

LAYING DOWN THE COUNTRY:  
NORMAN B. TINDALE  
AND THE LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTION  
OF THE NORTH-WEST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the  
Discipline of Linguistics – School of Humanities  
University of Adelaide  
June 2003

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## Abstract

This thesis critically examines the processes involved in the construction of the historical linguistic record for the north-west region of South Australia. From the 1870s, a string of travellers – explorers, surveyors, scientists and missionaries – have contributed to a body of linguistic material, including placenames, ‘tribal’ names, vocabularies, songs and *tjukurpa* (stories). In the Native title era this body of written material has taken on a new function, effectively becoming evidence available to be used for or against Native title claimants. In light of recent events (the De Rose Hill Native title claim), this thesis asks the all too necessary questions: what sort of knowledge does this linguistic material constitute and how was it constructed?

The primary focus of this thesis is the work of Norman B. Tindale. Drawing heavily upon Tindale’s manuscript materials, and also upon a wide range of literature and other archival sources, this thesis enquires into the processes by which Tindale’s Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya representations were constructed. This thesis seeks to answer the following questions: to what extent are these representations the result of Tindale’s own preoccupations; what role did linguistic criteria play in their delineation; and how did the wider contexts within which he worked influence his linguistic endeavours?

This thesis argues that, in producing his tribal representations, Tindale effectively reduced a diversity of indigenous practices to ordered categories more reflective of Western and colonial concepts than indigenous views. Tindale did not consider linguistic criteria in any depth, his informants were few, and the tribal boundaries appear to a large extent to be arbitrary. In addition, Tindale’s linguistic work was heavily biased towards the category ‘Pitjantjatjara’ and was informed by notions of racial and (to a certain extent) linguistic purity. Moreover, because these (among other) preoccupations played a direct role in shaping the historical linguistic record, they must be considered when interpreting the historical records rather than simply accepting them at face value, as lawyers, anthropologists and linguists have done in the past.

## **Declaration**

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

Signed:

Date:

## Acknowledgements

This thesis has been researched and written with the assistance and generosity of a number of funding bodies, institutions and individuals.

In terms of funding, I am grateful for the assistance provided by an Australian Postgraduate Award scholarship; for the travel assistance provided by the Centre for European Studies and General Linguistics at the University of Adelaide; and for a travel bursary to attend a conference in London in June 2000, provided by the International Association for the Integrational Study of Language and Communication.

A debt of gratitude is owed to the following people for their generous assistance. Firstly, a number of people offered their specialist knowledge of the north-west and contiguous areas. Tom Gara engaged with me in numerous discussions on the early post-contact history, and Bill Edwards and Luise Hercus readily and generously answered email requests for sources and information. Cliff Goddard, on a number of occasions, discussed with me the background to his research in the north-west in the 1980s and helped to clarify my understanding of indigenous metalinguistic terminology. My research colleagues at the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement during the years 2000-1, Susan Woenne-Green, Lyn Coad and Sandra Jarvis must be acknowledged for the many insights they provided into Western Desert culture during our research for the De Rose Hill Native title claim and for directing me to manuscript materials. Similarly, James Walkley must be thanked for explaining aspects of Native title law.

In practical terms, Valerie Sitters at the Royal Geographical Society has provided invaluable help including permission to reproduce the Carruthers map in this thesis; Bill Watt at the Geographical Names Board provided a section of the South Australian Gazeteer for the area covered by the Carruthers map; Philip Clarke, Kate Alport (now retired) and Lea Gardham at the South Australian Museum helped in locating manuscript materials and provided valuable advice and encouragement. Elise Bennetto and Susan

Woodburn at the Barr Smith Library, and Jenny Tonkin (now retired) at the State Library were also helpful in locating manuscript materials. For final editing I am indebted to Dr Cally Guerin.

My special thanks go to Mona Tur, my teacher in Pitjantjatjara between 1998 and 2000, both at the University of South Australia and as a personal tutor. Mona's teaching is notable for her deep interest in promoting greater intercultural understanding and meaningful dialogue between indigenous and wider communities. In significant ways, she has inspired the writing of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Peter Mühlhäusler for supporting this project as it developed, offering advice and expertise at innumerable points; Dr Rob Amery for early input into the project; and my fellow postgraduate students Jonathan Nicholls and Petter Naessan for discussions and advice over the years.

**Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara  
Orthographics**

|                    | bilabial | alveolar       | retroflex | lamino-<br>palatal | velar |
|--------------------|----------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|-------|
| <b>stop</b>        | p        | t              | ɽ         | tj                 | k     |
| <b>nasal</b>       | m        | n              | ɽ̃        | ny                 | ng    |
| <b>lateral</b>     |          | l              | ɽ̃        | ly                 |       |
| <b>flap, trill</b> |          | r              |           |                    |       |
| <b>glide</b>       | w        |                | ɽ̃        | y                  |       |
| <b>vowels</b>      |          | a a: i i: u u: |           |                    |       |

**Source:** Thieberger (1995, p.110)

## Abbreviations

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| AIATSIS | Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies |
| ALRM    | Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement                                      |
| AUPS    | Adelaide University Phonetic System                                   |
| BAR     | Adelaide University Board for Anthropological Research                |
| Geo II  | Geographic II   |
| H-A     | Harvard and Adelaide Universities expedition 1938-9                   |
| IAD     | Institute for Aboriginal Development                                  |
| IPA     | International Phonetic Alphabet                                       |
| NSW     | New South Wales   |
| NT      | Northern Territory  |
| P/Y     | Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara  |
| Qld     | Queensland  |
| RGS     | Royal Geographical Society  |
| SA      | South Australia   |
| SAM     | South Australian Museum   |
| UCLA    | University of California Los Angeles                                  |
| WA      | Western Australia   |

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- Map 2: Map showing the distribution of the Aboriginal tribes of Australia by Norman B. Tindale 1940 ..... back pocket

Between the idea and the reality ... falls the shadow

T.S. Eliot

# 1 Introduction

## 1.0 How this project began

This project, like so many journeys, began with the discovery of a map. While searching through the library of the Royal Geographical Society in Adelaide one day I came across an old and peculiar map of the north-west region of South Australia entitled: *Map of the country in the North-West portion of the Province triangulated by Mr J. Carruthers during 1888-1892*. This map (see Map 1) instantly stirred in me a sense of fascination akin to that expressed by Marlow in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*:

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there. (Conrad 2000 [1902], pp.21-2)

Of course, when Marlow eventually travels to Africa, the map is no longer blank – it had been filled with ‘rivers and lakes and names’ (Conrad 2000 [1902], p.22); he finds with a deep sense of foreboding that the hitherto white spaces had become a heart of darkness. Through the efforts of Australian exploration the map I had before me had been partly filled with ‘rivers and lakes and names’ (although many blank spaces remained) and the area covered by the map had entered the popular imagination of the nation as part of ‘the dead heart’ or ‘the red centre’. I wanted to travel there in both a physical and an intellectual sense.

By the time of John Carruthers' surveying activities during the years 1888-92, several exploring expeditions had passed through the region covered by the map, the most important being those led by Ernest Giles and W.C. Gosse in the early 1870s. These explorations had begun the process of filling in the blanks on the map of the north-west of South Australia. Their legacy of ‘rivers and lakes and names’ appears on the Carruthers map in many of the placenames dotted throughout the Mann and Musgrave Ranges, in the names of the ranges themselves, and in the watercourses that run (intermittently) into the

plains. These placenames, however, scarcely register an indigenous presence. From one perspective, the bestowing of placenames of European origin can be seen as an act of symbolic appropriation, with the formerly unknown territory entering into the expanding colonial sphere, as argued in the work of Paul Carter (1987) and Simon Ryan (1996). To me, of greater interest were the many indigenous placenames recorded by Carruthers, as well as those annotated on the map by Norman Tindale in the 1930s. Tindale is a figure in need of little introduction to anyone with even a passing interest in Australian anthropology and linguistics: a polymath based for many years at the South Australian Museum (SAM), he travelled widely in Australia and amassed a body of data on indigenous Australia, much of which retains an aura of canonical status. Through these recordings, it seemed to me at the time, the Carruthers map with Tindale's additions provides a window onto some of earliest and most sustained intercultural contacts in the north-west<sup>1</sup>.

Tindale's annotations are without doubt the most remarkable feature of the map. Relating to his travels as a research scientist through the region in 1933, they include a thick carpet of indigenous placenames in and around the Mann and Musgrave Ranges that becomes sparser as one's eye moves to the surrounding plains. While Tindale's recordings contrast with those of Carruthers, both in number and in orthographic style, taken together they form a palimpsest in the full sense of the word. Of particular interest are the words 'PITJANDJARA TRIBE' and 'JANKUNDJARA' written in thick, authoritative lines, and taking up nearly as much space as the granite ranges; the block letters of these ethnonyms contrasting with the almost hesitant dashed line separating them. Clearly these annotations are related to another map: Tindale's tribal distribution map of Aboriginal Australia, first published in 1940 (see Map 2), and appearing in revised form with his classic text *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* in 1974. For many people, this map is seen to represent the authoritative account of traditional tribal arrangements in Aboriginal Australia.

The palimpsest-like quality of the Carruthers map suggested to me an avenue of inquiry worth pursuing – the question of how the different contexts of exploration, surveying and scientific research may have influenced the types and quality of the indigenous linguistic materials recorded on the map. Further inspired by the renewed

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<sup>1</sup> Carruthers spent approximately 35 months in the field between 1888-92 (Carruthers 1892), and Tindale spent almost 3 months in the north-west in 1933 (Tindale 1933b MS).

scholarly interest in indigenous placenames in recent years<sup>2</sup>, and an awareness of the importance of historical linguistic materials more generally in Native title and cultural heritage contexts, I began to research the major contexts within which linguistic materials were recorded in the north-west. It was not long before these questions were extended to the wider historical linguistic record of the region, including materials such as vocabularies and sketch grammars. As this research progressed, the need to develop a fuller account of Tindale's linguistic practices and prejudices than I found existing in the literature became apparent.

The real impetus for this project came, however, when I witnessed the role played by Tindale's representations of the north-west of South Australia in the long running De Rose Hill Native title dispute<sup>3</sup>.

De Rose Hill appears on the north-eastern section of the Carruthers map, and was named by Carruthers after a member of his surveying party. The surrounding pastoral station was set up in the 1930s and for many years operated on the back of Aboriginal labour – a number of the Native title claimants had formed part of this workforce over a period of many years. An issue central to the dispute was the question of upon whose traditional territory the station is situated. According to Tindale's representations (1940, p.178; 1974, p.210 and the accompanying maps), the station falls within the boundaries of the Antikirinya tribe, whereas the claimants maintained it was on traditional Yankunytjatjara country (a neighbouring tribe according to Tindale, see figure 16). Those opposing the claim appeared to accept Tindale's representations without further question, using them as evidence to support the proposition that the claimants were not the eligible people to claim Native title over this area of country. Thus, from the beginnings of the dispute the claimants were placed in the invidious position of having to combat the historical records of the culture that had taken their land in the first place. More generally, it appeared to me that a number of important questions relating to Tindale's representations and his linguistic work did not arise in the course of the dispute. Most alarmingly, I was not convinced that the conditions under which archival materials were constructed were

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the contributions in Hercus, Hodges and Simpson (2002).

<sup>3</sup> During 2000-1 I was employed as a research consultant by the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement in Adelaide, who represent the claimants in the De Rose Hill Native title claim. At the time of writing, May 2003, the case is on appeal to the Full Bench of the Federal Court.

examined in sufficient depth. Thus, my initial response to the Carruthers map (with Tindale's annotations), that it was necessary to inquire into the role of contextual factors in the production of linguistic knowledge relating to the north-west, soon became strengthened by the sense that what I had before me was a research question of great significance.

## 1.1 The research problem

In Native title contexts, Tindale's representations of tribal distribution are usually the first port of call for researchers and lawyers. Such is the power and influence of the 'Tindale position' that decisions with regard to the advisability of pursuing litigation may be made relatively early in the Native title process. If an indigenous group is poorly represented by Tindale's map, for example, then it may be decided that seeking negotiated agreements is the only real prospect of a beneficial outcome. There is more to Tindale's representations, however, than bounded names on a map: Tindale also produced a catalogue of literature and manuscript sources listed under tribal headings. For any particular tribe recognised by Tindale, these sources may contain a variety of linguistic materials, including placenames, ethnonyms and vocabularies, all of which may be used to reflect land tenure patterns in times past<sup>4</sup>.

Despite these neat arrangements, real problems may arise if such materials are taken at face value without considering firstly the wider contexts within which they were collected and secondly how Tindale assigns them to a place in his catalogue of tribes. Some of the main contextual circumstances may include, for example, the preoccupations of the recorders (that is, the intellectual frameworks or discourses informing their collecting activities) and how communication proceeded (where it took place, who was involved in the exchanges, and what media were used). When one comes to the question of Tindale's use of the materials recorded by others, attention must also be paid to the

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<sup>4</sup> Just taking the first of these categories, for example, an individual's place of birth (or conception) and their knowledge of networks of places and related mythological associations may be an important aspect of that individual's claim of connection to an area of land. Where they are available, historical records, such as the reports, journals and maps of explorers, surveyors and others, may help to confirm the presence of Aboriginal people at particular places and points in time. Indeed, one of the first steps in establishing a historical connection is to trawl the archives for documents that may prove either beneficial or prejudicial. Linguistic analysis of placenames, along philological or statistical lines, may be employed to attempt to shed light on past land tenure history by reflecting population movements, for instance.

intellectual frameworks or discourses within which he conducted these activities. Ultimately, the use of historical materials in a decontextualised fashion may lead to false conclusions, and this applies equally to Tindale's work and to contemporary readings of it. In the recent past such contexts have been ignored, as shall be demonstrated in this thesis.

