PNG (1973-76) and a feasibility study on Aboriginal broadcasting conducted in association with the Australian Film and Television School (1979). It should also be noted that there was a significant level of correspondence (at the Ministerial level) between the ABC, DAA, the Department of the Media and the Department of Post and Telecommunications.

2. See note 8, chapter One.

3. OAA Internal memorandum from Moy to Dexter, 8.9.70. National Archive Ref: DAA Files, Series:A2354/16, Item: 78/2170.

4. OAA Letter from Coombs to Madgwick, 29.9.70. National Archive Ref: DAA Files, Series: A2354/16, Item: 78/2170.

5. OAA Letter from Coombs to Madgwick, 29.9.70. National Archive Ref: DAA Files, Series: A2354/16, Item: 78/2170.

6. A 'dual system' radio broadcasting service was established in PNG (prior to independence in 1976) whereby the Australian Broadcasting Commission operated its normal schedule of radio programming (distributed from Port Moresby), alongside a network of locally-operated services, produced and transmitted from regional centres throughout PNG.

7. The Mid Western Television episode is comprehensively described in a 1980 DAA document entitled 'History of Departmental Attempts to Improve Broadcasting Services for Aboriginals'. See National Archive Ref: DAA Files, Series: A2354/18, Item:80/642.

8. During and after the Whitlam Labor government era, 'Video Access Centres' were established in most Australian capital cities. They were operated by local community

organisations and received various forms of government funding. Some still existed in 2001- for example, Open Channel, in Melbourne.

9. Letter from Duckmanton to Dexter 26 July 1974, National Archive Ref: DAA Files, Series: A2354/16, Item: 78/2170.

10. In 2001, Australian governments defined the term 'Aboriginal' as someone who identified 'with the Aboriginal race of Australia' and who is accepted by the Aboriginal community as being Aboriginal. This definition is also written into various legislation. See, for example, the Aboriginal Housing Act 1998 (NSW).

11. From 'History of Departmental Attempts to Improve Broadcasting Services for Aboriginals'. See National Archive Ref: DAA Files, Series: A2354/18, Item:80/642.

12. Bathurst Island is situated 30 kilometres off the Northern Territory coast. With nearby Melville island, it is home to the Tiwi people whose population is estimated (in 2001) to be 2120. Milingimbi is located 440 kilometres east of Darwin, and 5 kilometres off the coast. In 2001 Milingimbi had an estimated population of 650 Aboriginal people, whose main (local) language is Gupapuyngu.

13. Local radio and television services were established at both Bathurst Island and Milingimbi under the 'Broadcasting in Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme (BRACS) in the late 1980's. This allowed for the input of locally produced video and radio material, as well as programming taken off the domestic satellite (AUSSAT).

14. DAA Internal Memorandum from J.P.M. Long (Deputy Secretary, signed by Charles Perkins) to Minister (Fred Chaney), 1979. See National Archive Ref: DAA Series: A2354/16, Item: 78/1489 PT.2

15. Newsome was acting in this position at the time. He was later to become Controller of Radio Resources for the ABC. He also played a critical role in assisting CAAMA to acquire federal funding through DAA in 1980. I conducted an interview with John Newsome in Sydney in 1997.

16. John Newsome interview.

17. ibid

18. In 1979, the Fraser government appointed a committee to review the ABC. Its chairman was Alexander Dix, hence 'the Dix Committee'. The committee delivered its report in May 1981, but it took a year for the government to act on its recommendations. The report found that the ABC was deficient in four main areas: broadcasting to non-metropolitan audiences; failure to reflect contemporary Australian society; over-emphasis on British imports and failure to effectively use resources.

19. The ABC had established a number of 'Program Advisory Committees' relating to specific programming and operational areas following recommendations emanating from the Dix Committee of Inquiry. The Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Broadcasting was first convened in Alice Springs in 1980 and included representatives from CAAMA, several local organisations, DAA and the Department of Post and Telecommunications. Its essential purpose was to provide a formal avenue for the ABC's future involvement in Aboriginal broadcasting. Several other advisory committees were subsequently established in other regions.

20. The ABC signed similar contracts with local Aboriginal broadcasting organisations in Townsville (TAIMA), the Torres Strait (TSIMA), Perth (WAAMA), and many other areas.

21. DAA Internal memorandum from J.P.M. Long (Deputy Secretary, signed by Charles Perkins) to Minister (Fred Chaney), 1979. See National Archive Ref: DAA Series: A2354/16, Item: 78/1489 PT.2

22. The national satellite system for Australia became known as AUSSAT. It was inaugurated in 1985 with the launch of the first of a series of communications satellites. It was designed to accommodate a range of telecommunication services, including the provision of direct television broadcasting to the remote areas of Australia. Under the Remote Commercial Television Service (RCTS), four satellite 'footprints' were configured so as to provide television and broadcasting services to all remote regions in Australia. The Central RCTS covered the Northern Territory and South Australia, across which Imparja Television and CAAMA radio were eventually broadcast.

23. The Canadian government and its agencies were far more active in providing broadcasting services for various indigenous groups than was the case in Australia. Both the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the federal Department of Communications began in the early 1960's to provide broadcasting programs in indigenous languages. By 1972, 17 % of all CBC national short-wave services were in these languages and between 1971-74 the

Department of Communications ran the Northern Pilot Project and other experiments relating to locally-operated indigenous radio services. By 1988, close to 98 % of people living in Northern Canada could hear radio programs broadcast in eight languages via the CBC. The first indigenous broadcasting organisation, the Alberta Native Communications Society, was established in 1968 and the first licensed community radio station broadcasting in native languages went to air in 1973 (see Valaskakis, 1992).

[24.] I would suggest that the Aboriginal communities who met with the Prime Minister and to whom Viner refers in this statement were the same communities that had been waiting for a local broadcasting service since 1975. I am drawn to this conclusion since the article in the local Milingimbi newsletter about the installation of a local radio station, quoted above (Milingimbi being one of the Aboriginal communities that had always expressed interest in broadcasting), was published in the same month that Viner made his statement in Parliament, and it is in the Milingimbi article that we also hear about the immanent arrival of 'government help' in establishing a local service, clearly echoing Viner's pronouncement. Neither Milingimbi nor any other Aboriginal community were to receive government 'help' in establishing local broadcasting services for another seven years, despite Viner's statement. Further, the activities of the Working Party on Aboriginal broadcasting - also mentioned by Viner - did not lead to the implementation of any 'community-based' broadcasting services. Indeed, a subsequent interim report by the Working Party was neither endorsed nor actioned by the government.

[25.] DAA Internal memorandum from J.P.M. Long (Deputy Secretary, signed by Charles Perkins) to Minister (Fred Chaney), 1979. See National Archive Ref: DAA Series: A2354/16, Item: 78/1489 PT.2

Chapter Five

[1.] Throughout the 1970's there was an increase in the public consumption of alcohol by Aboriginal people in Alice Springs (see Lyon 1990). This led to what can only be described as sensationalist news items in The Centralian Advocate. For instance, over the period of one month, the following frontpage headlines appeared in this weekly newspaper:

- Plea To Act on Violence: 'Woman Scared to Walk on Streets', 13 February 1975 pp.1
- Call to Cool Race Tensions: Allegations of Lynch Mob Atmosphere, 20 February 1975 pp.1
- Citizens Act on Violence, Group Seeks to Improve Relations in Town, 27 February 1975 pp.1
- Pickup Service for Drunks, 6 March 1975 pp.1

2. As shown in chapter Four, DAA had attempted to establish Aboriginal broadcasting services in the Northern Territory throughout the 1970's, but failed. As far as I can determine, the 8HA program was the first of its type in the Territory. Further, there were no community radio stations operating in the Territory at that point in time.

3. The Aboriginal languages used on The Aboriginal Half Hour reflected the three main Aboriginal languages spoken in Central Australia. These include the Western Desert Group (Pitjatjantjara, Pintupi, Luritja etc.), Arandic Group (Western and Eastern Arrernte, Anmatyerre, etc.) and Walpiri. (See Institute for Aboriginal Studies 1992)

4. Letter from Duckmanton to Dexter 26.7.74, National Archive Ref: DAA Files, Series: A2354/16, Item: 78/2170.

5. From 'History of Departmental Attempts to Improve Broadcasting Services for Aboriginals'. See National Archive Ref: DAA Files, Series: A2354/18, Item:80/642.

6. Before the advent of The Aboriginal Half Hour on 8HA, there were community radio experiments in Aboriginal programming at 7CAE-FM in Hobart, 6NR in Perth, 3ZZZ and 3CR in Melbourne, 2WEB in Bourke, 2NCR in Lismore and 5UV in Adelaide. For the most part, these experimental programs operated for a few months only.

7. The interviews with Chris Majewski and John Macumba were conducted on separate occasions and in different locations in Adelaide in 1996. All tapes were transcribed. The events depicted in this chapter are to a large extent based on the testimony of Majewski and Macumba and on my own recollections (I was living in Central Australia at that time and began to work with Macumba in early 1980). Both Macumba and Majewski essentially corroborate each other's memories of these events (even though they were not given - deliberately - the opportunity to compare notes).

8. See note 6, chapter Four.

9. Some indication of this animosity can be gleaned from the fact that the Northern Territory government issued proceedings in the High Court against every land claim made by the Central Land Council.

10. 8HA was the first commercial radio station in Alice Springs and was owned by private local interests.

[11.] Freda Glynn (Director of CAAMA, 1981-1991) was working for DAA as a liaison officer in the Aboriginal town camps of Alice Springs when The Aboriginal Half Hour was launched. She commented that the Aboriginal language-speakers in the camps were 'glued' to their radio sets when The Half Hour went to air.

[12.] The ABC archives centre in Sydney hold copies of some early Aboriginal Half Hour programs.

[13.] The song 'Old Bungalow Days' was written and performed by Herbie Laughton and originally released on a CAAMA Music cassette album entitled 'Herbie Laughton' in 1982. The song recounts the early childhood years that Herbie Laughton spent at 'The Bungalow' (a 'home for half-castes' established in Alice Springs in 1914 at the Old Telegraph Station, located north of the township. See Markus 1990). In the song, Laughton expresses a nostalgic longing for what he describes in the song as 'the happy days' he spent at the institution. CAAMA later produced a video-clip of the song in 1984 in association with Laughton.

[14.] The announcer was a well-known Aboriginal lay preacher in Alice Springs, Herbie Butler.

Chapter Six

[1.] The two interviews were conducted in Adelaide in June 1996.

[2.] This was undertaken at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Chapter Seven

[1.] List of unpublished source documents used to inform this account:

Scollay C. (1980) Amplifying the Aboriginal Voice, Aboriginal Broadcasting in Central Australia, Interim Report of I.A.D. Consultant, Clive Scollay, Alice Springs, 5 April 1980

CAAMA (1980) Minutes of the first meeting of the CAAMA Governing Committee, 22 February 1980. Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs.

CAAMA (1980a) Press Release, unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980b) *Submission by the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association to the Review into the Australian Broadcasting Commission.* Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980c) *A Submission for Funding to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, from the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association*, March 1980. Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980d) *First Annual Report of the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association*, 25 September 1980. Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980e) *The Rules of the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (Aboriginal Corporation)*, CAAMA constitution. Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980f) *Progress Report*, 5 February 1981. Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

[2.] Basso's Farm is one of a number of 'Aboriginal Town Leases' located around Alice Springs (see Heppell & Wigley 1981).

[3.] These small family-based communities were generally established on land to which the occupants had a traditional attachment. Some were situated a few kilometres outside Papunya, while others took more than a day to reach. Here, it was believed, Aboriginals could live in a 'traditionally-oriented' social environment and adjust, at their own pace, to the encroachments of the non-Aboriginal world (see Myers 1986).

[4.] Primarily through 8HA and The Centralian Advocate, see note 1, chapter 5.

[5.] Audience research for The Aboriginal Half Hour was conducted by the ABC in 1981. It indicated a relatively high Aboriginal listenership.

[6.] From Scollay C. (1980) *Amplifying the Aboriginal Voice, Aboriginal Broadcasting in Central Australia*, Interim Report of I.A.D. Consultant, Clive Scollay, Alice Springs 5 April 1980

[7.] Arrernte, Walpiri, Pitjatjantjara. A copy of the poster is in the author's private collection.

[8.] An Aboriginal employee at Tangentyere Council referred to this process as the 'town camp pickup'.

[9.] Although Macumba's mother was a fluent speaker of Yangkuntjatjarra, his earlier life as a foster child in Adelaide precluded his own fluency in this language.

[10.] See note 1, chapter Five.

[11.] Funding bodies included DAA, the Australian Film Commission, the Australian Institute

of Aboriginal Studies, the Commonwealth Employment Service, the Department of Employment, Education and Training, and others.

Chapter Eight

[1.] *A Submission for Funding to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, from the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association*, February 1980. CAAMA: Alice Springs.

[2.] In *A Submission for Funding to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, from the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association*, pp.2

[3.] In Minutes of the second meeting of the CAAMA Governing Committee, 23 March 1980. Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs.

[4.] In DAA Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting, Discussion Paper, July 1981, pp. 6

[5.] DAA Ministerial submission 'Aboriginal Broadcasting', 25 March 1980

[6.] Ministerial letter, Chaney to Staley, 27 March 1980

[7.] ibid.

[8.] The tour group members were: John Macumba (CAAMA Director), Barbara Shaw (CAAMA committee), Peter Clark (CAAMA committee), Clive Scollay (consultant hired by the Institute for Aboriginal Studies to work for six months with CAAMA) and myself (CAAMA Deputy Director). In *Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, Consultant's Report No.2, September 1980*, Clive Scollay, Alice Springs 1980a, pp.3

[9.] In minutes to the meeting kept by Clive Scollay, I.A.D. consultant

[10.] Press Release from Staley's office, 9 May 1980

[11.] In *Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, Consultant's Report No.2, September 1980*, Clive Scollay, Alice Springs, September 1980.

[12.] ibid.

[13.] From an interview conducted with John Hartley, former Director of ABC Corporate Affairs, 1998.

[14.] In *Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, Consultant's Report No.2, September 1980*, Clive Scollay, Alice Springs, September 1980.

[15.] DAA, Internal Minute, 'Reference - CAAMA - Alice Springs', Crisp to Huey, 23 May 1980

[16.] DAA, Ministerial Minute, Brownbill (First Assistant Secretary) to Chaney, 26 May 1980

[17.] See ABC 1981

[18.] See AUSSAT 1987

[19.] The ABC was required to distribute national radio and television services via AUSSAT. See AUSSAT 1987

[20.] Interview with John Newsome.

[21.] In interview with John Hartley.

[22.] ibid.

[23.] In DAA Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting, Discussion Paper, July 1981, pp. 7

[24.] ABC, Minutes of the ABC Program Advisory Committee for Aboriginal Broadcasting in Central Australia, 6 March 1981, pp. 9

[25.] ibid., pp. 11

[26.] In interview with John Hartley

[27.] ibid

[28.] CAAMA letter, CAAMA to Chaney, 7 September 1980

[29.] In an interview conducted with George Menham in 1996

[30.] ibid

[31.] In interview with John Hartley

[32.] ibid

[33.] In ABC, Minutes of the ABC Program Advisory Committee for Aboriginal Broadcasting in Central Australia, 6 March 1981, pp.6

[34.] Radio 8CCC was owned and operated by the Community College of Central Australia and broadcast within Alice Springs. 8CCC provided seven and a half hours air time per week to CAAMA (from 10.00 - 11.30 am each weekday)

Chapter Nine

[1.] Freda Glynn was born on Woodgreen cattle station, north of Alice Springs, and spent her early childhood years (1939 to 1943) in an institution officially referred to as 'a home for half-castes'. It was more commonly known as 'The Bungalow', located in the former Overland Telegraph Station on the outskirts of Alice Springs. Freda's mother was employed as a 'domestic' at The Bungalow and so had regular contact with Freda. During the war years they were evacuated - like many other so-called 'part-Aboriginal' people - to various regions throughout Australia. Freda and her mother were sent to a state institution at Mulgoa in New South Wales. There her mother was engaged in domestic work both at Mulgoa and in various private homes. For a time, they lived with a wealthy family in the Sydney suburb of Vaucluse where Freda's mother was again engaged as a 'live-in domestic'. In 1949 they were sent back to Alice Springs where they were located together in an institution known as St. Mary's Hostel, operated by the Anglican Church. Freda spent the following eight years at St. Mary's where she received an elementary education.

At the age of 18, Freda was offered employment in a local photography business where she trained as a darkroom technician. It was here that she developed a keen interest in radio:

> My love for radio came in those years when I was working in the darkroom on my own. My only companion was my radio and we only had the ABC - the first thing I did when I walked into the darkroom was to switch the radio on and the last thing I did was switch it off - I'd be listening to shows on geography, science, and everything - so you'd have a sort of understanding if you listened to ABC in those days - it was such an educational tool. So I loved it, and I got a better education through the radio (Interview with Freda Glynn, 1998).

Freda later married and had five children. Throughout the 1960's she worked in various businesses in Alice Springs until taking up a secretarial position with DAA in 1973. She was also helping her mother pay off a house at the time and therefore held down a second job working as the 'radio base operator' for a local taxi company. In 1975 she moved with her family to

Adelaide where she completed a three year Diploma course in Community Development with the Aboriginal Task Force Education Unit (based within the South Australian Institute of Technology). On returning to Alice Springs in 1978, she gained further employment with DAA, working with the Aboriginal 'towncampers' as a Community Advisor. Freda became involved in Aboriginal broadcasting when she attended CAAMA's first meeting in 1980.

[2.] In ABC, Minutes of the ABC Program Advisory Committee for Aboriginal Broadcasting in Central Australia, 6 March 1981, pp. 10

Chapter Ten

[1.] Coombs was then working with Dr Maria Brandel at ANU on Aboriginal issues

[2.] Coombs to Landsdowne, 5 October 1981

[3.] According to the ABS, in 1980, approximately 80% of people living outside the main towns of the Northern Territory were Aboriginal, of whom the majority spoke a first language other than English (see ABS 1981).

[4.] CAAMA Governing Committee minutes, 4 November 1984

[5.] The Canadian Party was led by Josephi Pulyat from the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation.

[6.] Walsh's report for AUSSAT was called *Aboriginal Uses of AUSSAT: A Feasibility Study for AUSSAT Pty. Ltd.*

[7.] A study was commissioned by CAAMA into ways in which educational services could be developed for Aboriginal communities through AUSSAT. A group of educational consultants 'The Consultancy Pty. Ltd.' undertook the study in 1984

[8.] The extent of the Aboriginal population within the Central RCTS zone was the subject of much debate at the hearing. CAAMA's figure was based on ABS and DAA statistics. The ABT judged that it was closer to 30%, based on ABS figures alone. CAAMA nonetheless maintained its position, arguing that the ABS figures were inaccurate due to the highly mobile nature of the Aboriginal population.

[9.] At this stage, CAAMA's radio station 8KIN-FM was broadcasting in Alice Springs and to three outlying Aboriginal communities only (see chapter Eight).

[10.] In Corker (1986), pp. 3

[11.] The Central Land Council, for instance, represents the interests of Aboriginal people in over fifty communities and outstations in Central Australia (see Central Land Council, 1995)

[12.] The 'ideological persuasions' of the ABT members were later attacked by the N.T. Government (under cover of parliamentary privilege).

[13.] See ABT (1986) for a list of witnesses in the Central RCTS hearings

[14.] In Minutes of meeting held at the ADC office, Canberra, 6 February 1987, Brian Walsh & Associates archives

[15.] Summary of Judgment, Wilcox J, Sydney, 23 December 1986, Brian Walsh & Associates archives

[16.] In Imparja Implementation Task Force Discussion and Direction Paper, 14 November 1986, Brian Walsh & Associates archives

[17.] In Project Manager's Final Report, June 1987, Imparja Television, Brian Walsh & Associates archives

[18.] See chapter Seven

[19.] In Project Manager's Final Report, June 1987, Imparja Television, Brian Walsh & Associates archives

[20.] Time differences between the Northern Territory and Western Australia made the scheduling of programs difficult

[21.] In Project Manager's Report to the Imparja Board, 8 April 1987. Brian Walsh & Associates archives

[22.] In ABT (1986)

[23.] In Project Manager's Final Report, June 1987, Imparja Television, Brian Walsh & Associates archives

[24.] In interviews conducted with Brian Walsh and Freda Glynn

[25.] ibid.