On turning to the north-west of South Australia, and specifically to Tindale's representations of Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya, one finds a variety of early historical materials listed in the catalogue of tribes that contain information, both linguistic and ethnological, of an often ambiguous or contradictory nature (Tindale's (1974) Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya catalogue entries are presented in appendix 1). This gives rise to concerns about the objectivity of the recorded materials themselves and to Tindale's treatment of them. These concerns are multiplied in legal contexts in which the claims of contemporary indigenous people are so often measured against the written authority of colonial records. In light of this, instead of simply treating Tindale's representations as canonical, the principal aim of this thesis is to examine and give a critical account of the processes by which Tindale's Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya representations (both cartographic and catalogue representations) were made. Are they supported by linguistic evidence; are they internally consistent and coherent; to what extent are they reflective of Western rather than indigenous perceptions and practices; and more generally do they stand up to close scrutiny? These are important questions, not in the least for the fact that, if the historical record is shown to be limited (owing to reductive and ethnocentric practices involved in the making of linguistic records), there are important implications for the weight apportioned to contemporary oral evidence and claims.

It is intended that the answers to these questions will be of some value to other groups involved in the Native title process, particularly in areas contiguous to the north-west of South Australia where there are a number of current Native title claims. More generally, Tindale collected linguistic materials from disparate areas of Australia, and an analysis of his linguistic practices in relation to the north-west region may be of use for the interpretation of materials gathered in other areas. The analysis presented below also may be of use to people engaged in linguistic heritage work such as language reconstruction or revitalisation. Indeed, a recent major report into the state of indigenous languages in South Australia stresses the need for 'a comprehensive state-wide database, library and archive

on Indigenous languages' and for the materials to be made 'readily available to language projects' (McConvell *et al.*, 2002 MS, p.16). It is intended that this thesis will contribute to these important goals. Finally, other researchers have based their own work upon Tindale's representations, often reproducing his errors or misinterpretations, so this study may help to overcome a number of problems in the historical record by tackling them at their root. Thus, it is envisaged that this thesis will make a significant contribution to wider practical and political applications and interpretations of Tindale's work.

## 1.2 Research design

The aim of this thesis has been pursued by means of archival research and a wide search of the published literature relating to the north-west of South Australia and areas contiguous to it. The first stage of the research process involved locating examples of indigenous linguistic material recorded by early travellers to the north-west from the 1870s (explorers, surveyors, scientists, missionaries and others), as well as noting the circumstances within which the recordings were made. Special attention was paid to the questions of who the recorders were, what they were trying to achieve, how communication proceeded and what was produced.

From the beginning of the research process it has been useful to look to the Carruthers map as the main spatial guide – although this is meant in a slightly loose sense: it has provided a general focus rather than a set of absolute spatial 'limits' as such (see figure 1). It has been necessary to consider material from areas contiguous to the north-west for a number of reasons. Firstly, while Tindale's catalogue of tribes (1940, pp.178-226; 1974, pp.160-262) lists a number of literature sources relating to the north-west, these catalogue entries are neither comprehensive nor entirely reliable (as shall be seen below). Further, a wider reading of the literature is necessary to gain a fuller understanding of the contexts within which collecting activities took place.

Similarly, with regard to Tindale's work, my reading was not limited to the north-west area, but extended to his fieldwork in other Western Desert areas in the Northern

Territory, western South Australia and Western Australia<sup>5</sup>. This course was pursued primarily to assist in building a fuller picture of Tindale's work against which the north-west material could be viewed. Tindale's fieldtrips to the Western Desert continued periodically from the early 1930s through to the mid 1960s when he left Australia to take up an academic position in the United States. The period of particular interest to this thesis is the 1920s and 1930s. During this approximately twenty year period Tindale made his first and most intensive expeditions to Western Desert areas, developed his tribal distribution project, producing the first edition of his catalogue of tribes and tribal distribution map (Tindale 1940), and amassed his major collection of vocabularies relating to languages of 'the Great Western Desert' (Tindale 1937 MS). While much of the research focused on this period, this did not preclude from consideration Tindale's later work, which often adds to or revises the early work.

During the initial research stage two major themes emerged that have directed the course of this thesis. It will be argued at numerous points throughout this thesis that the recording of indigenous linguistic materials, such as placenames, vocabularies and ethnonyms, often involved the *reduction* of diverse and fluid indigenous practices to perceived *order*, guided by Western cartographic, orthographic and grammatical categories. The second theme concerns notions of *purity* and *corruption*, both racial and linguistic, that have played a significant role in shaping the historical linguistic record of the north-west. In order to examine the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya representations that are so central to this thesis, it is necessary to provide an account of the major contexts within which Tindale worked as well as an account of the nature and limitations of Tindale's linguistic practices. As shall be seen, processes of reduction to ordered Western categories and notions of purity and corruption held a central place in Tindale's thinking.

In chapter 2 I examine the nexus between mapping and linguistic activities that arguably accounts for much of the reduction involved in the recording of such linguistic materials as indigenous placenames and ethnonyms. While some consideration is given to Carruthers' recording of placenames and the wider contexts within which his surveying activities took place, the major focus of the chapter is Tindale's tribal distribution project – a project in which placenames and ethnonyms in particular were recorded primarily to

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<sup>5</sup> The term 'Western Desert' is defined and discussed in section 1.4 below.

assist in mapping populations for scientific purposes. The discussion reveals the cultural biases with which Tindale operated while pursuing his objectives, the types of reduction involved in the construction of the catalogue of tribes and the tribal distribution map, and the types of problems posed by bringing to the task frames drawn from European languages and a number of other scientific discourses of the day. Finally, this discussion provides an account of Tindale's linguistics. At this point, however, my attention falls primarily to placenames and ethnonyms, with Tindale's vocabulary collecting activities coming under scrutiny in a later chapter.

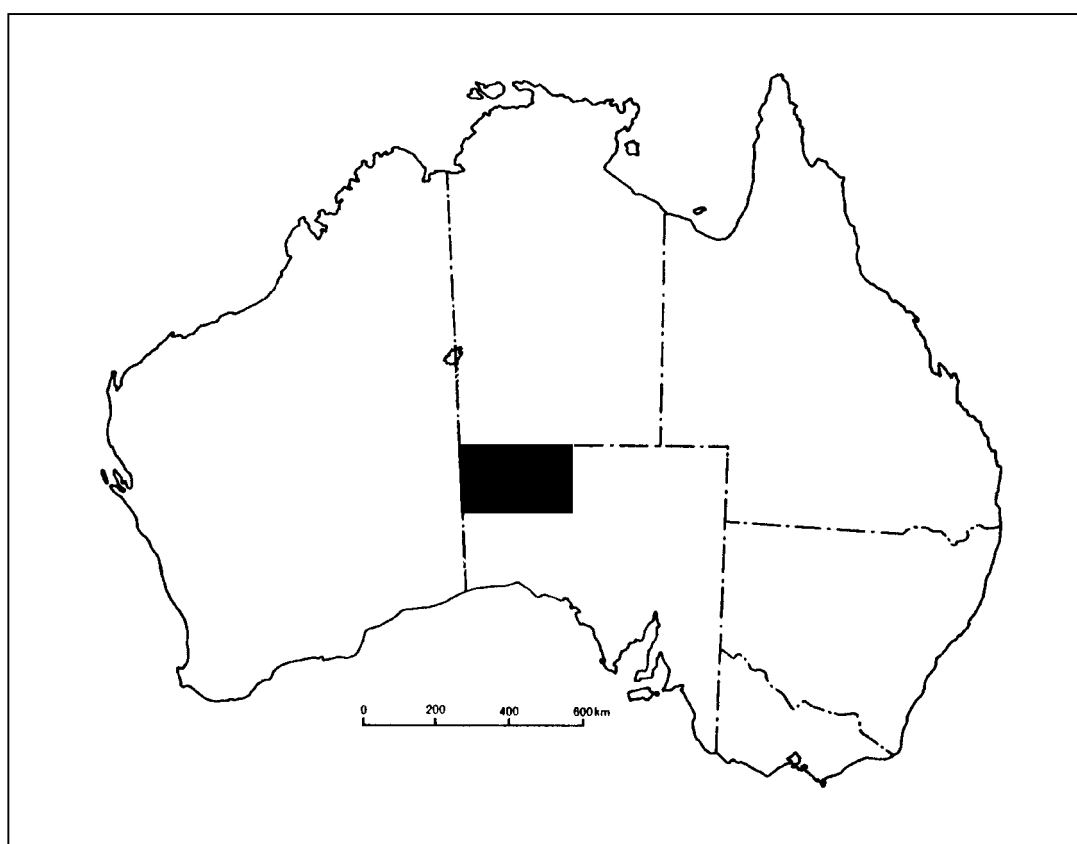


Figure 1. Approximate area covered by the Carruthers survey map.

In chapter 3 my attention turns to a number of issues relating to the problem of communication in intercultural contexts. The discussion is motivated by two main facts. Firstly, from the theoretical perspective adopted in this thesis (see section 1.3), the general model of communication implicit in the collection of linguistic materials in the early post-

contact period<sup>6</sup> was clearly inadequate for capturing the complexities of indigenous linguistic practices. To be sure, an examination of the historical record reveals a general ignorance by recorders of indigenous ways of communicating, which among other things appears to have heightened communication barriers and to have further hindered the gathering of objective and credible data. Secondly, the historical linguistic materials relating to the north-west have been interpreted and used in recent times without sufficient regard being paid to the communicative limitations and difficulties encountered by writers in the field. Thus, the analysis presented in this chapter highlights the need to re-evaluate material gathered through such exchanges rather than accepting them at face value as an accurate representation of indigenous views.

The chapter begins with the observation that recorders generally took a dim view of the principal medium of intercultural communication, pidgin English, which in a number of ways was particularly ill-suited for mapping work and imposed limitations on other areas of linguistic and ethnological research. Following this, I examine a number of cultural barriers to communication encountered by recorders in the north-west. Drawing heavily on the work of Ian Malcolm (1980-2), it is argued that travellers, and in particular scientific researchers, faced a number of communication barriers to their enquiries. It is suggested that the disparate expectations of researchers and *anangu*<sup>7</sup> not only created tensions but also at various times placed limits on communicative exchanges.

The main focus of the chapter, however, is a critical examination of Tindale's communicative practices. Drawing on a wide range of sources, I examine how Tindale attempted to overcome the considerable communication difficulties he faced. Accordingly, I profile Tindale's interpreters in 1933, when he collected the bulk of his linguistic materials relating to the north-west region, and draw out his working relationship with them. Some attention is also paid to Tindale's interactions with his informants. Finally,

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<sup>6</sup> The term 'early post-contact period' as used in this thesis refers to the period between the early 1870s, the time of the building of the overland telegraph to the east of the area under study and Giles's and Gosse's explorations, and the late 1930s, a period which saw the establishment of the Ernabella mission and an increase in contact. While there is an element of arbitrariness to these dates, they do represent significant points of change in the balance of local linguistic and cultural ecologies in the north-west region. For the sake of argument, this period contrasts with the 'post-Ernabella period', from c1940 to the 1980s, which saw the establishment of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands through the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act 1981*; and the 'post-land rights period' from the 1980s to the present.

<sup>7</sup> This term as used in this thesis usually refers to the indigenous inhabitants of the north-west region. In pre-contact times this term was used to refer to 'people in general', but is now more often used for 'aboriginal or indigenous person(s)', see Goddard (1996, pp.6-7).

special attention is paid to a number of communication difficulties relating to Tindale's key concepts of 'proper name' and 'boundary', which, as introduced rather than traditional concepts for the area of Australia under examination in this thesis, cast a negative shadow over the objectivity of the data they record.

In chapter 4 my attention turns more fully to the collection of vocabularies in the north-west. I begin, though, with a general overview of the development of vocabulary collecting as a response to the newly discovered diversity of languages brought about by European colonial expansion. The influence of these activities can be traced to the collection of linguistic material in the north-west, particularly during the early post-contact period. Indeed, vocabulary collecting often arose in response to a number of related discourses centring on the question of Aboriginal racial origins and the apparent 'fact' of racial decline and impending extinction. Certainly the vocabularies gathered during the Elder scientific exploring expedition (1891-2), which constitute the first vocabularies recorded in the north-west, reflect these discourses. While conducted under the banner of science, the results of these activities are not entirely objective, and it is arguably the case that these vocabularies are better viewed as Western (or colonial) rather than indigenous cultural artifacts. Besides uncovering the cultural assumptions behind the collection of vocabularies by recorders other than Tindale (whose own vocabulary collecting activities are examined in chapter 5), I also consider Tindale's use of them. Thus, I revisit the issue of the relationship between mapping and linguistic activities discussed in chapter 2. In particular, the focus is upon the apparent productivity and circularity of the catalogue of tribes and the tribal distribution map, and it is argued that these essentially scientific tools play a role in bringing languages into being.

In chapter 5 I continue my examination of the construction of the historical linguistic record of the north-west by bringing into focus Tindale's vocabulary collecting activities. It should be noted that the question of Tindale's linguistics has been largely ignored by scholars and as a result remains poorly understood. Accordingly, the chapter serves two purposes: firstly to provide an account of Tindale's linguistic activities in the 1930s to further the main argument of this thesis; and secondly to provide an account that may be useful in a more general sense to others wanting to interpret Tindale's vocabularies for other areas. Central to the discussion are Tindale's collected vocabularies for the north-west and contiguous areas compiled in his *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara, the Language of the*

*Natives of the Great Western Desert (with some words of the Pintubi, Ngalia, Kukatja, Na:dadjara, Wirongu, NaNatadjara, Aranda, Janjundjadjara [sic] & Wordaka languages)* (Tindale 1937 MS). This document poses a number of interpretive problems due in large part to a profusion of inconsistencies within the manuscript and a cloud of ambiguity surrounding Tindale's use of metalinguistic terminology (most notably terms relating to various 'dialects' of 'Pitjandjara'). Thus, in order to shed light on this document, and indeed on Tindale's wider linguistic practices, I sketch the main contexts within which Tindale pursued his linguistic activities in the 1930s. A central concern in this regard is the question of the degree to which Tindale was influenced by the discourses of racial and linguistic purity circulating in Adelaide's scientific circles of the day. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the construction of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*. This part of the thesis asks: with what assumptions about language did Tindale operate; what was Tindale attempting to do – were the vocabularies compiled in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* recorded for tribal identification or for some other purpose(s); and to what extent did he reduce diverse Western Desert speech practices to European categories – that is, how reflective of indigenous practices are his recordings?