[26.] Pat Dodson for the Central Land Council and John Ah Kit later for the Northern Land Council

[27.] CAAMA Governing Committee minutes, 11 October 1987

[28.] Located in a renovated building on South Terrace, Alice Springs

[29.] See CAAMA (1989)

[30.] Both Freda Glynn and I attended several Imparja Board meetings where these issues were discussed.

[31.] A half-hour program presented in an Aboriginal language for an Aboriginal audience would cost in excess of $15,000. Yet few, if any, advertisers bought air time on these kinds of programs since they were not directed towards who the advertisers considered to be a viable market.

[32.] See chapter Eight

[33.] In a transcript of an ABC Radio National interview conducted with the Chairman of Imparja, Tracker Tilmouth, in 1996. ABC Radio National Archives: Sydney.

[34.] Primarily in Queensland, through the North Eastern RCTS.

[35.] In an interview with Freda Glynn.

Conclusion

[1.] OAA Letter from Coombs to Madgwick, 29.9.70. National Archive Ref: DAA Files, Series: A2354/16, Item: 78/2170.

[2.] Viner speech to parliament in Hansard (1978) November 1978, House of Representatives, pp. 3449

[3.] Viner in DAA Internal memorandum from J.P.M. Long (Deputy Secretary, signed by Charles Perkins), to Minister (Fred Chaney), 1979. See National Archive Ref: DAA Series: A2354/16 Item: 78/1489 PT.2

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished references used in this study originate from the following archival sources:

National Archives of Australia

I have drawn on material held in the National Archive (Canberra) deposited by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission relating to the period from 1970 to 1990. The specific documents selected for research can be identified by the following Series and Item Numbers:

Series: A2354	Item:85/966 Parts 1/6
Series:A8402/6	Item:82/4067
Series:A2354/40	Item:89/309 PT.1
Series:A2354/40	Item:89/309 PT.4
Series:A84028	Item:87/9439
Series:A8402/1	Item:83/4291
Series:A8402/1	Item:83/4067
Series:A2354/19	Item:81/502
Series:A2354/30	Item:87/1109 PT.1
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/719 PT.2
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/719 PT. 1
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/719 PT.7
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/719 PT.6
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/719
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/719 PT.3
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/719 PT.4
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/912
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/719
Series:A2354/16	Item:78/1489 PT.2
Series:A2354/18	Item:80/642
Series:A2354/16	Item:78/2170
Series:A2354/30	Item:87/997
Series:A2354/52	Item:85/871 PT.2

Private Collections

Papers collected by Clive Scollay (community development consultant to the Institute for Aboriginal Development, 1980 - 81) relating to the establishment of CAAMA

Papers collected by Brian Walsh & Associates in relation to the development of Imparja (communications consultant to CAAMA and Imparja, 1985 - 87)

Interviews

Interviews were conducted during the period 1996-2000 with the following people, as listed below. I have noted their positions at the time of the events discussed in this study.

Jim Buckell, journalist, CAAMA

John Corker, lawyer, CAAMA/Imparja

Jim Downing, social worker, Uniting Church, the Institute for Aboriginal Development

Bill Davis, sound production co-ordinator, CAAMA

Erica Glynn, television producer, CAAMA

Freda Glynn, Director of CAAMA

Russell Guy, radio training officer, CAAMA

John Hartley, Director of Corporate Affairs, Australian Broadcasting Commission

John Macumba, Director and President of CAAMA

Chris Majewski, Southern Co-ordinator of Adult Education, NT Dept. of Education

George Menham, First Assistant Secretary, Public Affairs, Dept. of Aboriginal Affairs

John Newsome, National Controller of Radio, Australian Broadcasting Commission

Rachel Perkins, television producer, CAAMA

Andrea Philipp, production manager, CAAMA/Imparja

Clive Scollay, community development consultant, Institute for Aboriginal Development

Warwick Thornton, camera operator, CAAMA

Sasha Trikojus, coordinator of CAAMA Productions

Brian Walsh, communications consultant, Brian Walsh & Associates.

Julie Wiggins, outreach training co-ordinator, Australian Film & Television School

Books, Articles and Unpublished Documents

Aboriginal Development Commission (1985) Press Release, *ADC Support for Imparja*, November 1985, ADC: Canberra

Ahmad A. (1992) *In theory : classes, nations, literatures*, Verso: London

Altman J.C. (ed) (1989) *Emergent Inequalities in Aboriginal Australia*, Oceania monograph 38, University of Sydney: Sydney

Altman J.C. and Sanders W. (1991) *From exclusion to dependence: Aborigines and the welfare state in Australia*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, CAEPR: Canberra.

ATSIC (2000) *Annual Report, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission*, AGPS: Canberra

Attwood B. (1992) Introduction, in Attwood B. & Arnold J. (eds) *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines*, A special edition of the Journal of Australian Studies, La Trobe University Press: Melbourne

Attwood B. and Markus A. (1997) The 1967 R*eferendum, or when Aborigines didn't get the vote*, Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies: Canberra

AUSSAT (1987) *Annual Report*, AUSSAT Pty.Ltd.: Melbourne

Austin T. (1993) I *can picture the old home so clearly: the Commonwealth and 'half-caste' youth in the Northern Territory 1911-1939*, Aboriginal Studies Press: Canberra

Australian Broadcasting Commission (1981) *The ABC in review : national broadcasting in the 1980s : report by the by the Committee of Review of the Australian Broadcasting Commission*, ABC, AGPS: Canberra

Australian Broadcasting Commission (1981a) Minutes of the ABC Program Advisory Committee for Aboriginal Broadcasting in Central Australia, Unpublished document, 6 March 1981, ABC: Sydney

Australian Broadcasting Commission (1984) *A Report on the Role of the Australian Broadcasting Commission Regarding Radio and Television Services for Aboriginal and Islander People*. Unpublished report, ABC: Sydney

Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (1984) *Grant of Public Broadcasting Station Licence to Serve Alice Springs and Public Broadcasting Translator Station Licences to Serve Santa Teresa, Ali Curung and Hermannsburg, Northern Territory.* Unpublished document, September 1980, ABT: North Sydney

Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (1985-86) *Transcription of Proceedings, Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, Inquiry into the Provision of Remote Commercial Television Services At Alice Springs, August 1985 and March 1986.* Unpublished document, Commonwealth Reporting Service: Canberra

Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (1985) *Further Issues* Unpublished document, Australian Broadcasting Tribunal: Sydney

Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (1986) *Remote commercial television services: fourth report to the Minister for Communications*, Canberra: AGPS

Australian Bureau of Statistics (1982) *1981 Census of Population and Housing*, ABS: Canberra

Australian Film and Television School (1979) *Aborigines and Radio, the Need, the Potential*, unpublished report by Quigley B. for the Australian Film and Television School: Sydney

Australian Frontier (1974) *Consultation on community relations in Alice Springs*, Unpublished document, Australian Frontier: Melbourne

Australian Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) *National report by Commissioner Elliott Johnston*, AGPS: Canberra

Barnouw E. (1975) *Tube of plenty: the evolution of American television*, Oxford University Press: New York

Barth F. (1969) *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organisation of cultural differences*, Little Brown: Boston

Batty J. (1976) *Namatjira: wanderer between two worlds, with a foreword by Sir Paul Hasluck*, Rigby: Adelaide

Beckett J. (1985) 'Colonialism in a Welfare State: the case of the Australian Aborigines' in *The Future of Former Foragers: Australia and Southern Africa*, Schrire C. and Gordon R. (eds) Cultural Survival: Cambridge MA pp. 25-36

240

Beckett J. (1988) 'Aboriginality, citizenship and the nation state' in Beckett J. (ed) Aborigines and the State, *Social Analysis* 24, special issue series, pp. 3-18

Bell W. (1994) The Totem of the Clan: A Cultural History of the Introduction of Remote Satellite Broadcasting in Central Australia, Ph.D. thesis, La Trobe University: Melbourne

Bhabha H.K. (1990) 'Introduction: narrating the nation' in Bhabha H.K. (ed) *Nation and narration*, Routledge: London

Bourdieu P. (1990) *In other words : essays towards a reflexive sociology*, Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell: Cambridge

Brennan F. (ed) (1994) *Controlling destinies: greater opportunities for indigenous Australians to control their destinies*, AGPS: Canberra

Brands J. (1988) 'Imparja Opens with Pride and Tears' in *The Centralian Advocate*, 15 January 1988, pp.1

Brian Walsh & Associates (1985) *Aboriginal Uses of AUSSAT: A Feasibility Study for AUSSAT Pty. Ltd.*, Unpublished document, Brian Walsh & Associates: Melbourne

Brian Walsh & Associates (1986) *Imparja Implementation Task Force Discussion and Direction Paper*, 14 November 1986, Unpublished document, Brian Walsh & Associates: Melbourne

Brian Walsh & Associates (1987) *Project Manager's Report to the Imparja Board*, 8 April 1987, Brian Walsh & Associates: Melbourne

Brian Walsh & Associates (1987) *Project Manager's Final Report, June 1987, Imparja Television,* Unpublished document, Brian Walsh & Associates: Melbourne

Bryant G. (1973) *Government Policy Towards Aborigines*, in Australian Government Digest, 1 July to 30 September, AGPS: Canberra

Burchell G. (1996) 'Liberal government and the techniques of the self', in 'Liberalism, socialism and democracy' in *Foucault and political reason: liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government*, Barry A., Osborne T., Rose N., (eds) University College London Press: London

Burchell G., Gordon C., & Miller P., eds. (1991) *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality, with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*, Harvester Wheatsheaf: London

CAAMA (1980) Minutes of the first meeting of the CAAMA governing committee, 22 February 1980, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980a) Press Release, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980b) *Submission from the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association to the Review into the Australian Broadcasting Commission*, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980c) *A Submission for Funding to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs from the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association*, March 1980, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980d) *First Annual Report of the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association*, 25 September 1980, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980e) *The Rules of the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (Aboriginal Corporation)*, CAAMA constitution, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1980f) Minutes of the second meeting of the CAAMA governing committee, 23 March 1980, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1981) *Progress Report*, 5 February 1981, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1981a) *Submission Concerning the Creation of a Radio Broadcasting Service for and by Aboriginal People in Central Australia Using the Domestic Communications Satellite*, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs.