In chapter 6, the last of the main chapters, I turn to Tindale's Antikirinya representations, for the degree of contradiction and confusion surrounding this aspect of Tindale's work emerges as a loose thread that threatens to unwind the conceptual fabric of his mapping project. Against a background provided by the prominent role of Tindale's tribal representations in the De Rose Hill Native title dispute, the main aim of the chapter is to examine how Tindale arrived at his Antikirinya representations – both cartographic and catalogue – and to determine their reliability. That is, this part of the thesis asks: who were Tindale's main sources; what role did linguistic data play in his calculations; and are Tindale's representations more reflective of his own preoccupations than indigenous practices? In order to dispel some of the confusion surrounding this issue I examine the nature of the relationship between the terms 'Yankunytjatjara' and 'Antikirinya'. Largely on the basis of etymological evidence and inferences drawn from the historical record, Tindale's use of the term 'Antikirinya' to denote a distinct pre-contact tribe is rejected, which carries implications for the neatness of his tribal categories across the north-west area. Tindale's Antikirinya constructions, it is argued, provide a clear example of the types of problems that may arise when reducing diverse and essentially fluid phenomena to rigid

categories imposed from outside. Importantly, these problems carry the potential for serious misrepresentation and error.

Finally, the main conclusions arising from this inquiry are presented in chapter 7.

The archival component of the research was conducted at the following institutions over a two year period: the State Library of South Australia, the Barr Smith Library, the University of Adelaide archives, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies library, the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia, State Records of South Australia, the Lands Titles Office (in Adelaide), the Geographical Names section of the Department for Environment & Heritage, and the South Australian Museum. Of these institutions, without doubt, the greatest source of data has been the anthropology archive of the SAM.

In many ways this project would not have been possible if Tindale had not had the foresight and goodwill to bequeath his field journals and related materials to the SAM. This project is also made easier by Tindale's fastidiousness in keeping records. At the beginning of Tindale's ethnological career he received advice from Baldwin Spencer on keeping a detailed journal, and according to the historian Tom Gara: 'Tindale followed Spencer's advice, keeping a journal every day of his life, whether he was in the field, working at the Museum or at home on the weekend' (1995, p.135). Based on Tindale's assiduous observance of this practice, Gara suggests that 'all the information that Tindale recorded during his fieldwork is, or should be, documented somewhere in his journals' (1995, p.138). This provides some degree of confidence that a thorough search of the SAM archive should enable one to come close to constructing a comprehensive account of Tindale's activities<sup>8</sup>. To this end, a wide range of materials in the SAM's Tindale collection have been consulted, including: field journals, notebooks, expedition papers, field audiotapes, vocabularies, correspondence files, maps and papers relating to the tribal distribution project. While pursuing this research special care has been taken to avoid the dangers of what may be called over-interpretation. Wherever it has seemed reasonable to do so, Tindale's own published statements of his position, especially Tindale 1940 and

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<sup>8</sup> While my search of the Tindale collection was pursued over many months there remains the possibility that further material may exist that is as yet unaccessioned. Based largely on the assistance of Kate Alport, recently retired from her position as archivist, every effort has been made to locate any and all materials relating to the north-west, whether accessioned or not.

1974 and their accompanying maps, have been given significant weight in the interpretive process.

Due to a number of ethical concerns, a body of material that turned up during the research process has been excluded from this thesis. Western Desert society operates with an ‘economy of oral information’ (Michaels 1985) based upon gender and age, effectively imposing restrictions on what can be known and what can be communicated by whom and to whom. Thus, certain types of knowledge are considered *miil-miilpa* or secret/sacred and remain removed from the public domain. From the amount of restricted information appearing in the archives as well as the published literature, it is evident that this concept and associated set of cultural practices were either not grasped or were ignored by those researching and writing in the early post-contact period, particularly those who were fascinated by ritual aspects of Western Desert culture. More recently, steps have been taken by institutions and researchers to recognise the indigenous ownership of these types of cultural materials. In the researching and writing of this thesis, therefore, a number of steps have been taken to avoid causing offence to indigenous communities. Firstly, before commencing research in the Tindale collection at the SAM, I sought and obtained permission to access the collection and to pursue my research from the traditional owners of the material contained in the collection (through the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Council). Secondly, my policy has been to err on the side of caution and to avoid the discussion of potentially sensitive material at all times. For this reason *inma* ‘songs’ and *tjukurpa* ‘stories’ are only discussed in a general way, even though they could potentially shed light on matters linguistic. An example from the published literature of an exclusion of this type is Basedow’s (1904, p.23) recording of the words of a song associated with a men’s ritual in the Musgrave Ranges.

With Tindale’s manuscript materials care has been taken to avoid discussing *miil-miilpa* words and placenames. Tindale’s vocabularies of the Western Desert area contain many terms that fall into this category, reflecting his research interests at the time. Tindale’s placenames posed a further research limitation owing to the great difficulty in getting the required number of people with an interest in a particular site together at one time and place for research purposes. This difficulty, combined with the concern over the potential *miil-miilpa* status of many of the placenames recorded by Tindale, has meant that their discussion below is limited to general matters. The task of pursuing the veracity of

Tindale's placenames appearing on the Carruthers map proved simply too costly and time consuming to be pursued in this thesis, and would no doubt prove a useful research project for the future.

Apart from these constraints, I am bound to a confidentiality agreement with the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM) relating to my role as a research consultant for the De Rose Hill claim over a period of almost 18 months. In the writing of this thesis I have respected this agreement. During the three months I spent on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands during my period of employment with ALRM, however, I was afforded many opportunities to engage in informal discussions with residents of the north-west and to advance my understanding of Western Desert speech varieties such as Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara. Finally, the discussion of the linguistic aspects of the De Rose Hill hearings presented below has been limited by my confidentiality agreement with ALRM and the equally important fact that the matter is still sub judice at the time of writing (May 2003).

### **1.3 Theoretical perspective**

The historical linguistic record for the north-west of South Australia consists of two principal components: on the one hand are written observations of travellers in the field – the products of numerous, essentially verbal, communicative exchanges – and on the other are written constructions that draw upon them (such as Tindale's catalogue of tribes and the writings of other researchers). For the discussion to follow, it is useful to draw a distinction between the former as first order constructions and the latter as second order constructions. When we inquire into the conditions under which the communicative exchanges leading to the first order constructions took place, as well as the intellectual frames and discourses informing the writing of second order constructions, we find myriad contextual factors at play. A common thread running through both first and second order constructions, however, is a number of assumptions about language and communication at the heart of Western culture.

In order to explicate these assumptions, it is useful to begin with a general observation provided by the linguist Roy Harris:

The problem of communication, as presented in the Western tradition by virtually every theorist from Plato to the present day, has a basic structure of pristine simplicity. We have two individuals, A and B. Something A does affects B in such a way that ‘communication’ between the two is said to have occurred. (Harris 1996, p.1)

An influential exposition of what is thought to occur between A and B is presented by Ferdinand de Saussure in his ‘speech circuit’:

The starting point of the [speech] circuit is in the brain of one individual, for instance *A*, where facts of consciousness which we shall call concepts are associated with representations of linguistic signs or sound patterns by means of which they may be expressed. Let us suppose that a given concept triggers in the brain a corresponding sound pattern. This is an entirely *psychological* phenomenon, followed in turn by a *physiological* process: the brain transmits to the organs of phonation an impulse corresponding to the pattern. Then sound waves are sent from *A*’s mouth to *B*’s ear: a purely *physical* process. Next, the circuit continues in *B* in the opposite order: from ear to brain, the physiological transmission of the sound pattern; in the brain, the psychological association of this pattern with the corresponding concept [and so on if *B* responds]. (Saussure 1994 [1916], pp.11-12, translation by Roy Harris)

This passage is accompanied by the following illustration:

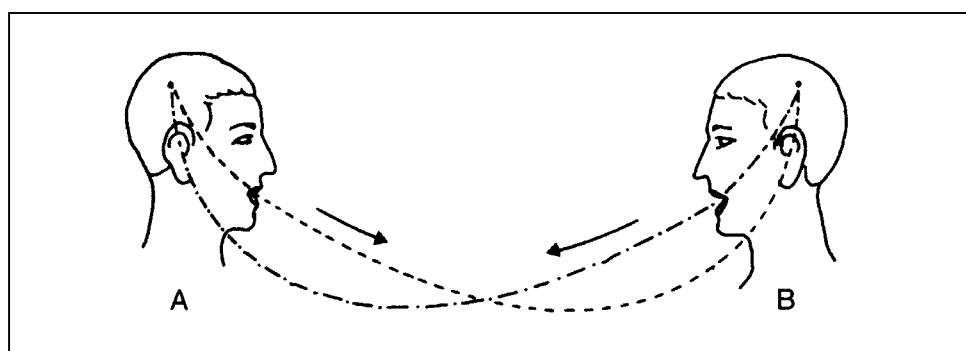


Figure 2. Saussure’s speech circuit (Saussure 1994 [1916], p.11).

While Saussure's speech circuit has certainly been influential, having laid the foundations for the development of European structural linguistics in the twentieth century, like many other versions of the sender-hearer model of communication, it rests upon two principal assumptions: (i) communication is a process of *telementation* or the transference of thoughts between speaker A and hearer B, and (ii) telementation involves a *fixed code* of forms and meanings shared by both A and B (Harris 1990, pp.26-32).

Now, before considering a number of problems associated with this model of communication, it is important to stress that one does not have to be a grammarian or linguistic theorist to share the assumptions inherent to it. Indeed, as Michael Reddy (1979) argues, words and sentences are often spoken of in everyday English usage as *containers* for the *transfer* of thoughts from one person to another. By analysing a corpus of sentences, Reddy finds that 'English has a preferred framework for conceptualising communication' (1979, p.285), that he calls the *conduit metaphor* of communication. Reddy highlights the following assumptions at the core of this metaphorical way of conceptualising communication (1979, p.290):

- (i) language functions like a conduit, transferring thoughts bodily from one person to another;
- (ii) in writing and speaking, people insert their thoughts or feelings in the words;
- (iii) words accomplish the transfer by containing the thoughts or feelings and conveying them to others; and
- (iv) in listening or reading, people extract the thoughts and feelings once again from the words.

Reddy's work supports the notion that for speakers of English, the conduit metaphor is a deeply ingrained and widespread folk intuition about how communication takes place<sup>9</sup>. Taking a wider socio-historical view, there is little doubt that these intuitions have been reinforced in Western culture by their having been enshrined in such major institutions as the education system (in the teaching of traditional grammar) and the

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<sup>9</sup> Reddy's data appear to have been drawn from pedagogic contexts. The following examples, drawn from Reddy's appendix, serve to illustrate points (i)-(iv) above: (i) 'it's very hard to get that idea across in a hostile atmosphere' (p.311); (ii) 'it is very difficult to put this concept into words' (p.312); (iii) 'Rich described his feelings in beautiful words' (p.321); (iv) 'the passage conveys a feeling of excitement' (p.313). It is also worth pointing out that the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) provides firm and detailed support for Reddy's insights. Lakoff and Johnson argue that 'our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature' (1980, p.3).

judiciary. During the course of this thesis, we will see numerous examples of ‘conduit’ thinking at work: a clear example appears in the writings of researchers who view a major ‘code’ in intercultural communication – pidgin English – as unsuitable for transmitting scientific and ethnological data because it is seen as a degraded or corrupted version of English (see chapter 3.1). Another example is found in Tindale’s notion that an orthographic system is a ‘phonetic vehicle’ for communication: that is, a means for representing and transporting sound (Tindale 1947 MS). In a more general way, we might see aspects of these intuitions at play in the negative stereotyping of indigenous languages as primitive codes (due to the putative primitive mentality of their speakers) that was so prevalent in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of course, a major implication flowing from this nexus of conceptual and cultural practices is that we can expect to find that early travellers to the north-west possessed a set of assumptions and limitations before they set foot in the field. How this may have affected their linguistic activities will be a question of major interest when it comes to interpreting the product of their linguistic endeavours.

Returning to the ‘speech circuit’ represented in figure 2, it should be noted that while the underlying notion of telementation according to a fixed code has enjoyed enormous prestige in Western linguistics and philosophy of language<sup>10</sup>, it has come under sustained criticism in recent years. Prominent among the critics has been Roy Harris (1980, 1981, 1990, 1996, 1998a, 1998b), a key figure in developing the theoretical perspective known as integrational linguistics. In essence, the integrational perspective arises as a critique of approaches to language and communication that operate firstly by separating verbal from non-verbal constituents, and secondly by focusing on the former and disregarding the latter. Accordingly, the basic sender-hearer model of communication and approaches that rely upon it come in for special critical attention. Such approaches are termed ‘surrogationalist’ by Harris, and central to the integrational critique of them is that they lead only to partial and misguided accounts of language and communication. In the following discussion it is pointed out that not only does the sender-hearer view of communication face a number of theoretical and practical objections which cast doubt over its appropriateness as a way of approaching communication in Western cultural contexts, but also that these doubts are heightened for contexts involving intercultural

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<sup>10</sup> This is seen in strictly formalist approaches to the study of language, such as generative grammar, and in positivist philosophy of language.

communication. If it is granted (as is argued below) that approaches to language and communication by travellers to the north-west were informed by segregationist prejudices, then the integrational perspective is a powerful tool for analysing the linguistic practices that gave rise to first order and later second order linguistic constructions appearing in the historical linguistic record.

A discussion of the limitations of this way of conceptualising communication must begin by noting a number of logical/theoretical problems associated with the notion of a fixed code. As pointed out by Harris, telecommunication according to a fixed code (which is often assumed to be a particular language or dialect) logically requires that A and B have ‘exactly the same linguistic knowledge ... if communication is to be successful’ (1990, p.32). Given the different linguistic histories of individuals it is difficult to see how this condition could be met. Moreover, it is unclear how a fixed code could become established in the first place (1990, pp.32-3). According to Harris, in this model of communication, ‘innovation becomes a theoretical impossibility’ (1990, p.34) – if innovation does occur then there cannot be a fixed code. While Harris’s criticisms might strike a hard-headed defender of sender-hearer approaches as theoretical hairsplitting (after all, in practice does anybody deny that linguistic change is a normal and ongoing state of affairs?), this is a debate that is well avoided here<sup>11</sup>. For our purposes, it is more important to pick up on a number of practical problems flowing from Harris’ critique of fixed code thinking.