CAAMA (1983) *A Pilot Television Production and Training Unit for the Aboriginal People of Central Australia, A Submission*, Unpublished document, March 1983, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1984) *Regional Commercial Television Service, Licence Application, by Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, on behalf of Imparja Television Pty.Ltd.,* Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1984a) Minutes of the CAAMA governing committee, 4 November 1984, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1987) Minutes of the CAAMA governing committee, 11 October 1987, Unpublished document, CAAMA: Alice Springs

CAAMA (1989) The CAAMA Group, CAAMA: Alice Springs

Corker J. (1986) An Aboriginal Commercial TV Station, in *Legal Service Bulletin*, Vol 11, No 6, Monash University: Melbourne

Cavanagh J. (1975) *Selected Policy Statements on Aboriginal Affairs 1973-1974*, AGPS: Canberra

The Centralian Advocate (1975) 13.2.75 pp.1, Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1975a) 20.2.75 pp.1, Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1975b) 27.2.75 pp.1, Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1975c) 6.3.75 pp.1, Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1979) 22.2.79 pp.12, Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1979a) 15.3.79 pp.11, Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1980) 15.6.80 pp.4, Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1980a) 27.6.80 pp.3 Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1985) 17.8.85 pp.4 Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1988) 15.1.88 pp.2 Alice Springs

The Centralian Advocate (1988a) 20.1 5 pp.3 Alice Springs

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC) (1991) *Some health services of central Australia, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress*, Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association Newsletter, no. 14, pp. 18-20: Alice Springs

Central Land Council (1995) *Our land, our life: Aboriginal land rights in Australia's Northern Territory*, Central Land Council, Northern Land Council: Casuarina, N.T.

Coombs H.C. (1978) 'The Council for Aboriginal Affairs', in Coombs H.C. (ed) *Kulinma, Listening to Aboriginal Australians*, Australian National University Press: Canberra

Coombs H.C. & Smith D. (ed.s) (1994) *Aboriginal autonomy: issues and strategies, H.C. Coombs*, Cambridge University Press: Melbourne

Cowlishaw G. (1986) 'Aborigines and Anthroplogists' in *Australian Aboriginal Studies*

Cowlishaw G. (1999) *Rednecks, eggheads and blackfellas : a study of racial power and intimacy in Australia*, Allen & Unwin: St Leonards, NSW

Crough G., Howitt R. & Pritchard B. (1989) *Aboriginal economic development in Central Australia*, Combined Aboriginal Organisations of Alice Springs: Alice Springs

Cruikshank B. (1996) 'Revolutions within: self-government and self-esteem' in *Foucault and political reason : liberalism, neo-liberalism, and rationalities of government*, Barry A., Osborne T., Rose N., (eds) University College London Press: London

DAA (1973) Annual Report, *Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Territory Division 1972-73*, DAA: Canberra

DAA (1975) Annual Report, *Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1974-75*, DAA: Canberra

DAA (1977) Annual Report, *Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1976-77,* DAA: Canberra

DAA (1977a) *Papunya: history and future prospects, a report prepared for the Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs and Education*, unpublished report by Davis K., Hunter J. & Penny D.: Canberra

DAA (1978) Annual Report, *Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1977-78,* DAA: Canberra

DAA (1980) Annual Report, *Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Northern Territory Division 1979-80*, DAA: Canberra

DAA (1981) Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting, Discussion Paper, July 1981

DAA (1983) Annual Report, *Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1982-83,* DAA: Canberra

DAA (1984) *Out of the silent land, report of the Task Force on Aboriginal and Islander Broadcasting and Communications*, AGPS: Canberra

DAA (1986) Ministerial Press Release, *Minister Welcomes ABT Decision on Central RCTS*, August 1986, DAA: Canberra

Davies C. (1999) *Reflexive ethnography : researching selves and others*, Routledge: New York

Dean. M. (1996) 'Foucault, government and the unfolding of authority' in 'Liberalism, socialism and democracy' in *Foucault and political reason : liberalism, neo-liberalism, and rationalities of government,* Barry A., Osborne T., Rose N., (eds) University College London Press: London

Dean M. (1999) *Governmentality : power and rule in modern society*, SAGE: California

Dews P. (1987) *Logics of disintegration : post-structuralist thought and the claims of critical theory,* Verso: London

Donald & Rattansi (eds) (1992) Introduction in "*Race", culture and difference,* Sage Publications in association with the Open University: London

Donovan, F. (1988) *Alice Springs, its history & the people who made it,* Alice Springs Town Council: Alice Springs

Dowmunt, T. (1993) *Channels of Resistance, Global Television and Local Empowerment,* BFI Publishing: London

Downing J. (1988) *Ngurra Walytja, country of my spirit, with colleague and cultural interpreter Munti Smith*, Australian National University, North Australia Research Unit: Darwin

Duffy M. (1984) Ministerial Press Release, *AUSSAT: Ownership and Capacity Allocations, Government Policy,* Department of Communications: Canberra

Easthope A. & McGowan K. (1992) *A Critical and cultural theory reader,* Open University Press: Buckingham

Elkin A.P. (1951) 'Aborigines and the Minister's Welfare Council', in Australian Quarterly, 23(4), 9-20

Ewen S. (1976) *Captains of consciousness : advertising and the social roots of the consumer culture*, McGraw-Hill: New York

Faine J. (1993) *Lawyers in the Alice : Aboriginals and whitefellas' law,* Federation Press: Sydney

Fanon F. (1963) *The Wretched of the earth,* MacGibbon & Kee: London

Foucault M. (ed) (1975) I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother ... : a case of parricide in the 19th century, Pantheon Books: New York

Foucault M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge, Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972-1977,* edited and translated by Gordon G., Harvester Wheatsheaf: New York

Foucault M. (1990) *The History of Sexuality,* Penguin: London

Foucault M. (1993) 'Space, power and knowledge', in During S. (ed) *The Cultural Studies Reader,* Routledge: London

Foucault M. (1994) *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* Routledge: London

Foucault M. (2000) 'Subjectivity and Truth', in Rabinow, P. (ed) *Michel Foucault, Ethics, Essential Works of Foucult 1954 -1984 Volume 1,* Penguin Books: London

Foucault M. (2001) 'Governmentality', in Faubion J.D. (ed) *Michel Foucault, Power, The Essential Works 3,* Allen Lane, Penguin: London

Geertz C. (1988) *Works and lives : the anthropologist as author,* Stanford University Press: Stanford, California.

Gerritsen, R. (1982) 'Blackfellas and whitefellas', in Loveday, P. (ed) *Service Delivery to Remote Communities,* North Australia Research Unit: Darwin

Gilroy, Paul (1992) 'Cultural Studies and Ethnic Absolutism', in Lawrence Grossburg, Carry Nelson and Paula Treichler (eds). *Cultural Studies,* Routledge: New York and London, pp. 277-286

Ginsburg F. (1991) 'Indigenous Media: Faustian contract or global village?' in *Cultural Anthropology*, 6(1) pp. 92-112

Ginsburg F. (1995) 'Production values: indigenous media and the rhetoric of self-determination', in Battagalia, D. (ed) *Rhetorics of Self-Making*, University of California Press: Berkeley

Ginsburg F., Abu-Lughod L. & Larkin B. (eds) (2002) *Media worlds: anthropology on new terrain,* University of California Press: Berkeley

Goffman E. (1959) *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, Anchor Books: New York

Goffman E. (1961) *Asylums*, Anchor Books: New York

Graham D. (ed) (1994) *Being whitefella*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press: South Fremantle

Grossberg L. (1996) 'Identity and Cultural Studies - Is That All There Is?' in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed.s Hall S. & Du Gay P., Sage Publications: London

Gosewinkel G. (1986) 'Opening Address, AUSSAT New Communications Horizons for Australia' in AUSSAT '86 New Horizons, Conference Papers: Sydney

Hall S. (1971) *Deviancy, politics and the media, a paper given by Stuart Hall at the British Sociological Association Conference*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham: Birmingham

Hall, S. (1993) 'Minimal Selves', reprinted in Ann Gray and Jim McGuigan (eds) *Studying Culture,* Edward Arnold: London, pp 134-138

Hall, S. (1996) Introduction, *Questions of Cultural Identity,* Sage Publications: London

Hall, S. (ed) (1997) *Representation : cultural representations and signifying practices*, Sage with The Open University: London

Hansard (1978) November 1978, House of Representatives, pp. 3449

Hansard (1980) August 1980, Senate, pp. 485

Haraway D. (1991) *Simians, cyborgs and women: the reinvention of nature*, Free Association: London

Harker R., Maher C. & Wilkes C. (1990) *An Introduction to the work of Pierre Bourdieu: the practice of theory*, Macmillan: London

Harris, S. (1990) *Two Way Aboriginal Schooling: Education and Cultural Survival*, Aboriginal Studies Press: Canberra.

Hasluck P.M.C. (1988) *Shades of Darkness*, Melbourne University Press: Melbourne

Heppell, M. (ed) (1979) *A Black reality : Aboriginal camps and housing in remote Australia*, AIATSIS: Canberra

Heppell M. and Wigley J.J. (1981) *Blackout in Alice: a history of the establishment and development of town camps in Alice Springs*, Australian National University Press: Canberra

Hindess, B. (1996) 'Liberalisim, socialisim and democracy' in *Foucault and political reason: liberalism, neo-liberalism, and rationalities of government*, Barry A., Osborne T., Rose N., (eds) University College London Press: London

Hinkson M. (1999) *Walpiri Connections*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, La Trobe University: Melbourne

Hinkson M. (2002) 'New Media Projects At Yuendumu: Inter-Cultural Engagement and Self-Determination in an Era of Accelerated Globalization', *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 16 (2): 201-220

Hodge B. & Mishra V. (1990) *Dark side of the dream: Australian literature and the postcolonial mind*, Allen & Unwin: Sydney

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (HRSCAA) (1988-1989), Official transcript of proceedings (Hansard)

Howard M. (ed) (1978) '*Whitefella Business': Aborigines in Australian Politics*, Institute for the Study of Human Issues: Philadelphia

Hunter I. (1988) *Culture and government: the emergence of literary education*, Macmillan Press: Hampshire

Hunter I. (1991) 'From Discourse to Dispositif, Foucault and the Study of Literature' in *Meridian* no. 10: La Trobe University: Melbourne pp. 36-53

Hymes D. (ed) (1972) *Reinventing anthropology*, Pantheon Books: New York

Institute for Aboriginal Development (1992) *Current Distribution of Central Australian Languages*, Institute for Aboriginal Development Press: Alice Springs

Jacobs J. (1988), 'The Construction of Identity', in Beckett J.(ed) *Past and Present, the Construction of Aboriginality*, Aboriginal Studies Press: Canberra

Jackson M. (ed) (1996) *Things as they are : new directions in phenomenological anthropology*, Indiana University Press: Bloomington.

James-Bailey J. (1981) The Australian Domestic Satellite System: A National Communications Network or American Takeover?, in *Intermedia*, June 1981.

Jenkins R. (1996) *Social identity*, Routledge: London.

Keefe K. (1990) *Aboriginal education, culture and power*, unpublished report of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Curriculum Development Research Fellowship.

Keen I. (1989) 'Aboriginal governance' in Altman J. (ed) *Emergent Inequalities in Aboriginal Australia,* Oceania monograph 38, University of Sydney: Sydney.

Langton M. (1993) *"Well, I heard it on the radio and I saw it on the television": an essay for the Australian Film Commission on the politics and aesthetics of filmmaking by and about Aboriginal people and things*, Australian Film Commission: Sydney

Lattas A. (1993) 'Essentialisim, Memory and Resistance: Aboriginality and the politics of authenticity', in Cowlishaw G. (ed) *The Politics of Representation and the Representation of Politics*, Oceania special issue 63 (3)

Latour B. & Woolger S. (1986) *Laboratory life : the construction of scientific facts,* Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey

Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, Hansard (1986) August 1986 pp. 609-611

Leigh M. (1994), 'A Note to the Reader', in Michaels E., *Bad Aboriginal Art, Tradition, Media and Technological Horizons,* Allen and Unwin: Sydney

Lester Y. (1993) *Yami : the autobiography of Yami,* Institute for Aboriginal Development: Alice Springs

Lewis K. (1974) 'Radio Station for Aborigines', in *Identity,* Aboriginal Publications Foundation: Canberra

Lewis, R. (1996) G*endering Orientalism: race, femininity and representation,* Routledge: New York

Long, J.P.M. (1967) 'The Administration and the Part-Aboriginals of the Northern Territory', in *Oceania,* Vol. 37 No.3

Long, J.P.M. (1992) *The go-betweens: patrol officers in Aboriginal affairs administration in the Northern Territory 1936-74,* North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University: Casuarina, N.T.

Lyon P. (1991) *What everybody knows about Alice: a report on the impact of alcohol abuse on the town of Alice Springs,* Tangentyere Council Inc.: Alice Springs

Mansfield N. (2000) *Subjectivity : theories of the self from Freud to Haraway*, Allen & Unwin: St Leonards, N.S.W.

Mama, A. (1995) *Beyond the masks: race, gender, and subjectivity,* Routledge: New York.

Markus A. (1990) *Governing savages,* Allen & Unwin: Sydney

Markus G. & Fisher M. (1986) *Anthropology as cultural critique: an experimental moment in the human sciences*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago

Markus G. (1998) *Ethnography through thick and thin*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J

McQuail D. (1975) *Communication*, Longman: New York

McGrath A. (1987) *Born in the cattle: Aborigines in cattle country,* Allen & Unwin: Sydney

Meadows M. (1992) *A watering can in the desert: issues in indigenous broadcasting policy in Australia*, Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Griffith University: Brisbane

Meadows M. (1994) 'At the Cultural Frontier', in *Not just another business; journalists, citizens and the media*, Schultz J. Pluto Press in association with National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University: Melbourne

Meadows M. (1994a) 'Re-claiming a cultural identity: indigenous media production in Australia and Canada', in *Continuum*, vol. 8 no. 2, pp. 270-292

Meadows M. (2001) *Voices in the wilderness : images of Aboriginal people in the Australian media*, Greenwood Press Westport: Connecticut

Merlan F. (1998) *Caging the Rainbow: Places, Politics and Aborigines in a Northern Australian Town*, University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu

Michaels E. (1986) *The Aboriginal invention of television in Central Australia 1982-1986*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies: Canberra

Michaels E. (1987) *For a Cultural Future: Francis Jupurrula makes TV at Yuendumu*, Art & Criticism Monograph Series, Artspace: Melbourne

Michaels E. (1994) 'Aboriginal Content: Who's Got It? - Who Needs It?' in Michaels E., *Bad Aboriginal Art, Tradition, Media and Technological Horizons*, Allen & Unwin: Sydney

Michaels E. (1994) *Bad Aboriginal Art, Tradition, Media and Technological Horizons*, Allen & Unwin: Sydney

Miller P. & Rose N. (1990) 'Governing Economic Life', in *Economy & Society: vol. 1*, no. 31

Molnar, H. (1995) 'Indigenous media development in Australia: a product of struggle and opposition', in *Cultural Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1

Molnar H. & Meadows M. (2001) *Songlines to satellites: indigenous communication in Australia, the South Pacific and Canada*, Pluto Press: Annandale, NSW

Moran, M. (1999) *Improved Settlement Planning and Environmental Health in Remote Aboriginal Communities*, Centre for Appropriate Technology: Northern Territory

Morris B. (1989) *Domesticating resistance : the Dhan-gadi Aborigines and the Australian state*, St. Martin's Press: Oxford

Morris, M. (1988) *The pirate's fiancée: feminism, reading, postmodernism,* Verso: London.

Morton J. (1998) 'Essentially Black, Essentially Australian, Essentially Opposed: Australian Anthropology and Its Uses of Aboriginal Identity', in Wassmann J. (ed) *Pacific answers to Western hegemony: cultural practices of identity construction,* Berg: Oxford

Muecke S. (1992) *Textual spaces: aboriginality and cultural studies,* New South Wales University Press: Kensington, NSW

Mullard C. (1974) *Aborigines in Australia today, commissioned by National Aboriginal Forum,* National Aboriginal Forum: Canberra

Myers F. (1985) 'Illusion and Reality: Aboriginal self-determination in Central Australia', in *The Future of Former Foragers: Australia and Southern Africa,* Schrire C. and Gordon R. (eds) Cultural Survivial: Cambridge, MA

Myers F. (1986) *Pintupi country, Pintupi self: sentiment, place and politics among western desert aborigines,* Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington and London

Nathan, P. (1980) *A home away from home: a study of the Aboriginal Health Service in Fitzroy,* Victoria Pit Press: Fitzroy

Noble & Munro (1980) *Something Stirring in the Bush, Media and Aborigines,* in Media Information Australia, no. 18, pp. 3-7

Northern Territory Administration Welfare Branch (1965) *Annual report,* Welfare Branch, Northern Territory Administration: Darwin

O'Dwyer B. (ed) (1981) *Broadcasting in Australia, today's issues and the future: proceedings of the National Conference held in July 1980 at the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia,* Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University: Canberra

O'Malley P. (1996) 'Indigenous governance' in *Economy and Society, Volume 25, Number 3, August 1996,* pp. 310-26, Routledge: London

O'Malley P., Weir L. & Shearing C. (1997) *Governmentality, criticism, politics*, in Economy & Society 26(4) November, pp. 501-517

O'Regan T. (1990) TV as cultural technology: the work of Eric Michaels, in O'Regan T. (ed) *Communication and Tradition: Essays After Eric Michaels*, a special edition of Continuum, 3 (2) pp. 53-59

Paine R. (1977) 'The path to welfare colonialism', in *The White Arctic: Anthropolgical Essays on Tutelage and Ethnicity*, Paine R. (ed), Memorial University of Newfoundland: St John, pp. 3-28

Pearson N. (1997) 'The concept of native title at common law', in *Our land is our life: land rights: past, present and future*, Yunupingu G., University of Queensland Press: St. Lucia, Qld

Peters F. (1994) 'The black film unit at the ABC and Aboriginal filmmaking', in *Film policy; an Australian reader*, Moran A. (ed), Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Griffith University: Brisbane pp. 151-154

Peterson N. (1998) 'Welfare Colonialism and Citizenship; Politics, Economics and Agency', in *Citizenship and indigenous Australians: changing conceptions and possibilities*, Peterson N. and Sanders W. (eds) Cambridge University Press: Melbourne

Povinelli E. (2002) *The cunning of recognition: indigenous alterities and the making of Australian multiculturalism*, Duke University Press: Durham

Renato R. (1994) 'After Objectivism' in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, During S. (ed), Routledge: London and New York

Rosaldo R. (1994) 'After Objectivism', in During S. (ed) *The Cultural Studies Reader*, Routledge: London

Rose, N. (1989) *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self*, Routledge: New York

Rose N. (1996) 'Governing "advanced" liberal democracies', in 'Liberalism, socialism and democracy' in *Foucault and political reason: liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government*, Barry A., Osborne T., Rose N. (eds) University College London Press: London

Rose N. (1996a) 'Identity, Genealogy, History', in Hall S. and du Gay P. (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Sage Publications: London

Rowley, C.D. (1972) *Aboriginal Policy and Practice,* Australian National University Press: Canberra

Rowley C.D. (1972a) *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society,* Penguin Books: Ringwood

Rowley C.D. (1972b) *Outcasts in White Australia,* Penguin Books: Ringwood

Rowley C.D. (1972c) *The Remote Aborigines,* Penguin Books: Ringwood

Rowley C.D. (1986) *Recovery: the politics of Aboriginal reform,* Penguin: Ringwood

Rowse T. (1988) 'From houses to households? The Aboriginal Development Commission and economic adaption by Alice Springs town campers', in Beckett J. (ed) *Aborigines and the State,* Social Analysis 24, special issue series, pp. 50-65

Rowse T. (1998) *White flour, white power: from rations to citizenship in Central Australia,* Cambridge University Press: Melbourne

Rowse T. (1992) *Remote possibilities : the Aboriginal domain and the administrative imagination,* North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University: Darwin.