In practice there are numerous problems encountered in (i) objectively locating or defining the fixed code and (ii) defining the community of speakers that shares it. These are perennial linguistic problems, and when we come to the vocabularies recorded in the north-west these problems are particularly acute. As shall be seen at numerous points throughout this thesis, the assumption that *discrete* dialects traditionally existed in the north-west is problematic: certainly it is not supported by empirical evidence. According to

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<sup>11</sup> A defender of the sender-hearer model might respond that the fixed code is an idealised state of affairs, a necessary abstraction. It is not crucial for the analysis presented below to elaborate this dispute – it is sufficient merely to accept the general point that the notion of a fixed code is a theoretical liability in the sense that it seems to give rise to more problems than it solves. According to the integrational perspective adopted here, meanings are negotiated in social contexts and are not given in advance of the communicative event by a fixed code shared by participants. Having said this, for the sake of clarity it should be stressed that it is not denied here that artefacts promoting fixed-code notions, such as dictionaries (in promoting standardised word meanings), do serve practical functions. Problems arise when too much authority is given to such artefacts and when the full non-verbal aspects of language and communication are ignored. For a more detailed account of Harris’s criticisms, the reader is referred to Harris (1990, pp.32-6). For a more detailed account of the integrational linguistic approach than can be afforded here, see Harris (1998a).

Harris, the notion of a discrete dialect rests upon the assumption that at some level there exists linguistic homogeneity: ‘a uniform system to which all speakers within that particular geographical circumscription have equal access’ (Harris 1998b, p.92). Such conditions are hard to imagine let alone locate in the Western Desert, whose inhabitants were traditionally of high mobility and later suffered the effects of cultural disruption brought by contact. Certainly, as argued by Rigsby and Sutton (1980-2), the notion of a ‘speech community’ is of limited utility for indigenous contexts in Australia where we find high levels of multilingualism and fluid social groups. Apart from these points, it is worth stressing that the sender-hearer model promotes the assumption that *discrete* dialects and languages exist, a point to which I shall return.

A second major problem with the speech circuit (or ‘talking heads’ model, as it is often called) is that it reduces communication to the transference of a fixed code without taking into account non-verbal aspects of communication such as, for example, the facial expressions, bodily stances, gestures, beliefs (or expectations), perceptions, power relations, gender and cultural backgrounds of the participants. In other words, by focusing upon the code and failing to take into account the wider contexts within which communication takes place, the model is overly abstract (see Harris 1990, pp.21-2). Furthermore, owing to the extent to which this view of communication is built upon a narrow view of Western communicative practices, it is open to the charge of ethnocentrism. The talking heads model is a poor one for understanding communication in non-Western societies. For Australian contexts, this is amply demonstrated by the work of Malcolm (1980-82), which draws on ethnographic approaches to communication developed by Dell Hymes and others from the 1960s. Malcolm’s work, which is discussed in chapter 3, points to a breakdown of the sender-hearer model in indigenous contexts (through a range of culturally prescribed practices such as, for example, the right not to respond, and restrictions over who can play a part in communicative events and what can be discussed).

Following on from this, a third problem with the speech circuit, and by association ‘conduit’ thinking, is that it is an inappropriate model for approaching intercultural communication. This model is confronted by the problem that the principal medium of intercultural communication in the north-west, pidgin English, was a reduced, variable and

often ambiguous ‘code’ that operated in restricted social contexts (see chapter 3.1). Thus, according to its own requirements, the model breaks down. Another way of viewing intercultural communication from an orthodox linguistic perspective would be to adapt the speech circuit model by including a third participant ‘C’, an interpreter, thus forming a triadic relationship between ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ with two codes in use instead of one. Leaving aside the contentious issue of the theoretical possibility of two inter-translatable codes, at the very least this model multiplies the problem of a fixed code and still suffers the same problems of over-abstraction and ethnocentrism as the diadic model discussed in the previous paragraph. In intercultural contexts in Australia, and particularly for those under consideration in this thesis, serious barriers to communication stemmed from the differing communicative expectations and practices of the travellers and the indigenes. For example, while ‘natural’ for travellers, question and answer discourse was foreign to, and often avoided by, indigenous people. In itself, this fact is of crucial importance when considering first order linguistic materials and by implication the second order constructions based upon them. This and other problems associated with this triadic model are illustrated by the discussion offered in chapter 3.

Now it might be objected that it is possible to share the intuition that thoughts are put into words and transferred between speakers without holding on to the view that this takes place according to a rigidly fixed code. Indeed, there have been approaches based on the sender-hearer model that relax this condition and in turn allow a greater role to contextual factors in describing communication. Let us consider, for example, a model provided by Roman Jakobson, a prominent structuralist. According to Jakobson, the following model presents ‘a concise survey of the constitutive factors in any speech event, in any act of verbal communication’ (1960, p.353):

The ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE. To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT referred to (‘referent’ in another, somewhat ambiguous, nomenclature), seizable by the addressee, and either verbal or capable of being verbalized; a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and decoder of the message); and, finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication. (1960, p.353)

The first thing to note is that while Jakobson's model is recognisable as a version of Saussure's speech circuit, it involves a number of departures, arising from the functionalist perspective adopted. Most notably, it appears to relax the notion of a completely shared code for the encoding and decoding of messages. This is allowable, it seems, largely because the MESSAGE may serve a metalingual function and allow the ADDRESSER and ADDRESSEE to overcome gaps in shared linguistic knowledge (but note that even though there are fewer restrictions on the code, it is clear that it must be fixed to a large extent). In fact, Jakobson's model may also be seen to avoid the problem of ethnocentrism: the CONTACT includes a phatic function (1960, p.355) that allows participants to initiate and keep open channels of communication. While this may go part of the way to avoiding problems associated with ethnocentrism, in intercultural contexts there remains the more general problem of the participants assigning the same *function* to the MESSAGE for communication to be successful. According to this model it is difficult to see how this may be overcome<sup>12</sup>. A major problem from my perspective, therefore, remains one of segregation: there is still a focus on verbal code over non-verbal contextual factors and cultural practices. It should be reiterated that, according to the integrational perspective adopted in this thesis, it is not only to the verbal but also to the non-verbal, situational elements of communicative exchanges that one must pay attention in approaching communication.

Having noted a number of theoretical and practical problems faced by sender-hearer models of communication (including the conduit view of communication), it is important, for the purpose of this introduction, to unpack a number of assumptions fostered by this view of communication that can be traced in the work of Tindale and other contributors to the historical linguistic record for the north-west of South Australia. When we consider the linguistic record, this is revealed by:

- (i) a focus by recorders on the verbal code;
- (ii) an assumption that the code is sufficient for communication;
- (iii) an assumption that discrete languages and dialects exist;
- (iv) an assumption that pure languages and dialects exist; and
- (v) an assumption that discrete populations (usually referred to as 'tribes') speak discrete languages and dialects.

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<sup>12</sup> For a detailed discussion of Jakobson's model see Taylor (1980, chapter 3).

Taken together, this closely related cluster of practices and assumptions are at the core of Western responses to the recording of indigenous linguistic material in the north-west. Before proceeding it is important to be clear about what is being claimed here. By making this claim, it is suggested that points (i)-(v) form a significant part of the intellectual baggage of travellers to the north-west, although there are a number of caveats to consider. Firstly, in themselves, points (i)-(v) do not provide a full explanation of the types of linguistic practices engaged in – a range of additional contextual factors played a role in the recording of linguistic materials, as will be seen in due course. Secondly, it is not suggested that all of (i)-(v) were always concurrently at play in the recordings of each and every contributor to the historical linguistic record – each contribution to the record arose in response to its own set of contextual circumstances and records need to be examined on a case by case basis. We do not find in Carruthers' recording of indigenous placenames, for example, any indication that he saw them as belonging to particular tribes or discrete or pure languages or dialects (although this may not have been entirely absent from his thinking). Having said this, it is useful at this preliminary stage to expand briefly on points (i)-(v) to illustrate the importance of reconsidering the historical materials against this cluster of practices and assumptions to avoid some of the potential pitfalls surrounding second order interpretations and indeed contemporary interpretation of these records.

A close reading of the historical sources suggests that travellers were preoccupied with the verbal code when recording their linguistic observations, although reports of non-verbal aspects of communications such as gesture, sign language, message sticks and ground drawings do occasionally appear. This practice was recognised as early as the 1930s by Elkin, who called for a broader, culture-based approach to the recording and study of indigenous languages (Elkin 1937)<sup>13</sup>. Of course, the focus on the verbal code is most readily apparent with vocabularies and grammatical sketches, and one does not have far to search for an explanation for this – for missionaries the code would prove useful for Bible translations and for scientists it would prove useful for shedding light on the question of Aboriginal racial origins and other research interests. Underpinning much of this work lies the assumption fostered by the talking heads approach that the code is sufficient for communication. From the perspective of this thesis, this is wrong-headed and genuinely

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<sup>13</sup> Elkin's alternative programme for linguistic work would appear to fit into a Boas-Sapirian framework. Unfortunately, Elkin's appeal was not widely taken up.

misleading, potentially giving rise to the very dangers that this thesis seeks to expose. That is, a corollary to this segregationist approach is that the sender-receiver model encourages the decontextualised use of written records. A stark example of the decontextualised approach is provided by Giovanni Gattie, an Italian linguist who wrote on the South Australian language Dieri in the 1930s, and also corresponded with Tindale and others in Adelaide<sup>14</sup>. In a letter found in Tindale's correspondence files, Gattie acknowledges the receipt of Dieri language materials and makes the rather startling claim that he will write his next letter in Dieri (Gattie 1932 MS)<sup>15</sup>. In what meaningful sense, one may well ask, would the contents of this letter be Dieri?

As noted above, the sender-hearer model promotes the assumption that discrete dialects and languages exist. Of course, this aspect of fixed code thinking is encouraged by literate artifacts, such as dictionaries and prescriptive grammars, that underlie the codification of standard national languages. Later in this thesis I take exception to this assumption and argue that in colonial contexts it is often the case that languages are not so much discovered as made by literate practices (see chapter 4).

It is only a small step from the notion that discrete languages and dialects exist to the notion of linguistic purity – that is, that pure dialects, or more frequently pure languages, exist. I have already noted that pidgin English was generally seen as a corrupt code of English, but to this may be added the observation that indigenous languages (or dialects), particularly as spoken by 'full bloods' or 'uncontaminated natives', were revered for their putative purity. As shall be seen below, a nexus between notions of linguistic and racial purity (which interestingly is also amenable to criticism as a fixed code type of thinking, Hutton 2000 MS) played a significant role in the construction of the historical linguistic record.

The notion that discrete populations (tribes) exist who speak distinct languages or dialects is prevalent in the historical record. There is now a significant body of literature

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<sup>14</sup> Gattie published his *La Lingua Dieri* in Rome in 1930 (Tindale 1935a, p.263).

<sup>15</sup> It should be acknowledged that the addressee of this letter is ambiguous, simply appearing as 'Gentleman'. While the addressee is ambiguous, Gattie's linguistic assumptions are clear. That is, his intentions illustrate the assumption that, firstly, if one has the code one can communicate and, more generally, that it is unproblematic for one to use first order constructions to produce further decontextualised second order constructions.

that is critical of this simplistic relation between people and languages, and parts of this debate, particularly in relation to Tindale's work and the Western Desert region, will be discussed in section 1.5.

As this thesis moves through the chapters to follow, the influence of the above practices and assumptions in the construction of the historical linguistic record for the north-west will be illustrated and discussed in more detail.

Finally, it should be mentioned that this thesis is informed in a general way by the concept of the ecology of language (Haugen 1972, Mühlhäusler 2002). According to Einar Haugen: 'language ecology may be defined as the study of interactions between any given language and its environment' (1972, p.325). Leaving to one side for a moment Haugen's notion of a 'given language', which *prima facie* may seem incompatible with the integrational perspective outlined above, the ecology metaphor provides a particularly useful way of thinking about the disruptions brought by contact to traditional linguistic practices in the north-west. While it is not within the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed account of these changes, it is nevertheless important to bear in mind that by the late 1930s-early 1940s the linguistic ecology of the north-west had been changed by the introduction of pidgin English, the codification and teaching of Pitjantjatjara at Ernabella (in the Musgrave Ranges), the decline in population of some groups through introduced diseases, and movements away from traditional countries to pastoral stations and ration distribution points<sup>16</sup>. For someone interested in reconstructing pre-contact tribal arrangements, as Tindale in the main attempted to do, such changes posed a number of difficulties, as will be seen below.

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<sup>16</sup> For classic accounts of traditional living patterns in the north-west of South Australia and contiguous areas of the Northern Territory, see Strehlow (1965) and Tindale (1972). The general picture emerging from these accounts is that *anangu* traditionally lived in a delicate balance with their environment, sheltering around permanent waters in the ranges during dry times and ranging out to exploit resources after rains. The coming of the colonists instigated wholesale change – whether through the introduction of disease or environmental degradation caused by the pastoral industry and feral animals; the introduction of rations and the development of the dogging industry; or the establishment of the mission at Ernabella. There is a sizeable literature describing the impact of these and other aspects of contact, including: Cleland (1951), Hilliard (1968), Brokensha (1978 MS), Hamilton (1979 MS), Vachon (1982), Toyne and Vachon (1984), Layton (1986), Edwards (1992), Lester (1993) and Mattingley and Hampton (1998). A number of these works from 1980s deal with more recent post-land rights history. More generally, the effects of contact are discussed by Shaw and Gibson (1988) for Oodnadatta and neighbouring regions, Long (1989) for the south-west of the Northern Territory, Kimber (1990) for Central Australia, and Doohan (1992) for the pastoral lands to the east of the area under study. Mattingley and Hampton (1998) offer a South Australia-wide perspective.

In other respects, the ecology metaphor also serves to highlight the extent to which travellers ignored the various and multiple links between indigenous linguistic practices and the social and physical environments (or contexts) within which they arose. So in this important sense the linguistic ecology perspective is compatible with the integrational perspective outlined above. Any concern over the notion of a ‘given language’ as expressed by Haugen (to the extent that it may be conceived of as a fixed code) is avoided by adopting the ecology of language perspective in a general way. That is, it is perfectly acceptable to consider the north-west as constituting a number of inter-related functioning linguistic communities without committing to the notion of discrete languages or dialects.

#### 1.4 Terminology

The north-west of South Australia falls within a wider region known in the literature as the Western Desert. This term appears in Tindale’s work in the 1930s as a geographical term apparently synonymous with the ‘Great Victoria Desert’ (1936, p.169; 1940, p.150), a narrower use than we find in general use today. Contemporary use of the term derives from the 1950s with Ronald Berndt’s (1959) notion of a ‘Western Desert cultural bloc’ and the notion of a widespread ‘Western Desert language’ introduced by the linguists Arthur Capell and W.H. Douglas (see O’Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin 1966, p.138). Douglas writes:

The Western Desert language is an Australian Aboriginal language spoken by an unknown number of people (possibly by a number in the low thousands) living in the, so-called, ‘desert areas’ of South and Western Australia, including the Great Victoria Desert and the Gibson Desert, and in the central west of the Northern Territory. (1964, p.1)

As it is based primarily upon cultural-linguistic criteria, the Western Desert is difficult to define in physical terms – that is, the term does not denote a particular geographical feature and neither is there a corresponding or near equivalent indigenous term or concept that serves this function<sup>17</sup>. Despite these definitional problems, an idea of the extent of the

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<sup>17</sup> To make matters more complicated, Tindale was not always consistent with his use of this term. In Tindale (1972, pp.217-9), for example, the term ‘Great Western Desert’ is used to denote a region extending from the coast of Western Australia into Queensland. This use of the term appears to be restricted to Tindale and also appears to be based on geographical rather than cultural criteria.

Western Desert region sufficient for our purposes can be gained from figure 3, which more properly indicates the approximate distribution of the Western Desert language.

It is of more than passing interest that, like the notion of the Western Desert region, the notion of the Western Desert language also appears to be a colonial rather than an indigenous construct. Certainly a number of observers, including Douglas himself, report the absence of an indigenous term for this overarching language<sup>18</sup>. While it has been customary in the literature to speak of ‘dialects’ of the Western Desert language, which in contemporary terms is usually referred to as a complex dialect chain or continuum (Wurm 1988), in the discussion to follow the more neutral term ‘speech varieties’ is often preferred – as should be clear by now, the notion that traditionally there were discrete dialects in the Western Desert is taken to be a problematic one. At times, the indigenous metalinguistic term *wangka* is used to refer to indigenous speech in general<sup>19</sup>.

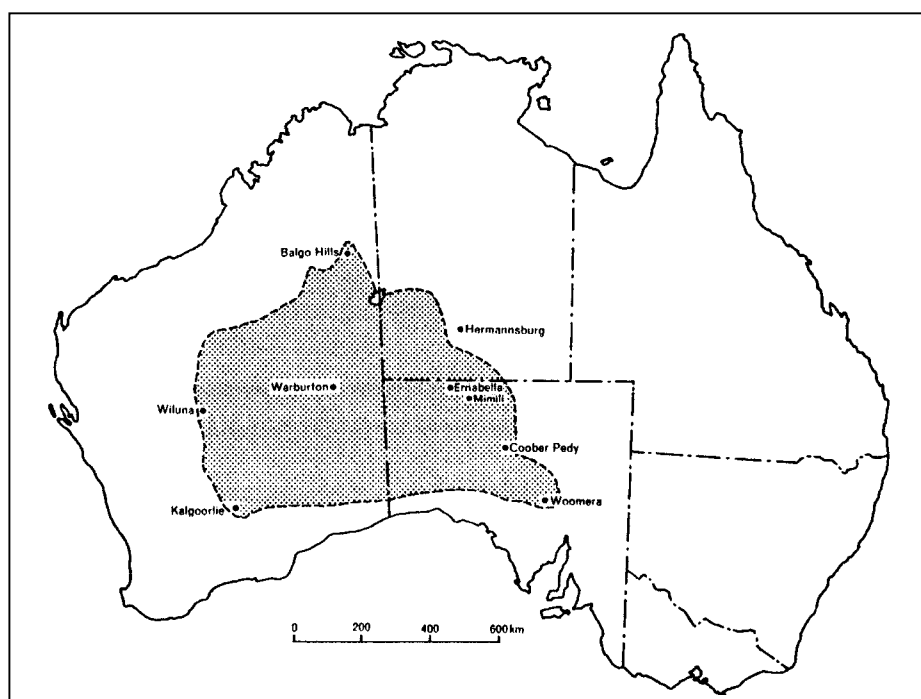


Figure 3. Approximate distribution of the Western Desert language (in Goddard 1985, p.2).

<sup>18</sup> Berndt (1959, p.101), Douglas (1964, p.2) and Hamilton (1982, p.92) report that this language is unnamed by *anangu*.

<sup>19</sup> It should also be noted that another context within which the term *wangka* appears in this thesis is in the discussion of indigenous metalinguistic constructions in chapter 2.

The terms ‘Pitjantjatjara’, ‘Yankunytjatjara’ and ‘Antikirinya’ that are so central to this thesis are in need of a few introductory remarks. In the literature these terms appear in two main contexts: as the names of Western Desert dialects and as the names of distinct tribes. As the status of these terms, particularly their historical status, is very much under investigation in this thesis, it is sufficient to provide only brief and provisional definitions at this point. The following are taken from a contemporary dictionary (Goddard 1996):

- (i) Pitjantjatjara – ‘dialect having the word *pitjantja* “coming, be going somewhere” (as opposed to *yankunytja*)’ (Goddard 1996, p.139);
- (ii) Yankunytjatjara – ‘dialect having the word *yankunytja* “going” (as opposed to *pitjantja*)’ (Goddard 1996, p.243);
- (iii) Antikirinya – ‘name for the people who traditionally live east of the Yankunytjatjara, and for their dialect, which is similar to Yankunytjatjara’ (Goddard 1996, pp.9-10).

While definitions such as these are useful as a rule of thumb, it is important to stress that they often gloss over a complex web of contextually defined meanings and functions for indigenous speakers, a point raised by Sutton (1979). Sutton’s observation arises as a critique of researchers treating indigenous speech labels as if they were simply proper nouns with clearly defined referents. In many cases, of course, there is often a degree of variation in the way speech labels (or language names) are used in the literature. Certainly ‘Pitjantjatjara’, for instance, has been used with a wider denotational range than definition (i) suggests – it appears at times to be used synonymously with the wider ‘Western Desert language’ (for example, R. and C. Berndt 1942-5, Vol.12, No.4, p.324; Birdsell 1976, p.95). In such cases, where the term ‘Pitjantjatjara’ covers (i)-(iii) above, as well as other speech varieties<sup>20</sup>, the situation can easily become ambiguous. In the following discussion, ‘Pitjantjatjara’ is used with the narrower sense of definition (i) unless otherwise indicated. ‘Yankunytjatjara’ is used throughout this thesis as in (ii). The term ‘Antikirinya’ is discussed in some detail in chapters 2 and 6.

A relatively recent account of the distribution of contemporary Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara speakers appears in Goddard’s dictionary (1996, p.viii; see figure 4 below). While this map is reproduced here primarily for orientation purposes, it is also notable for a representational absence: it gives no indication of where Antikirinya speakers

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<sup>20</sup> For more on this point see Edwards (1983, p.1). Other writers suggest that Pitjantjatjara began to function as a lingua franca in the post-Ernabella period (Tindale 1972, p. 223; Wurm 1988, p. 252).

may be found. Now, without wanting to pre-empt the discussion of maps and representation in the following chapter or the discussion of the relationship between ‘Antikirinya’ and ‘Yankunytjatjara’ in chapter 6, a likely explanation for this is the relatively low political profile of Antikirinya in the 1980s.

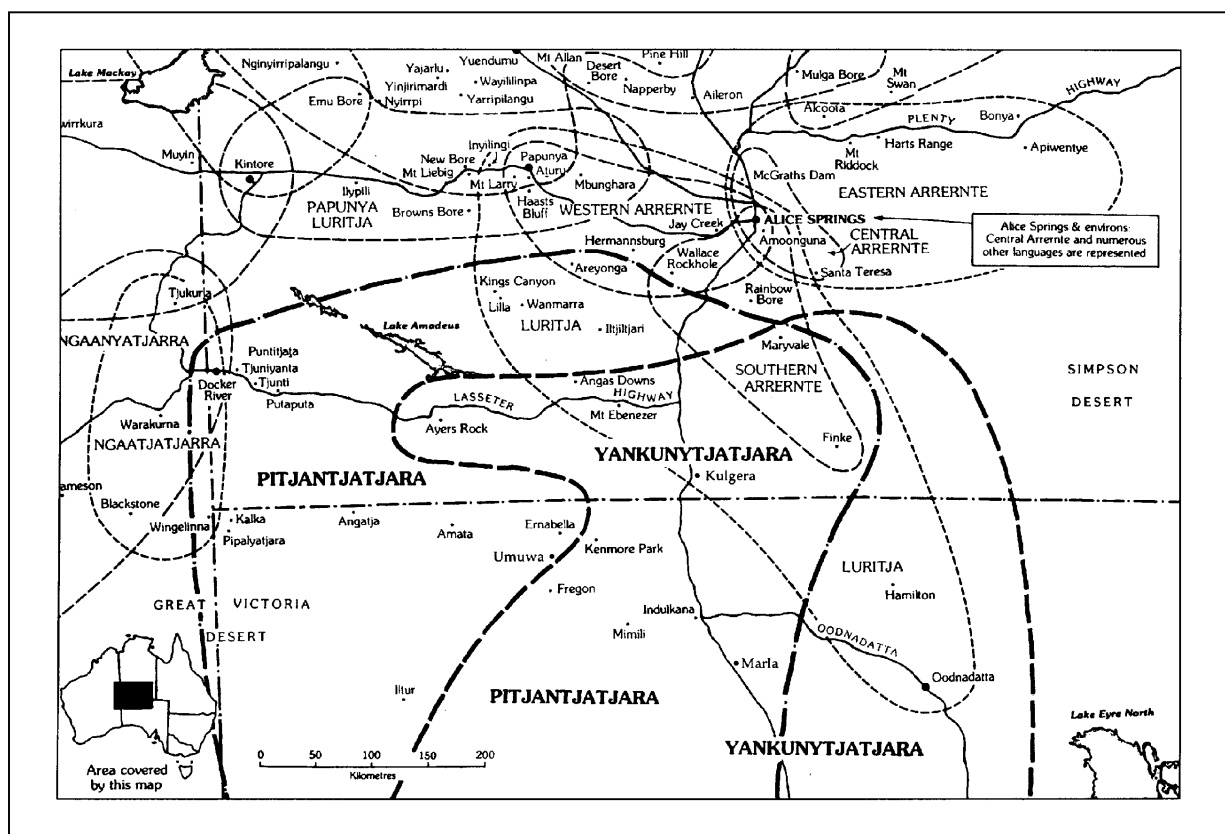


Figure 4. ‘Yankunytjatjara, Pitjantjatjara and neighbouring dialects (approximate current distribution, after Hobson 1990)’ (in Goddard 1996, viii).

As mentioned above, a second main context in which the terms ‘Pitjantjatjara’, ‘Yankunytjatjara’ and ‘Antikirinya’ appear in the literature is as the names of distinct tribes. While the notion of distinct tribes forms the cornerstone for Tindale’s work, the existence of tribes in the Western Desert has long been controversial. An overview of this controversy is presented in the following section. It is necessary to point out at this stage that while the term ‘tribe’ is under dispute in this thesis, to avoid tedium for both writer and reader this term appears in the main text without scare quotes. Having said this, the term does appear on a small number of occasions in scare quotes, usually for clarity or emphasis.

Before moving on, it is necessary to draw attention to the spelling of the terms ‘Pitjantjatjara’, ‘Yankunytjatjara’ and ‘Antikirinya’ in the discussion to follow. As they appear in the previous sentence, these terms are in the current Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara (P/Y) orthographic system. Like many ‘tribal’ or language names in Australia, their spelling in historical records is characterised by a high degree of variation (even within the manuscript materials of the same writer). Thus, in the discussion to follow, P/Y orthographics are followed except for two main exceptions: (i) with quoted passages I have preserved the spelling and punctuation of the original in an effort to retain the flavour of the text, which is often a journal entry which may have been written by campfire light or on the back of a camel; and (ii) where it is necessary to use Tindale’s spellings in the main text, they appear within quotation marks – ‘Pitjandjara’, ‘Jankundjara’, ‘Antakirinja’ (or slight variation depending on the source). Where it has been practical to do so, this policy has been extended to the names of other indigenous groups and speech varieties. Note also that examples of Tindale’s vocabulary material presented below do not reproduce his stress diacritics.

Finally, the term ‘University of Adelaide’ is used throughout this thesis although the university was formerly known as ‘Adelaide University’. This latter construction is represented in the acronym ‘AUPS’, the Adelaide University Phonetic System, and it also appears in the ‘H-A’, Harvard-Adelaide Universities, construction. It is hoped that the reader bears this in mind and is not inconvenienced. A list of abbreviations is provided at p.xi.

## **1.5 Background literature**

Given the nature of this thesis, which in many ways is built around a critical examination of two major works by Tindale (1940 and 1974, and accompanying maps), and is pursued by the close reading of a wide range of literature and archival sources, a separate chapter devoted to discussing background literature is not warranted here. Instead, as this thesis progresses, attention is drawn to a number of Tindale’s sources and major textual influences (reviews of Taplin 1879 and Curr 1886-7, for example, both significant influences on Tindale’s activities, are offered in chapter 4); and an important part of the

discussion in chapter 6 reviews some recent literature on Antikirinya. Having said this, it is important at this preliminary stage to consider, albeit briefly, a number of previous comments of Tindale's work that have arisen in response to his definition of 'tribe' and the question of its applicability to Australian contexts. Thus, an overview of the Tindale-Berndt debate on the existence of tribes and boundaries in the Western Desert is offered below. It is also important to consider a number of previous comments on Tindale's maps and a number of linguistic studies relating to the north-west to help to mark out the path of this thesis and to highlight the original contribution it seeks to make to Australian linguistics.