Rowse T. (1993) *After Mabo: interpreting indigenous traditions,* Melbourne University Press: Carlton

Rowse T. (2000) *Obliged to be difficult: Nugget Coombs' legacy in indigenous affairs,* Cambridge University Press: Melbourne

Sahlins, M. (1995) *How "natives" think: about Captain Cook, for example,* University of Chicago Press: Chicago

Said E. (1978) *Orientalism,* Vintage Books: New York

Sanders W. (1982) 'From self-determination to self-management' in P. Loveday (ed) *Service Delivery in Remote Communties,* North Australia Research Unit: Darwin, pp. 4-10

Scollay C. (1980) *Amplifying the Aboriginal Voice, Aboriginal Broadcasting in Central Australia, Interim Report of I.A.D. Consultant Clive Scollay,* Alice Springs 5 April 1980, Unpublished document

Scollay C. (1980a) *Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, Consultant's Report No.2, September 1980:* Alice Springs

Shore & Wright (1997) *Anthropology of policy: critical perspectives on governance and power,* Routledge: London

Spivack, G.C. (1987) 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography' in Spivack G.C. *In other worlds: essays in cultural politics,* Methuen: New York

Steier F. (ed) (1991) Introduction, in *Research and reflexivity,* Sage: London

Sullivan, P. (1996) *All free man now: culture, community and politics in the Kimberley region, north-western Australia,* AIATSIS: Canberra

Tatz C. (1964) *Aboriginal Administration in the N.T.,* unpublished Ph.D.thesis, Australian National University: Canberra

Tonkinson R. (1974) *Aboriginal victors of the desert crusade,* Cummings Publishing: Menlo Park, California

Tonkinson R. (1985) 'Councils, corporations and the Aboriginal polity', in Anthropological Forum 5(3), pp. 377-81

Tonkinson R. (1988) 'One Community, two laws: aspects of conflict and convergence in a Western Australian Aboriginal settlement', in Morse B. & Wooden G. (eds) *Indigenous Law and the State,* Foris Publications: Dordrecht, pp. 397 – 411

Tonkinson R. & Howard M. (1990) *Going it Alone? Prospects for Aboriginal Autonomy,* Aboriginal Studies Press: Canberra

Toorn P. & English D. (1995) *Speaking positions: Aboriginality, gender and ethnicity in Australian cultural studies,* Victoria University of Technology: Melbourne

Toyne P. & Vachon D. *Growing up the country: the Pitjantjatjara struggle for their land,* Penguin Books: Ringwood

Valaskakis G. (1992) 'Communication, Culture and Technology: Satellites and Northern Native Broadcasting in Canada', in Riggins S. (ed) *Ethnic Minority Media: An International Perspective,* Sage: Newbury Park, pp. 63-81

Von Sturmer J. (1982) 'Aborigines in the Uranium Industry: towards self-management in the Alligator River region?', in Berndt R. (ed) *Aboriginal Sites, Rights and Resource Development,* UWA Press: Perth

Von Sturmer J. (1984) 'The different domains' in *Aborigines and Uranium,* Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies: Canberra

Wafer J. (1996) 'After the Field' in Jackson M. (ed) (1996) *Things as they are: new directions in phenomenological anthropology,* Indiana University Press: Bloomington

Weaver, S. (1984) 'Struggles of the Nation-State to Define Aboriginal Ethnicity: Canada and Australia', in Gold G. (ed) *Minorities and Mother Country Imagery, Social and Economic Papers 13,* Institute of Social and Economic Research: Newfoundland

Whitlam E.G. (1973) Aborigines and Society: a Press statement in Australian Government Digest 1 (2), AGPS: Canberra, pp. 696-8

Whitlam E.G. (1974) 1973 Policy Speech, in Sen. J. Cavanagh, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, *Selected Policy Statements on Aboriginal Affairs 1973-1974,* AGPS: Canberra

Williams R. (1981) *Culture,* Fontana: London

Wilson J. (1992) Introduction, *New Formations* No.18, Methuen: London

Wolfe P. (1999) *Settler colonialism and the transformation of anthropology: the politics and poetics of an ethnographic event,* Cassell: London

Yeatman A. (1993) 'Voice and Representation in the Politics of Difference' in *Feminism and the politics of difference,* Gunew S. and Yeatman A., Allen & Unwin: St. Leonards, NSW

Yipirinya (1982) 'Bilingual-bicultural programme at Yipirinya school', in *Yeperenye Yeye* 4; 15-20

Young R. (1990) *White mythologies: writing history and the West,* Routledge: London

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY
OF ALICE SPRINGS

A detailed examination of the internal complexities of the Aboriginal community of Central Australia is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, such complexity warrants a brief examination in an appendix. In many respects, the development of CAAMA and other Aboriginal organisations were delineated by this internal differentiation. The following is therefore provided:

Aboriginal people in Central Australia routinely refer to themselves - or other Aboriginal people - using various markers of internal differentiation. The following quote provides some indication of this reality. It is taken from a transcript of several speeches delivered at a public meeting held in Alice Springs in 1974 (Australian Frontier: 1974). The two speakers I have quoted here, Patricia Turner and Yami Lester respectively, are both Aboriginal people of mixed descent who discuss their respective positions within the local Aboriginal community:

> I've been asked to talk to you … giving my point of view as an Aboriginal born and raised in this town …I shall be talking about the part-Aboriginal people who have lived in the town all their lives as citizens of this community. I have used the term 'part-Aboriginal' as this is an exceptionally widely-used term in the Northern Territory, to distinguish between the full-blood Aboriginal living more in the camp situation, as opposed to the part-Aboriginal living in houses in the town … I have presented here a distinction between two Aboriginal groups who live quite differently from each other …

> Now many people present here may well be thinking, 'But what problem do the part-Aboriginal people have?' 'They seem to manage quite well. Many of them come from well known and respected families who seem to have quite adequate standing in this community'. This may be true on the surface. But in fact, there are many problems we have to contend with by just being who we are. We belong to neither the full-blood Aboriginal nor the whites. We're in the middle and that is a very significant factor. Then why the term 'part-Aboriginal', why not the term 'part-white'? This is a question that has been put to me on many occasions and I might add is very disturbing. It is my belief that this is so because we have had more association and contact with our Aboriginality than our whiteness … The part-Aboriginal people who live in the town are part of numerous, very large families. Almost everybody is related to everyone else … this gives us some sense of belonging to some group (Australian Frontier 1974:13-14).

Now to Yami Lester:

> I would like to talk about tribal Aborigines who are living out on the government settlements, missions, out on cattle stations and government reserves. These people are quite happy in their own area. They do not read or write … They do not see and hear what white people are talking about concerning Aborigines …
>
> In the 1940's … [the] government made a policy that half-caste children had to be taken away from their mothers and be put in children's homes in order to be educated the whitefella way … When the part-Aboriginal children grew up and became educated, they began to speak up through the newspapers and the other media. Some white residents of the Northern Territory called these part Aborigines 'loudmouths' … But these part-Aborigines know what is going on … They have sympathy for the full-blood Aboriginal people, many of whom are related to them anyway. They are worried about the situation of the full-blood tribal people and the young people having too much to drink … The part-Aborigines therefore know more about the extent of the problems and have the means and knowledge to speak up loudly and can try to help their own people. (Australian Frontier 1974:10-11)

As may be gleaned from these two quotes, the kind of divisions we see in the Aboriginal community today are, to a large extent, attributable to the discriminatory actions taken by the Northern Territory Administration over the course of half a century. From 1908 through to1953, the Aboriginal Ordinance gave the Administration certain powers to control people of mixed descent and those who were then called 'full-bloods' in relation to almost every aspect of their lives (see Tatz 1966). As has become widely appreciated in recent times, the most disturbing feature of this regulatory regime was the power it gave the authorities to remove children of mixed descent from their Aboriginal mothers and to locate them in state institutions or with white foster parents - a power that Ann McGrath has rightly described as the 'ultimate racist act' (McGrath 1987: 93). This was the most influential factor in creating the contemporary division between what both Pat Turner and Yami Lester have termed 'part-Aboriginals' and 'full-blood Aboriginals'.

Having said this, I would argue that one cannot attribute simply these differences between Aboriginals to government edict alone, nor is it entirely possible to apply sweeping generalisations in order to understand the origins and nature of these differences. As Tony Austin notes in his detailed book on 'half-caste youth' in the Northern Territory, some Aboriginal people of mixed descent believe that they were given 'a good start in life' as a result of being brought up in a 'home', while for others their lives were irrevocably shattered as a result of being removed from their mothers and families (Austin 1997:3). In a few cases, relationships between white men and Aboriginal women were stable, and their children were cared for and given adequate educations, despite the social stigma often attaching to them (and their fathers). In other instances, either the white fathers or the Aboriginal mothers

voluntarily put their mixed-descent children in 'homes for half-castes', believing that they would be better off. Occasionally, they were later retrieved by their parents.

In 1979, The Centralian Advocate published an interesting debate between two Aboriginal people on these issues (The Centralian Advocate 1979). The debate was sparked by a long article written by the late Brian Willis, who was for a time Director of the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service. His article was entitled *The Race in the Middle*. In response to this article, Harold Liddle published a letter in the same newspaper, captioned *Being half-caste ain't half-bad*. First to an extract from Willis:

> I think this forceful taking away of children …was an horrendous and abominable criminal act … [they] were taken to … institutions ... missions or settlements ... [they] were raised to become station hands or domestics … A lot of these children started to look for their roots when they grew up … whether they had any sisters or brothers, where their mother was …They had no sense of where they could call home, no sense of being wanted, all traces of their families had disappeared … these in-betweens were educated as 'coloureds' [and] made to feel that they were 'nearly' on the same level as Europeans [and] to lose all links with the Aboriginal side … (The Centralian Advocate, 22 February 1979, pp.12)

Now to Liddle:

> As far as I am concerned, the police of my times, in the 'twenties, did a good job with the part-coloured children … At least these children were given a go in life, but they had to toe the line ... I myself am in my sixties and I think I know what I am talking about … I can say that I don't regret having been sent to the station where I went … I appreciate what my employer did in educating me further so that I could fit into any community… I have done this and so did the rest of my school pals - boys and girls … I will speak for Central Australia: These children you say were the victims of legalised kidnappers, are now living in their own bought homes, and have their own businesses. They hold responsible positions and would not live any other way … They live like human beings brought up by big families - and just look around, one would not find any healthier children.(The Centralian Advocate, 15 March 1979, pp.11)

For most of the history of the Northern Territory, it appears that there was always a small number of people of mixed descent who remained exempt from the provisions of the Aboriginal Ordinance and enjoyed at least some of the benefits of ordinary citizenship. This was particularly the case where their white fathers continued to provide for them, or their mixed-descent parents were themselves exempt. For example, in 1930, of the 267 children in Northern Territory schools, over 40 were of mixed descent (excluding the 'half-caste' homes) (Austin: 1993:3) and in 1940, out of an estimated mixed-descent population of 913 people (for the whole of the Northern Territory), 240 were also exempt (Long 1967: 191). Nevertheless, up until 1953, the Administration still retained the power to impose restrictions on 'half-castes' and the policy of removing 'part-Aboriginal'

children from their traditionally orientated mothers continued unabated well beyond this period.