There are few studies devoted to examining Tindale's work from a critical perspective. This is a surprising fact given the power and ubiquity of his tribal representations. As Nicolas Peterson could remark in the 1970s: 'there can be no Australianist who has not consulted the tribal map to localise a group of people' (1976, p.10). While this thesis draws upon two works devoted to Tindale's achievements, namely, an account of Tindale's early career (Walter 1988 MS) and an overview of Tindale's working life (Jones 1995), neither can be described as critical. Karen Walter's study traces Tindale's development as a field worker from the beginnings of his career to his association with the University of Adelaide's Board for Anthropological Research up to the late 1930s. As Tindale's grand-daughter, Walter was certainly in a unique position to pursue her research. Aimed at showing 'the connections between Tindale's collected data and the circumstances of his research life' (1988 MS, p.31), her work presents useful insights drawn from personal interviews with Tindale and from his field journals. Unfortunately, she offers little discussion of Tindale's collected linguistic data beyond superficial matters. Philip Jones also knew Tindale personally (through their association at the South Australian Museum), and his obituary, while indebted to Walter's work, is particularly useful in providing a broad overview of Tindale's long and active working life. Jones, too, lists some of Tindale's linguistic products but, like Walter, leaves them unexamined. Finally, Walter and Jones acknowledge both the controversy surrounding aspects of Tindale's work and its enduring influence (Walter 1988 MS, p.232; Jones 1995, p.168).

Tindale's tribal representations began to attract criticism soon after the publication of his 1940 map. In particular, from their research conducted at Ooldea<sup>21</sup>, the Berndts cast serious doubt upon the notion that fixed tribal boundaries exist in the surrounding desert region (1942-5, Vol.12, No.4, pp.326-7). A more sustained criticism followed a number of years later with the publication of Ronald Berndt's classic paper 'The Concept of "the Tribe" in the Western Desert of Australia' (1959). Berndt's paper questions not only the existence of fixed boundaries, but also the very applicability of the concept 'tribe' in the Western Desert. Thus, Tindale and Berndt found themselves holding diametrically opposed views. A central point of difference, and one of particular interest to this thesis, concerns the nature of indigenous nomenclature, with Berndt maintaining contra Tindale that so-called tribal names do not designate tribes (this issue is addressed in chapter 2 below). Subsequent research in the Western Desert strongly favours Berndt's position. Literature that may be cited in favour of Berndt, and this list is by no means comprehensive, includes Gould (1969), Hamilton (1982), Goddard (1985) and Myers (1986)<sup>22</sup>. Fred Myers is perhaps the strongest critic of Tindale's position, writing in relation to the south-west of the Northern Territory:

Despite the reassuring presence of tribal groupings on some ethnological maps such as Tindale's (1974), such overarching social identities hold little significance in this region and are genuinely misleading. Names need not specify social boundaries. (1986, p.28)

Despite the weight of opinion in favour of Berndt's general position, some other researchers have not been deterred from continuing from where Tindale left off. Indeed, the debate over tribes and the nature of boundaries reappeared with the publication of

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<sup>21</sup> Ooldea was a major site of intercultural contact in the early twentieth century. Its permanent water supply had long made it a traditional meeting place for indigenous people and also provided an important siding for the Trans-Australian railway. See Elkin's map in appendix 2.6, where Ooldea is to be found inland from the Great Australian Bight.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Gould writes, paraphrasing Berndt (1959, p.102), that 'named dialect groups (Pitjantjatjara, Ngatatjara, Nyatunyatjara, etc.) cannot be equated with Tindale's notion of tribe, even though many of these dialect names appear as tribal names on Tindale's [1940] map', adding that his own research 'absolutely confirms Berndt's view in this matter' (1969, p.271). Annette Hamilton takes a more equivocal view between Tindale and Berndt but can still find that it would be 'incorrect to describe someone as a member of the Bidjandjara [Pitjantjatjara] tribe, the territory of which is to be found between A and B' (1982, p.98). Hamilton's equivocation stems from her disagreement with the extremes of Berndt (1959), whereby Berndt appears to view language as completely divorced from territory. Research on the relationship between language and territory in the north-west would no doubt support Hamilton in this criticism. Hamilton was perhaps prevented from fully exploring this issue owing to gender restrictions on knowledge. Finally, in his grammar of Yankunytjatjara, Cliff Goddard writes that there is 'little evidence to support Tindale's persistent claims that more or less discrete "dialectal tribes" existed' (1985, p.12).

Davis and Prescott (1992) and the accompanying map of traditional tribal territories in Australia (Davis 1993). Given the nature of contemporary land politics in Australia, and despite the devastating critique of Davis and Prescott's work by Sutton (1995), made largely on methodological grounds but also drawing on the personal observations of many researchers, it would appear that the issue is not yet dead and buried<sup>23</sup>.

It is worth considering the Tindale-Berndt debate in slightly more detail because it leads to a closer appreciation of Tindale's definition and use of 'tribe'. It is possible to get to the core of the debate by considering the following statements by Tindale and Berndt<sup>24</sup>. Firstly, when Tindale published his tribal map in 1940, he drew attention to the issue of tribes in the Western Desert, perhaps in response to Elkin's prior observation that significant population movements had been occurring in the west of South Australia even before contact, and that the fixing of boundaries and names presented difficulties to the researcher (Elkin 1938-40, Vol.10, No.2, p.203, also cited by the Berndts 1942-5, Vol.12, No.4, pp.327). Tindale writes:

It might be well argued that the groups called tribes in the Western Desert are not of the same political<sup>25</sup> value as those found in other parts of Australia. Careful enquiry, however, suggests that they are equally valid, that the areas occupied are discrete and that the distributions are based on physiographic realities. (1940, p.150)

A more detailed indication of what Tindale considered a tribe to be will be given in a moment, but for now it is enough to accept that the Western Desert for Tindale, after *careful enquiry*, does not provide an exception to the general Australian situation (a point repeated on a number of occasions). Berndt's key statement in response to Tindale's claim that tribal groups in the Western Desert live within well-defined boundaries (that are transgressed legitimately only in times of unusual drought) is the following:

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<sup>23</sup> Jane Jacobs (1986) provides some insight into the ongoing influence of Tindale's tribal representations on indigenous people, one of the few studies to take up this important subject. Interestingly, even though Stephen Davis publicly denied that Tindale's map was a direct influence on his work, the veracity of this claim is seriously challenged by Sutton's critique (see Sutton 1995, pp.26-7).

<sup>24</sup> As details of the ensuing debate between Tindale, Berndt and others is discussed in a number of places in the literature, only the core elements of the debate are restated here. Hamilton (1982, pp.92-103) provides one of the best critical discussions of the debate, adding her own observations from fieldwork conducted in the Everard Range area in the north-west of South Australia.

<sup>25</sup> Tindale is perhaps using the term 'political' rather loosely here. At any rate, tribes were later clarified as linguistic rather than political units with the notion of the 'dialectal tribe' (see below).

Our contention on the contrary, in which we are in agreement with Elkin, is that these groups are not ‘tribes’, that there are no strict boundaries, that movements were relatively frequent, and that what we are faced with is, rather, a cultural and social bloc. (1959, p.91)

Tindale’s most considered response to Berndt focuses on the quality of Berndt’s data, which Tindale suggests suffers from a number of methodological shortcomings. Most significantly, it is claimed, they describe post-contact arrangements and rely on hearsay evidence. Tindale concludes:

It seems to me unfortunate that Berndt, using this data, feels that it supports his view that there is a looser territorial bond in the Western Desert than there is elsewhere. On the contrary, my own observations confirm an opinion that the tribal patterns evident there are not particularly different from those found among other hunting tribes in Australia. (1974, p.117)

Whether or not Tindale is correct in his appraisal of the quality of Berndt’s data (a similar criticism of Berndt 1959 is offered by Birdsell 1970), the fact remains that in this passage Tindale provides a clear statement of his position *vis-à-vis* tribes and boundaries in the Western Desert, and this statement informs the examination of Tindale’s Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya tribal representations in this thesis.

Tindale’s use of the term ‘tribe’ appears to vary in different contexts depending on the emphasis of the discussion (and, of course, Tindale is not the exception here<sup>26</sup>). In Tindale’s major work, definitions of ‘tribe’ are offered in a number of places (1974, pp.30-3, 115-7). In the latter pages, Tindale offers a defence of his use of the concept, citing Elkin’s definition, which includes the following five elements (or ‘markers’, p.115):

- (a) they inhabit and claim a definite area of country;
- (b) use a dialect or language peculiar to themselves;
- (c) possess a distinctive name;
- (d) have customs and laws differing in some measure from those practiced [*sic*] by their neighbours; [and]
- (e) possess beliefs and ceremonies differing from those held or performed by others.

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<sup>26</sup> Berndt (1959) discusses various uses of the term ‘tribe’ in Australia. See also the appendix to Dixon (1976).

Tindale adds: ‘none of the data given in this work [i.e., Tindale 1974] negates or contradicts the general principles which can be seen behind these markers’ (1974, p.115). In spite of the controversy surrounding his definition and use of the term ‘tribe’, Tindale continued to defend his use of the notion in later papers (see for example Tindale 1976; 1978; 1981). Before moving on, it is worth noting that Tindale’s notion of tribe is also referred to in the literature as the ‘dialectal tribe’, which is held to consist of ‘a group of contiguous bands, speaking a common dialect, and sharing a common culture through lines of patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence, and a cellular network of communications among its bands’ (Birdsell 1976, p.96).

Prior to the publication of Tindale (1974), the notion of tribe and the existence and nature of tribal boundaries in Australia were the subjects of a symposium held in Canberra in 1973. Organised to celebrate over 30 years of collaboration between Tindale and Joseph Birdsell<sup>27</sup>, the papers presented appear under the title *Tribes and Boundaries in Australia* (Peterson 1976). Two issues arising from the symposium seriously challenge the conceptual underpinnings of Tindale’s work. The first concerns the role of linguistic criteria in defining tribes. Peterson notes in his introduction that Tindale’s use of ‘tribe’ in his mapping work ‘tends to assume that the tribe is a population whereas defined by the single criterion of language it is almost unavoidably a typological unit’ (1976, p.7), adding that Tindale’s ascription of linguistic unity to tribes is often problematic (1976, p.8). R.M.W. Dixon adds to this criticism with his finding that, for an area of north Queensland, ‘a “tribe” cannot be defined on linguistic criteria’ (1976, p.231)<sup>28</sup>. Second, with regard to boundaries, Peterson summarises the contributions contained in *Tribes and Boundaries* as showing that they ‘move, that they are permeable and that they are sometimes hard to define precisely’ (1976, p.8). In the following years, criticism continued to mount against Tindale’s position. The ‘dialectal tribe’ is thoroughly criticised by Sutton (1978, pp.17-34), who finds for instance that ‘at Cape Keerweer ... dialect affiliation is not correlated with definable cultural groups’ (1978, p. 18), and argues that the dialectal tribe notion is equally inappropriate for other areas of the Cape York Peninsula. Further weight is added to the

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<sup>27</sup> For more on the Tindale-Birdsell collaboration than can be mentioned here, see Jones (1995, p.165) and Yengoyan (1995, pp.177-8).

<sup>28</sup> Dell Hymes (1968) had already highlighted problems associated with the use of linguistic criteria in defining ‘tribe’.

argument against the dialectal tribe in subsequent papers (for example, Sutton and Rigsby 1979, Rigsby and Sutton 1980-2, and Sutton 1991) and is extended to other areas of Australia by writers such as Merlan (1981) and Rumsey (1989; 1993).

While many researchers would now agree that Tindale's notion of bounded tribes has been severely discredited for many areas of Australia, Tindale's representations remain influential. Indeed, Peterson's comment quoted above concerning the widespread use of Tindale's representations is as applicable today as it was in 1976. Despite the fact that criticism has been levelled at Tindale's map, much of it is incidental and limited in scope, considering such issues as the accuracy of the placement of boundaries or questioning the tribal nomenclature for a small section of the map. Given the Australia-wide scope of Tindale's map, this is in many ways understandable. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that much of the criticism is about the *product* of Tindale's work rather than the *processes* involved in its construction. Of course, this observation is made not to devalue the work of previous researchers, but to point out an area in need of serious attention. As mentioned earlier in this introduction, this thesis explores the deeper issue of the circumstances under which Tindale's tribal representations were made (albeit for only a small section of the tribal map and catalogue of tribes).

For the Western Desert, and the north-west of South Australia in particular, there has been little concerted effort to determine how Tindale's tribal boundaries were established. Tensions continue to exist in the literature that might be dispelled by addressing this issue. Consider, for example, the following observation offered by Kim Doohan, which relates to ethnological maps of the area immediately to the east of the area under study in this thesis: 'there is ... little chance that the position of the boundaries between tribes, the lines drawn on the maps, kilometre by kilometre, are backed by evidence' (1992, p.37). Against this, in a recent and significant linguistic publication, David Rose (2001) includes a map entitled 'Western Desert dialect groups' (p.52), which ultimately relies in part on Tindale's 1940 map<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, in his discussion of 'dialect groups' (2001, pp.50-3), Rose seems uncritically to support Tindale's notion of 'dialect

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<sup>29</sup> My comments here are directed in particular to the Pitjantjatjara- Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya section of Rose's map. Although Rose does not provide the source for his map, it appears to have been adapted from Horton (2000 [1996]). While Horton's map relies on Tindale's work, it is notable for utilising an innovative graphic device, namely, coloured areas rather than lines, in order to avoid the political problems associated with 'exact' boundary lines. If Horton is indeed Rose's source, then Rose effectively erases this device by reverting back to boundary lines.

tribes' separated by environmental constraints (to the extent that the two terms may be seen as synonymous). Clearly, given the political and legal implications, there is an urgent need to address this type of disjunction in the literature, and to follow up and add substance to intuitions such as Doohan's. This course is pursued in detail below.

Rose's reproduction of Tindale's representations leads this discussion towards another problematic area in the literature. Tindale's map and catalogue of tribes have been used as a key resource for those producing linguistic surveys in Australia. The major surveys of Capell (1963), O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966) and Oates and Oates (1970), as well as the classificatory map produced by O'Grady, Wurm and Hale (1966), all rely in significant ways on Tindale's 1940 map and catalogue, and reproduce aspects of it. This produces a potential ambiguity in that it arguably promotes the false impression that linguistic research supports the locations of Tindale's tribal boundaries<sup>30</sup>. A more serious problem is that these surveys reproduce errors that reside in Tindale's catalogue of tribes. O'Grady, Voegelin and Voegelin (1966, pp.38-9), for example, fall into this trap when they reproduce sections of Tindale's catalogue under the Antikirinya entry in their classification of Australian languages (the nature of these errors is discussed in chapter 6). The same problem occurs in Oates and Oates (1970, p.76), which is described as 'the most comprehensive survey of Australian languages' (Walsh 1979, p.7). The influence of Tindale's representations also appears in O'Grady and Klokeid's (1969) linguistic classification work, which played an important role in the hearing of linguistic evidence during the De Rose Hill Native title claim, and is discussed below. My point here is that there is a serious need to address such uncritical acceptance of Tindale's representations, and to examine aspects of Tindale's work beyond the issue of 'tribe', such as the processes involved in his construction of boundaries, in the construction of his catalogue of tribes, and to explore the relationship of his wider linguistic activities to these projects.

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<sup>30</sup> Consider, for instance, the following comments. Firstly, Peterson (1976, p.1) draws attention to a 'close correspondence between Tindale's tribal map and the linguistic map of Australia' (that is, O'Grady, Wurm and Hale 1966), and, secondly, Davis and Prescott (1992, p.19) write: 'tribal distributions shown on Tindale's map have many similarities to linguistic maps of Australia'. If it is being claimed by these writers that the linguistic surveys intentionally reproduce Tindale's representations in significant ways, then these statements are unproblematic, but this is by no means clear. Thus, the point raised above remains of some concern. It is worth adding that this problem is to a large extent avoided in the more recent language map produced by Michael Walsh (1981), which does not place boundaries around languages (or speech varieties) represented in the Western Desert section of the map.

When considering previous linguistic work relating to the north-west, such as Trudinger (1943), Goddard (1985), Glass and Hackett (1970, which is described as a Pitjantjatjara grammar but was researched at Warburton in WA), Eckert and Hudson (1988), Bowe (1990) and Rose (2001)<sup>31</sup>, it may be seen that the theoretical assumption underpinning much of this work is restricted. That is, the apparent differences between traditional, generative, tagmemic and systemic-functionalist approaches are superficial in the sense that they are all governed by the same metaphor of language and communication (the conduit metaphor, Reddy 1979). Of particular relevance for this thesis is that these studies are atemporal: that is, they do not consider the processes by which languages are made. Although Rose (2001) does mention Tindale's contribution to the description of Pitjantjatjara, it is reduced to one sentence. Rose writes: 'description of Pitjantjatjara began with lists compiled by Tindale during his 1933 expedition to the Mann Ranges' (2001, p.446). By investigating Tindale's role in the making of the Pitjantjatjara language in the detail that it deserves, and by examining this linguistic work in relation to his tribal representations of the north-west, this thesis takes a fresh and, in the era of Native title, urgently needed approach.

Finally, I hope that by adding to the debates and addressing the unexplored problems outlined above, this thesis makes a significant contribution to the field of Australian linguistics. It adds to a body of critical literature on the issue of tribes and boundaries in Australia by drawing on Tindale's own writings on the Western Desert (and in particular the north-west of South Australia). Indeed, new evidence concerning the processes by which Tindale pursued this work is presented below. By addressing a number of problems in the literature that have received minimal attention, such as the processes by which the catalogue of tribes was constructed, and by providing an account of Tindale's linguistics, this thesis broadens our understanding of the processes involved in the making of the historical linguistic record for the north-west of South Australia. This greater understanding is of obvious value for cultural heritage reasons and may prove useful in helping to resolve linguistic issues in Native title contexts.

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<sup>31</sup> Most of these works are reviewed from a systemic functional linguistic perspective by Rose (2001, pp.446-68). It should be noted that this list of previous linguistic work is not comprehensive and other work, conducted by J.R.B. Love, for example, is discussed in later chapters of this thesis.

## 2 Maps, language and representation

In that Empire, the craft of Cartography attained such Perfection that the Map of a Single province covered the space of an entire City, and the Map of the Empire itself an entire Province. In the course of Time, these Extensive maps were found somehow wanting, and so the College of Cartographers evolved a Map of the Empire that was of the same Scale as the Empire and that coincided with it point for point. Less attentive to the Study of Cartography, succeeding Generations came to judge a map of such Magnitude cumbersome, and, not without Irreverence, they abandoned it to the Rigours of sun and Rain. In the western Deserts, tattered Fragments of the map are still to be found, Sheltering an occasional Beast or beggar; in the whole Nation, no other relic is left of the Discipline of Geography.

Jorge Luis Borges, *Of Exactitude in Science*, 1975

### 2.0 Introduction

A view with a long history in the Western linguistic and philosophical tradition is that language maps reality. While the finer details of how this process takes place is still under debate (and still largely a mystery), many writers accept the metaphor of mapping to investigate the levels of representation – between concepts and words, and words and objects – that are widely accepted as taking place in language. The efficacy of this way of conceiving of language and its relation to the world is such that, for one observer, ‘the comparison of language to a map ... may seem rather obvious’ (Bickerton 1990, p.26). Those who maintain this view often share the associated notion that writing maps a language. Accordingly, graphemes may be seen to map speech sounds or a grammar may be seen to map the verbal patterns of a language. While this may also seem obvious to some, there are a number of limitations associated with both views.

The most significant limitations derive from the fact that, as illustrated by Borges in taking cartography to its absurd ‘point for point’ limits, mapping is essentially a reductive process. There is always a gap between the representation and the thing represented. Problems begin to arise if it is assumed, as often occurs, that the process of reduction proceeds in an objective or culturally neutral fashion. Arguably, behind this assumption rests the notion that the world is the same for all people and linguistic differences are merely superficial, a notion with a long history from Aristotle to the more recent ‘mental dictionary’ that operates by mapping words onto concepts (see, for example, Pinker 1994,

p.85). The essentially *surrogational* aspect of this view is criticised by Harris (1980) for, among other things, supporting the fixed code notion operating behind the talking heads or conduit model of language and communication discussed in chapter 1. Of course, the Aristoteleian view has been attacked also by so-called relativistic approaches to language (such as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, see Duranti 1997, pp.56-7), and while these ideas may be seen to form a general background to the discussion to follow, they will not be pursued in depth. The task in this chapter is a more practical one – I am concerned primarily with examining the influence of mapping projects on the collection of linguistic materials and the making of the historical linguistic record of the north-west.

In light of this, the limitations associated with the view that writing maps a language demand most of our attention. In this case, as will be argued below, written records may be accepted without recognition of the levels of reduction involved in the process: a potentially serious problem in the later interpretation and use of the materials in the historical linguistic record. The acceptance of such records as objective or culturally neutral representations is often the result of a set of literate cultural practices described by Harris (1980) as *scriptism*<sup>1</sup>, another critical concept that will arise at various points in the discussion to follow.

As mentioned, my main concern in this chapter is with examining the influence of mapping activities on the collection of linguistic materials in the north-west. Mapping projects, Carruthers' surveying activities on the one hand and Tindale's tribal distribution project on the other, form two of the major contexts within which the indigenous placenames and ethnonyms under discussion in this chapter were recorded. As will be argued below, the recording process was essentially a reductive one in which diverse phenomena were reduced according to narrow Western cartographic, ethnological, orthographic and grammatical categories and concepts. In the case of recording speech,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Scriptism' is defined by Harris in the following terms: 'the concept of a language in a literate society may always be expected to tend towards what, for want of any existing term, may be called "scriptism": that is to say, the assumption that writing is a more ideal form of linguistic representation than speech' (1980, p.6). Writing has been seen as more ideal than speech owing to its relative permanency, for example. It is important to realise, however, that this privileging of written over oral communication reverses the natural order, and in the case of prescriptive grammars, for instance, this order may be reversed to the extent that the 'correctness' of a verbal utterance may be measured against the written standard. A more far-reaching implication of scriptism for the analysis presented in this thesis, however, is that, owing to the degree of abstraction involved in writing, there is often a temptation to give authority to written accounts without paying sufficient regard to the contexts within which they were produced.

this process can readily be appreciated as one leading to stylistic or functional reduction. For example, the recording of *anangu* placenames in the course of surveying and ethnological research illustrates the mapping of Western Desert sounds with Roman letters, a process that gives rise to numerous representational inadequacies and inaccuracies. Apart from this, the rich indexicality of many indigenous placenames is often a casualty of the recording process, which privileges the referential function<sup>2</sup>. Although we will only be able to pay passing attention to it below, the Berndts's sketch grammar of Western Desert speech at Ooldea (1942-5, Vol.15, No.1, pp.49-80) clearly illustrates at a more complex descriptive level an attempt to reduce diverse phenomena onto an ordered framework of grammatical categories and rules for usage. In both cases the mapping framework is supplied by grammatical categories of European languages and English spelling conventions.

The Carruthers map with Tindale's annotations provides the launching point for this discussion, and a description of it is offered in section 2.1. This part of the discussion remains largely introductory, and it is not until the following sections that I begin to examine more closely a number of ethnocentric aspects of cartographic representation (section 2.2) and orthographic representation (section 2.3). An appreciation of these contextual influences is crucial for a proper understanding of the types of limitations built into the linguistic recordings under consideration from their inception. It also provides an important contribution to the account of the nature and limitations of Tindale's linguistic practices that will emerge as the thesis progresses. The major focus of this chapter is Tindale's tribal mapping project. By appealing to a range of Tindale's manuscript materials it will be seen that his placenames were recorded largely for use in mapping population movements, tribal boundaries and centres of ceremonial activity (section 2.4). Indeed, Tindale's linguistic and mapping activities are so intimately linked that a detailed examination of his tribal mapping project is offered below. In section 2.5 I examine not only how and why the tribal distribution map was constructed, but also how these preoccupations influenced his collection of linguistic materials. Emerging from this discussion is the view that Tindale's overriding criterion for clear and unambiguous reference came at the cost of his ignoring indigenous perspectives and practices, which in

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<sup>2</sup> The contributors to Hercus, Hodges and Simpson (2002) provide many examples of the complexity of indigenous placenames for a range of areas in Australia.

the end puts in doubt the objectivity and the descriptive adequacy of this crucial aspect of his work.

Throughout this chapter, the discussion of both Carruthers' survey map and Tindale's tribal distribution map is informed in a general way by the insights of ethnography of communication (Saville-Troike 1982), particularly when considering the colonial and scientific contexts for which such maps were created and in which they functioned. Although, while drawing on these insights, it should be noted that I do not go so far as to offer a detailed analysis of the maps as communicative events using Hymes's (1972) categories – it is not an 'ethnography of communication' as such.

I turn now to Carruthers' surveying expeditions in the late nineteenth century that led to the first major mapping of the north-west.

## 2.1 The Carruthers map

Like many historical documents, the Carruthers map does not come with a neat explanation of its provenance; this has to be pieced together by considering a number of other historical sources. Maps are often considered rather naively as synchronic or atemporal representations; here it is suggested that a deeper appreciation arises through a more diachronic or longitudinal analysis of how the various layers of maps are built up. For this purpose we are fortunate in having a series of documents, including official correspondence and a selection of Carruthers' field diaries, available at the State Library of South Australia<sup>3</sup>. This material allows considerable insights, obviating the need for much speculation – although, having said this, the analysis to follow does depend at times on a degree of interpretation. The discussion begins with a description of the 'substrate' layer of the map, the original published version, and is followed by a discussion of the 'superstrate' level, the handwritten additions and corrections made by Tindale. At this early stage of the argument, the discussion will be restricted to placenames; the handwritten tribal names and boundary line will be discussed in later sections.

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<sup>3</sup> Thus, Layton is incorrect in asserting that Carruthers 'wrote only a brief report of his field experiences' (1986, p.54). Also, copies of Carruthers' original field sketchbooks are located at the Lands Titles Office in Adelaide.

To begin with, the map was drawn from information copied from Carruthers' field sketches, as indicated by a note printed beneath the title (see Map 1). This work was probably carried out by a draftsman at the Surveyor General's Department, with work commencing soon after the completion of the triangulation work in 1892. It is difficult to ascertain the exact date of printing, although there is a handwritten date in the bottom right-hand corner of the map, '1893?', added by a Royal Geographical Society (RGS) librarian, which seems to be a reasonable estimate<sup>4</sup>. Tindale's additions cannot at present be dated precisely, although they were probably made in the mid to late 1930s<sup>5</sup>.

Although the draftsman informs us that the map was produced from Carruthers' field sketches, some information obviously comes from prior sources, such as the expeditions of Gosse and Giles, whose official reports appeared as Parliamentary Papers (Gosse 1874, Giles 1874). As noted earlier, these early explorers left their mark most noticeably across the top of the map where many European names appear. Gosse recorded a few indigenous placenames, but they are not shown on the map, being further east than Carruthers' activities. For his part, Giles did not record any *anangu* placenames on his 1873 expedition.

The map also traces part of the route of the Elder scientific exploring expedition, led by David Lindsay; 'Lindsay's camel pad' is marked running in a westerly direction through the Everard Ranges, ending near Yaroon Hill. It is curious that Lindsay's path is not shown after this point (Lindsay's party travelled towards the Western Australian border in a north-westerly direction from the Yaroon Hill area). So it seems likely that details of Lindsay's path up to this point were provided by Carruthers' personal observations, rather than Lindsay's journals, which may not have been available to the mapmaker. This reading is supported by the fact that two placenames recorded by Lindsay have been added by Tindale: 'Baccaley Hill', just over the Western Australian border, and 'Purndu Saltpan', south-west of the Everard Ranges. Tindale has also added altitude measurements,

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<sup>4</sup> Huebbe (1897) often refers to Carruthers' map on his expedition through the area in 1895-6, and Carruthers retired from public service in 1895 (Seegerlind, n.d. MS).

<sup>5</sup> From maps located at the South Australian Museum, it seems that Tindale often transferred information gathered during his expeditions, as well as from other sources, from one map to another. The good condition of the Carruthers map in question suggests it was not taken into the field in 1933, and that the additions were made at a later date but before the publication of the 1940 tribal boundaries map.

sometimes accompanied by ‘Lindsay’ in parentheses. These have been transferred from the map published with the expedition report (Lindsay 1893).

Finally, it is worth pointing out that there is some overlap in the extreme eastern section of map between Carruthers’ observations and those of his surveying precursor Edward Britten Jones. Indigenous placenames that appear in two books of topographical sketches made by Britten Jones in 1887<sup>6</sup> appear on the Carruthers map. This can be explained by the fact that Carruthers began his trigonometric observations from points fixed earlier by Britten Jones.