It would also seem apparent that Aboriginal people who managed to avoid the provisions of the Aboriginal Ordinance developed a certain level of respectability (as indicated in the quotes by both Turner and Liddle, above). By the 1940's some ran small businesses, others owned cattle stations, and one man, Ken Stuart, was for a time relatively wealthy, having bought into successful mining leases at Arltunga and The Granites. In towns such as Alice Springs and Darwin, an unstated 'understanding' developed on the part of the local authorities as to who should or should not be exempt from the Ordinance. Certainly, it would have seemed odd, perhaps embarrassing, to subject station owners and business people of mixed descent to the Ordinance, particularly if they had friends within the local white establishment.

There were of course many anomalies in the law and its application. It was possible to have exempt and non-exempt people in the same extended family. This meant that - technically speaking - some could legally drink alcohol and others could not, some could live in Alice Springs while others were expected to live in areas 'designated for Aboriginals'. Some could go to the local picture theatre, but one's non-exempt cousin could not. Needless to say, it was extremely difficult for the authorities to administer what Paul Hasluck (the federal Minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs from 1951 to 1963) described as a 'clumsy' policy (Long 1967:195). In practice, it appears that at the beginning of the 1940's, many if not the majority of mixed-descent Aboriginals in Alice Springs were more or less exempt, although the 'full-blood Aboriginals' remained subject to all its oppressive provisions.

During the late 1940's and early 1950's, frustration with the anomalies that existed between the actual provisions of the Aboriginal Ordinance and its application came to a head. As Long points out, this was due, at least in part, to the fact that during the war years, many Aboriginal people of mixed-descent joined the army, while others had gained employment in other parts of the Northern Territory and elsewhere. As a result, they enjoyed better wages and conditions and experienced freedoms and attitudes far removed from those that operated in Alice Springs. When they eventually returned to Central Australia, not only was the old regime still in place, but, as Tim Rowse notes, steps were taken by the local law enforcement agencies to tighten restrictions on Aboriginal people to a degree not seen before or since (Rowse:1998). It seems that the local police felt a need to

put a brake on the new Aboriginal assertiveness that was in evidence following the war years.

As the Northern Territory Administration dithered over the manifestly unworkable and oppressive exemption system, and the police in Alice Springs continued to act in an increasingly draconian manner, local Aboriginal people and their supporters began to mount public protests in both Alice Springs and Darwin against the provisions of the Ordinance. In late January 1951, at least half the mixed-descent population of Alice Springs removed their children from local schools in an act of defiance (Donovan:1988). They asserted that under the Ordinance, the schools were located in an area 'prohibited to Aboriginal people' and that they and their children were therefore apparently breaking the law. In reporting on the incident, The Advocate noted that 'The general feeling among the more enlightened section of the half-caste community in Alice Springs is bitter against what they claim to be a sudden excess of zeal on the part of the authorities who, in previous years, have been prepared to take a broad and knowledgeable view of the problem' (from Donovan 1988: 271). During the same year, the president of the Australian Half-Caste Progressive Association in Darwin attended the Australian Council of Trade Unions conference in Melbourne and made a widely published plea for 'part-Aboriginal' people in the Northern Territory to be allowed to live as ordinary citizens. Finally, in January 1953, legislation was introduced into the Legislative Council in Darwin to amend the Ordinance. Henceforth, all references to 'half-castes' would be removed. According to Long, these changes gave 'part-Aboriginal' people living in the towns of the Territory 'real and unconditional equality'.

The struggle to change the Aboriginal Ordinance during the late 1940's and early 1950's was, I believe, an historically significant episode that was to have an important influence on the later development of Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs during the 1970's. Although a detailed account of this period of change during the 1950's is yet to be written, it is certainly the case that at least some of the Aboriginal people who lived through this era and participated in the local protests to abolish the exemption system were directly involved in the establishment of some of the first government-funded Aboriginal organisations in Central Australia. Paradoxically, while the amendments to the Aboriginal Ordinance marked the beginning of the end of restrictions on Aboriginal people of mixed-descent, it nevertheless had the effect of continuing and substantiating their separation from traditionally-oriented (or 'full-blood') Aboriginal people who remained hostage to a new set of laws and a 'new policy' designed to regulate and control their gradual 'assimilation' into the broader white community.

In 1953, as part of the new policy direction, the Northern Territory Welfare Ordinance was enacted to replace the old Aboriginal Ordinance. At the same time, the Native Affairs Branch of the Northern Territory Administration became the Welfare Branch and for the next fifteen years the Administration pursued the policies of 'assimilation'. However, other legislative changes and events were to occur during the 1960's that tended to disturb and derail the objectives of the 'new' policy.

Under the Welfare Ordinance, every effort was made not to refer specifically to 'Aboriginals'. Rather, there would only be reference to 'wards'. The problem with this of course was that if there was no specific connection between Aboriginals and wards in the Ordinance, then anyone could be declared a ward, including whites. To get around this 'problem', the Legislative Council decided that since Aborigines could not vote they would simply add a clause to the Ordinance stating that 'no person *entitled* to vote' could be declared a ward. This piece of legislative double-speak ensured that in the main, only 'full-blood' Aboriginals could be declared 'wards', thus guaranteeing the 'liberties and freedoms' of white citizens (and to a certain extent, 'half-castes'). Nonetheless, this contrivance came undone in 1962, when the federal government introduced voting rights for all Aboriginal people, including those in the Northern Territory. Naturally enough, this immediately exposed glaring legal contradictions.

Like the exception system before it, the unworkable nature of this new legislation eventually led to the complete abolition of all 'special' laws governing Aboriginal people, including 'full-bloods', in the Northern Territory. On the 15th of September 1964, a new Welfare Bill was proclaimed in the Legislative Council that brought to an end fifty-six years of governmental attempts to regulate and control the Aboriginal population through laws that took away their basic human rights. This did not mean of course that the old social prejudices were also abolished, nor did it necessarily result in the withdrawal of special government assistance to Aboriginal people. As we have seen, from the early 1970's onwards, specific legislation and policy aimed at the Aboriginal population was to expand dramatically. Nevertheless, the 1964 legislation marked the beginning of a new era in black/white relations in Central Australia.

Appendix 2

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL MEDIA ASSOCIATION, CAAMA.

In September 1984, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) granted CAAMA the first radio broadcasting licence awarded to an Aboriginal organisation. In making its decision, the then Chairman of the ABT, David Jones, said:

> The application by CAAMA for this licence is considered by the Tribunal to be ... an historic occasion in Australian broadcasting ... CAAMA is the major Aboriginal broadcasting organisation in Australia and is taking a key role in the development of programs of social relevance to Aboriginals (ABT 1984:2).

Following its installation, the CAAMA broadcasting network 8KIN-FM was officially launched by John Macumba on the 27th May 1985, amidst a crowd of 1,500 well-wishers [1]. It consisted of a central transmission tower and studio complex in Alice Springs with three outlying re-transmission sites located at the Aboriginal communities of Hermannsburg, Santa Teresa and Ali Curung [2]. A survey conduced by CAAMA shortly after the launch indicated that approximately 35% of 8KIN's Aboriginal audience spoke English as a mother tongue, while 65% spoke a variety of Central Australian Aboriginal languages [3]. In 1989 the 8KIN network commenced transmissions through the Imparja Television satellite services (see following chapter). This effectively extended its reach to all Aboriginal communities throughout the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Before the establishment of CAAMA, there was little Aboriginal involvement in video and television production anywhere in Australia [4]. However, the impetus created through the establishment of 8KIN and its associated activities provided a focus for this lack of participation. Government plans to lunch Australia's first domestic satellite service, AUSSAT, in 1985 also served to highlight the question of Aboriginal involvement in television production. In March 1983, CAAMA prepared a submission entitled 'A Pilot Television Production and Training Unit for the Aboriginal People of Central Australia' (CAAMA 1983). It was argued that AUSSAT would deliver an 'avalanche of foreign television' into numerous remote Aboriginal communities and that this would have an

'immense impact' on local Aboriginal cultures and languages. CAAMA further argued that, 'appropriate facilities need to be established as soon as possible to train Aboriginal people to use video and television technology on their own terms'.

These arguments elicited a positive response from government and in late 1983 funds were provided to establish a Video Production Unit within CAAMA [5]. Although the funding bodies were sympathetic to CAAMA's desire to produce 'culturally appropriate' Aboriginal video and television material, they nevertheless insisted that the Unit seek additional funds through the production of commercial work. Indeed, the Unit was offered several commercial production projects within the first few weeks of its establishment, which it was obliged to accept [6]. It steadily expanded over the following years, generating income from both commercial and government sources.

In 1986, negotiations were held with the ABC regarding the possibility of televising CAAMA Video Unit material through the national broadcaster's TV network. CAAMA argued that it should gain experience in producing and broadcasting television programming before the advent of the AUSSAT. Eventually, in August 1986, an experimental series of thirteen weekly television programs were produced by the Unit and broadcast through ABC TV. The series was called 'Urrpeye', meaning 'messenger' in Arrernte [7]. It was broadcast at the conclusion of ABC television transmissions each Thursday night (usually at 12.30am) and ran for twenty-five minutes. It was seen throughout the Northern Territory and South Australia and later distributed on video cassette. It was the first time in Australian broadcasting history that a program devoted entirely to Aboriginal issues - and presented in Aboriginal languages - was put to air.

In 1988 the CAAMA Video Unit was transformed into 'CAAMA Productions Pty. Ltd'. Work in a variety of commercial and non-commercial projects rapidly increased following this move. By 1990, 'CAAMA Productions' had become the largest single video production house in the Northern Territory [8]. It was also producing Aboriginal television programming broadcast through Imparja Television (see below).

When CAAMA first went to air in 1981, there was only a limited selection of Aboriginal music commercially available [9]. It was nonetheless committed to promoting Aboriginal music and, in the long-term, increasing the proportion of Aboriginal musical content on 8KIN [10]. In order to achieve these goals, CAAMA began to record and collect Aboriginal music for airplay. A number of local Aboriginal musicians were recorded - usually in their

own homes or in the town camps surrounding Alice Springs. Much of this music was in the form of 'covers' of country & western standards. However, there were a few local artists and groups who had developed their own material. This included the singer songwriters Isaac Yamma, Herbie Laughton, Bob Randell, Punch Thompson and others. Groups such as the The Warumpi Band and Coloured Stone were also recorded.

This music was later released on a series of cassette albums. The first was called 'Desert Songs' (1982) and provided a selection of the artists listed above. This was followed by a number of separate albums featuring each of these artists and bands[11]. In 1984 CAAMA created its own record label - Imparja Recordings - which began to manufacture, distribute and sell this music on a more formal basis. In the same year, a recording studio was built next to the 8KIN broadcast buildings and professional multi-track recording and production equipment installed. The studio was operated by the newly created 'CAAMA Sound Production Unit'.

From its inception, the Unit was in constant demand, recording and producing numerous local and interstate Aboriginal artists and groups. As this demand increased, further staff were hired to administer the activities of Imparja Recordings (later changed to 'CAAMA Music'). By 1987 it had grown into a substantial business, selling more than 30,000 cassettes and CD's annually, from a catalogue of some 40 albums [12]. Much later - in the late 1990's - CAAMA Music was recording and distributing Aboriginal artists from around Australia. One of the notable compilation albums recorded during this period entitled 'Our Home, Our Land' featured a number of high profile Aboriginal artists and groups including Yothu Yindi, Christine Anu, Archie Roach, The Warumpi Band, Ruby Hunter, Kev Carmody, Bart Willoughby, Coloured Stone and Tiddas. There were also contributions from non-Aboriginal artists: Paul Kelly, David Bridie, Shane Howard and Neil Murray.

Outside these media-related activities, CAAMA also became involved in the development and sale of Aboriginal arts and crafts. It opened three retail outlets in Alice Springs [13] and established a close working relationship with the Aboriginal artists of Utopia, a community located 300 kilometres north of the township. Several artists from Utopia went on to achieve national acclaim, including the late Emily Kngwarreye [14].

One of the most important aspects of CAAMA's work during this time was the implementation of extensive training programs. In 1988 the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) provided CAAMA with $3 million to fund over forty

Aboriginal traineeships in all fields relating to media production (in association with the Australian Film Television and Radio School). Many of these trainees later found employment in the wider industries of television, radio and film. One of these trainees, Rachel Perkins, has since become an acclaimed feature film director, winning several AFI awards for her film 'Radiance'.

From 1980 to 1990, CAAMA grew from two volunteers to an organisation which employed over seventy full and part-time staff, with income derived from both government and commercial sources. Each of the various sections and companies within CAAMA were largely operated as separate entities, with their own premises, production facilities and managers. Overall managerial responsibility for what became known as the 'CAAMA Group' was left to a Director and Deputy Director, who reported to the CAAMA governing committee [15].

In 1986, the CAAMA-owned company, Imparja Television Pty. Ltd. won a licence to operate a satellite-delivered television service across all of the Northern Territory (excepting Darwin) and most of the rural regions of South Australia and parts of New South Wales and Victoria. A substantial television production and transmission complex was also built in Alice Springs from where Imparja's programming could be 'uplinked' via AUSSAT to numerous re-broadcast sites throughout its broadcast region. The Imparja service was launched in 1988 and is still the only Aboriginal-owned commercial television network in Australia. The emergence and fate of Imparja will form the primary focus of the following chapter.

National Consequences

Beyond CAAMA, the complex set of events that occurred throughout 1980, as briefly described here, were to shape the broader evolution of Aboriginal broadcasting throughout Australia. The ABC formed contractual arrangements with numerous Aboriginal broadcasting groups in other regional centres, based on its experience with CAAMA. In many cases, this had the effect of fostering the formation of these groups. A special fund was established by the Public Broadcasting Foundation to assist Aboriginal groups who wished to access public radio stations. A range of accredited courses in media were established by the AFTRS for Aboriginal people and DAA created a specific program to administer and fund aspiring Aboriginal broadcasters.

With the subsequent expansion of Aboriginal broadcasting, DAA established a Task Force in 1984 to produce coherent policy in the area. The resultant policy document, Out of the Silent Land (DAA 1984), set the parameters for an increasing involvement by the federal government in Aboriginal broadcasting and a range of related communications initiatives, including television and the BRACS project (Broadcasting in Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme) [16].

By 2000, ATSIC was funding the operation of 'about 150 Indigenous-owned and operated broadcasting groups' (ATSIC 2000). This included, '40 local and regional media groups producing programs principally for community radio or the ABC'. ATSIC further estimated that close to $80 million had been spent on the development of Aboriginal broadcasting organisations since CAAMA was first established in 1980.

Notes

[1.] A two day concert was held to celebrate the opening featuring a number of local Aboriginal bands and traditional dancers.

[2.] A technical report commissioned by CAAMA in late 1981 indicated that the costs involved in installing a standard AM or FM transmitter capable of serving the Central Australian region were prohibitive. Instead, it was suggested that a more modest radio network be established that would serve Alice Springs and some of the surrounding Aboriginal communities. In August 1982, CAAMA engaged a chartered broadcast engineer, Paul Dubois, to assist in these developments. Dubois had recently retired from the position of State Manager for Telecom, in Queensland and was willing to work for CAAMA on a voluntary basis. Over a period of two months he developed a plan to establish a broadcasting network encompassing Alice Springs and three major outlying Aboriginal communities: Hermannsburg, Santa Teresa and Ali Curung.

[3.] For the most part, these languages consisted of the three predominant language groupings in the region and their dialectical variations: the Arandic (Eastern, Western, Southern and Central Arrernte, Anmatyerre, Alyawarre and Kaytetye); Western Desert (Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra, Luritija, Pintupi and Kukatja); and Ngarrik (Walpiri and Warlmanapa).

[4.] In DAA Working Party on Aboriginal Broadcasting, Discussion Paper, July 1981.

[5.] Funds provided by DAA and Australian Film Commission.

[6.] This included numerous programs such as 'Trachoma' (N.T. Health), 'No Sugar No Holes' (N.T. Dental), 'Bushfire' (N.T. Education), etc.

[7.] In 'The CAAMA Group', 1989.

[8.] ibid.

[9.] CAAMA possessed only five records containing such material: two albums by the Aboriginal country and western singer, Jimmy Little, a 'hit single' by Lionel Rose entitled 'Thankyou', a double album of various traditional Aboriginal music recorded by AIATSIS and a collection of Christian hymns sung in Arrernte by the 'Hermansburg Ladies Choir'.

[10.] By 1988 CAAMA had a policy of playing 40% Aboriginal music on 8KIN.

[11.] Isaac Yamma had developed a large repertoire of songs in his mother tongue, Pitjantjatjara. For the most part, they dealt with various themes relating to particular episodes in his life. For instance, the song *Ngurrapunya Amoonguna* recounted his arrival as a young boy at the government settlement of Amoonguna situated to the south of Alice Springs. Amoonguna was built on Arrernte country, far from Isaac's traditional lands, and the song expresses a great longing - *tjilurutjiluru, kurrunpa ngurruwiya* - for his home and the relatives he left behind. Most of Isaac's songs later become an enduring feature of 8KIN's musical content attracting almost a cult following among the Pitjantjatjara listeners. He also inspired a number of other Aboriginal artists to write and sing in their own languages. At a later point, Isaac became a regular presenter on 8KIN. Unlike Isaac, singer-songwriter Herbie Laughton was born in Alice Springs and spent most of his early life in the same 'home for half-castes' (the Bungalow). In his song - *Old Bungalow Days* - he sings about this experience in highly nostalgic terms, indeed, the song opens with 'Happy days are the saddest of memories'. Not surprisingly, his music was to become extremely popular with the English-speaking section of CAAMA's Alice Springs audience. Other solo artists recorded during this period included Irwin Inkamala, an Arrernte man from Hermannsburg who wrote several songs about his relative Albert Namatjira, Punch Thompson, a Pitjantjatjarra gospel singer and Bob Randell, who became well-known for his song 'Brown Skin Baby', concerning his removal as a child from his Aboriginal mother. Apart from these and other individual musicians, CAAMA also recorded a number of aspiring Aboriginal rock and roll

bands. Most prominent among these were the 'Warumpi Band' from Papunya and 'Colored Stone', originally from the South Australian town of Port Augusta. The Warumpi Band's song - *Tjailanguru Paka__nu__* - which can be loosely translated as 'getting out of jail' was an immediate 'hit' when it was first broadcast. This was probably due to the fact that jail was a common experience for most of CAAMA's younger Aboriginal listeners.

[12.] In 'The CAAMA Group', 1989.

[13.] At the Alice Springs Airport, Gap Road and Yeperenyere Shopping Mall.

[14.] Kngwarreye's paintings were included in Australia's contribution to the Venice Biennial in 1997. Her works are represented in all major metropolitan galleries and the National Gallery of Australia.

[15.] A body of twelve Aboriginal people elected each year from the membership of CAAMA as stipulated in the CAAMA constitution.

[16.] Under the federal government project known as *BRACS* - the *Broadcasting in Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme* - 83 Aboriginal communities were officially granted 'access and control over local television and radio services' and provided with a satellite-receiving dish, a multi-channel decoder, radio and TV re-transmission facilities, and the appropriate legislative framework allowing them to choose, re-mix, or switch off, any satellite services entering their local regions. They were also given enough equipment to produce their own radio and TV programming.