### 2.1.1 Tindale’s annotations

The bulk of the *anangu* placenames entered on the Carruthers map by Tindale were gathered during an expedition to the Musgrave and Mann Ranges in 1933. Between May and July of that year Tindale and Cecil Hackett, a physical anthropologist, formed an advance party to the Board for Anthropological Research (BAR) expedition planned for August. Arriving at Ernabella in late May, Tindale and Hackett wasted no time in heading west for the Mann Ranges, collecting as they went a body of anthropometric, sociological and linguistic data, as well as performing the important task of locating and attempting to persuade *anangu* to travel to Ernabella to meet the main party. The track of their expedition to the Mann Ranges is marked on the map. In Tindale’s journal covering the expedition (Tindale 1933b MS) many of these placenames appear in lists and topographical sketches.

A smaller number of the placenames were gathered by Tindale at Ooldea in 1934. Some of these appear on the map as two lines of rockholes running in a south-westerly direction from the Everard Ranges and represent important travelling routes between the Everard Ranges and Ooldea<sup>7</sup>. Many of the places along these routes are marked as approximate, reflecting the fact that Tindale did not personally visit them.

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<sup>6</sup> See Jones (1887a MS; 1887b MS) held at the Lands Titles Office in Adelaide.

<sup>7</sup> These routes are discussed by Johnston (1941) and Berndt (1941). Travel to and from Ooldea by these routes was severely disrupted by the atomic tests of the 1950s and 1960s and by the increased availability of motor transport thereafter.

That Tindale worked in a different range of contexts from those of explorers and surveyors is reflected by the fact that he did not bestow any placenames himself. The initial phase of colonial expansion was effectively over by this time, and his ethnological approach, so far as placenames were concerned, was directed more towards accurate recordings in a spelling system developed specifically for Central Australian research. His interest in the consistency of spellings can be seen in the many alterations made to Carruthers' placenames. One example is the change from 'Opparina Native Well' (Carruthers) to 'Aparana' (Tindale). Some changes are made to correct apparent errors. For instance, 'Pinundinna Hill', south of the Musgrave Ranges, is crossed out, marked 'in error', and replaced by 'INanja'.

Also noteworthy is the number of placenames to the north and north-west of the Everard Ranges that are followed by the initial 'F' in parentheses. To the north-west of the Everard Ranges is written 'check with HHF' below the placename 'Kaltja (F)'. These are likely to be places visited by H.H. Finlayson during a collecting trip to the area in the early 1930s (described in Finlayson 1935). When we consider these additions, as well as those copied from Lindsay (1893), we can see that concerns both for geographical accuracy and accurate spellings were significant characteristics of Tindale's approach. The reasons for this will become more apparent when we come to consider the ways Tindale used placenames in his major research projects.

## **2.2 Ethnocentric aspects of cartographic representation**

When Carruthers' trigonometric surveying expeditions to the north-west corner of the State were completed in 1892, they effectively brought to a close a significant phase of colonial expansion in South Australia. By this time 'all lands likely to be leased had been mapped and fixed and the triangulation of the State was discontinued' (Harris 1914, p.12). Previously unknown or little-known country had effectively been reduced to order: important geographical features had been located; placenames had been bestowed (colonial) or recorded (indigenous); pastoral leases had been measured and marked out; and potential feed and waters for stock located and described. In short, the unknown had become known and now lay ready for economic exploitation.

While this process of laying down the country involved numerous technical and logistical aspects, it was essentially a written exercise. Raw data, observations and sketches from the field were basic ingredients in the construction of the final product – the Carruthers survey map. It is important to recognise, however, that the art of cartography, in many respects the handmaiden of the colonial enterprise, allowed the construction of a map that is not as objective as it may at first appear. Consider, for instance, the way the presence of Aboriginal people is represented solely by virtue of a number of indigenous placenames spread across the map. Arguably this is a type of representational silence, where the land is presented as vacant, devoid of human occupation, awaiting exploitation. This point alone raises a number of important questions relating to the *myth* of objective representation and the power of maps that will be explored as this chapter progresses. Indeed, a central premise of the analysis to follow is that maps are not culture-neutral in their modes of representation and their power derives in part from the selection of what is represented and what is left out<sup>8</sup>.

It would be going too far, however, to view such omissions as resulting from a carefully orchestrated silencing policy, as this clearly was not the case. To a great extent indigenous absences are more the result of limitations imposed by European conceptual structures, such as the representational codes of cartography, and categories of thought developed over centuries of European colonisation that perceived indigenous people and their land through self-serving and often disparaging stereotypes. This is a large part of the story, but it must be considered also that omissions occur for practical reasons; there are basic ‘economic’ constraints to be balanced in the production of a map, such as the need for legibility, and particular categories of information for particular purposes. Most noticeably, notions of what constitutes a ‘feature’ in a landscape are partly given in advance in terms of (in our case mostly English) linguistic resources and the history of cartographic practices. At a more sophisticated level of analysis this is also the case when

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<sup>8</sup> In recent years the orthodox view that maps offer an objective reflection of the world has been subject to growing criticism. One of the most incisive and outspoken critics, J.B. Harley, maintains that Western cartography developed as a colonialist way of seeing the world as territory to be controlled (Harley 1988). According to this view, colonial maps are ethnocentric constructions, reflecting (and, importantly, serving) the interests of the makers rather than reflecting a pre-existing objective reality. Defenders of the orthodox view who would respond to this criticism by appealing to the standards of accuracy aspired to in Western cartography would be missing the point. While representational practices such as scale and latitude and longitude do allow for accurate reference to objects in the world, even something as seemingly objective as longitude has a long and complex social history inextricably linked to trade and colonial expansion (see Sobel 1996).

one comes to the question of phonetics and the writing of indigenous placenames: in this case the categories are partly given in advance by the letters of the Roman alphabet (or an orthographic system based upon it) and the sound patterns of English<sup>9</sup>. Such was the general ignorance of indigenous languages that it was often assumed until quite late in the colonial period that a proper system of spelling based on these constraints would allow words to be written down from potentially any language with a degree of accuracy sufficient for colonial purposes.

The indigenous placenames recorded by Carruthers constitute some of the earliest recordings of *anangu* language and culture<sup>10</sup>, but they may also be seen as ‘corruptions’ or ‘distortions’ of it. Certainly Tindale considered ‘non-phonetic’ or ‘poorly transcribed’ spellings as mutilations or barbarisms (Tindale 1947 MS; 1952 MS), and may have viewed Carruthers’ placenames in this light while using the survey plan as a template for his own purposes.

The ethnocentric biases of the Carruthers map can be further illustrated by considering the place naming practices of the colonists in contrast to those of *anangu*. Firstly, the English naming of ranges and creeks treats them grammatically as geographical units or objects: a single name is used for each of the Everard, Musgrave and Mann Ranges, and the Officer, Currie and Hamilton Creeks. For *anangu*, however, no single name for these ranges exists, and watercourses typically have a string of named sections or points rather than a single name. For instance, *Ilintjitjara* ‘place of tall grass’ on Granite Downs station is the name commonly used for a section of Tarcoonyinna Creek<sup>11</sup>. In other contexts *anangu* placenames may have a wider referential range than a native English

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<sup>9</sup> This was not always the case, however. Basedow, for example, in his comparative vocabularies of Central Australian languages uses the German alphabet supplemented with English symbols where necessary (Basedow 1908). However, in other contexts he used the RGS orthographic system with ‘modified forms’ for some vowels that were the same as in German (Basedow 1904, p.47).

<sup>10</sup> The following sources suggest some surveying work was done in the Everard Ranges in the years before Carruthers’ expeditions. In 1882 Edward Coates (1882 MS) travelled to the Everards where he had leased land; C.J. Chambers, who undertook water exploration work for the Surveyor General’s Department, was in the Indulkana area in 1883 (Basedow 1914, p.68); and Giles (1995 [1889], p.355) mentions a trigonometric survey at the Everards c1880. As far as I am aware, there is a lack of documentary evidence to indicate whether such surveying work involved the recording of *anangu* placenames. The term ‘Carruthers’ placenames’ is used with this proviso in mind.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Tarcoonyinna’ (*Tarkanynga*) is the *anangu* name for a section of the creek that Carruthers has extended to the whole creek. Granite Downs is a cattle station to the east of the Everard Ranges and is now a part of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands.

speaker would normally expect, a point well illustrated by *Kanpi*. According to Noel Wallace, *Kapi* (lit. ‘water’) *Kanpi* is ‘a major waterhole in the Mann Ranges, but the whole area, mountain and valley, extending into the plain is called *Kanpi*’ (1988, p.111). Clearly, notions of what constitutes a place differ widely at this point. The situation is further complicated by the way in which Western Desert places often have multiple names, serving a variety of indexical functions. Rather than expand on this aspect of *anangu* placenames here (see 2.4 below), it is sufficient to point out that an approach that privileges the referential function of placenames will often fail to capture (or, eventually, represent) much of the *anangu* perspective. One of the main reasons for this is the cartographic preference or ideal for a one name to one ‘feature’ ratio. In colonial contexts, as indicated by the debate surrounding reforms to the RGS system of orthography (see section 2.3), clear reference was believed to lead to more successful communication, thus facilitating colonial order and control.

The process of laying down the country, or reducing the country to order, employed the further representational strategy of listing its contents – or ‘objects of cultural significance’ to borrow Paul Carter’s phrase (Carter 1987, p.56). Indeed, a few days prior to his departure for the north-west, Carruthers received a letter from the Surveyor General’s Office in which he received the following instructions:

The plans and reports supplied by you from time to time for the information of this Office, should be as complete as possible, conveying all information which can be collected respecting the country travelled over, therefore careful notes must be kept of distances travelled, with description, as will enable you to prepare, feature sketches, shewing ranges, lakes, lagoons, watercourses, springs, waterholes, tracks or routes, belts of scrub, timber and open plain with brief description of herbage, character & direction of rocks & nature of soil. (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/6, 17 April 1888)

This way of gathering knowledge of ‘unknown’ country had been the official approach from the early days of the colony<sup>12</sup>. As early as 1840 in South Australia the Surveyor General instructed surveyors to produce similarly detailed descriptions of the country in which they worked, and even to provide mineral and botanical specimens (see Frome

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<sup>12</sup> Ryan (1996, p.39) discusses similar instructions given to Charles Sturt in the 1820s. According to Ryan, this type of inventory reflects ‘the empiricist’s view of the world as a collection of things to be listed’. The analysis here also draws on Harley’s (1992) notion of the map as catalogue.

1840, p.7). Carruthers' instructions did not extend quite this far, but his observations cataloguing the north-west nevertheless appear on the map. The following description appears below the Musgrave Ranges (see Map 1):

Low broken red sandhills and sandy flats covered with stunted mallee, spinifex, sage and other bushes, scattered willow, quondong, wattle and patches of mulga, wire and tussock grasses, few poplars and little herbage. A few red granite hills covered with spinifex and bushes.

The key to water supplies at the bottom of the map is an extension of this approach. Of course, access to water was of fundamental importance to any economic project, whether related to mineral exploration or pastoralism. The key, presenting detailed information about the permanence of waters, the rates of flow and the longevity of rockholes after rains, is a unique feature of this map.

It is germane at this point to consider, albeit briefly, cartographic practices in relation to representations of indigenous people. The obvious starting point is the fact that maps of exploration generally *fail* to represent an indigenous presence. According to Simon Ryan (1996, p.124), explorers often lacked the linguistic and ethnographic skills to enable them to elicit information concerning the indigenous occupation and use of the country through which they were travelling. This general observation certainly applies to the situation in the north-west of South Australia. While the accounts of explorers and surveyors in the north-west reveal varying degrees of interest in and appreciation of the indigenous cultures encountered, ethnological activity at best involved brief descriptions of physical appearance, ceremony and material culture, and linguistic recordings rarely went beyond placenames, short vocabularies and occasionally songs<sup>13</sup>.

The recording of a tribal name or tribal boundary, however, was an event of a different order, and Ryan is correct in suggesting that in the early years of contact it rarely occurred. As shall be seen, the task of obtaining a tribal name and associated boundaries in the Western Desert was (and still is) fraught with difficulty. Much of the difficulty stems from the fact that these categories are more reflective of European (and particularly

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<sup>13</sup> See for instance Lindsay (1893; 1894), Helms (1896), Basedow (1914), and White (1915). It should be noted, however, that one of the officers of the Elder expedition engaged in taking physical measurements, see chapter 4. This general picture, of course, changed with Tindale's arrival on the scene.

cartographic) concepts than a traditional indigenous social reality existing on the ground. While a close reading of the early literature for the north-west does reveal that boundary-like *points* were sometimes observed by *anangu* (and that Whites were often aware of this fact<sup>14</sup>), the notion of a bounded territory was an imposition, influenced in part by the European nation-state model and related ways of thinking.

The first concerted attempts to represent an Aboriginal presence in Australia are found in maps drawn specifically to show tribal distribution. From the late nineteenth century such maps were produced in response to a growing concern over the rapid rate at which tribes were ‘passing away’. Certainly this was a motivating factor behind Curr’s ‘Australia-wide’ survey and tribal distribution map (Curr 1886-7), the first of its kind. Much of Curr’s information was compiled through correspondence with missionaries, pastoralists, policemen and other colonial agents, and this accounts in part for the vast gaps in the map: the state of settlement led to a lack of data for many areas. In the following years a number of smaller maps, more often concerned with areas of limited geographical focus, were published to accompany various ethnographic articles and monographs<sup>15</sup>. Such maps are characterised by a high degree of variation, as noted by Davidson (1938).

It is useful to consider Davidson’s work briefly, as his own map is based on a thorough survey of published sources and represents the state of the art prior to the publication of Tindale’s map in 1940 (see appendix 3). Importantly, when Davidson finally sat down to compile his map he found that he could not draw boundaries with any degree of accuracy or certainty, and admits that the (few) boundaries appearing on his map are *arbitrary* in the sense that no attempt is made to follow topographical features (Davidson 1938, p.667). Such categories as ‘names’ and ‘boundaries’ pose a number of difficulties. Davidson observes that the literature ‘contains ambiguities and conflicting evidence. Hence of the several thousands of names recorded it often is impossible to come to any definite conclusion as to just what they represent’ (Davidson 1938, p.666-7). In other words, there may be problems in determining the status of a name: is it a tribal or local

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<sup>14</sup> The accounts of travellers through the region often describe *anangu* either turning back at what are presumed to be the limits of their country or refusing to travel in certain directions. See for example Murray (1904, p.18), Basedow (1914, p.195) and Kramer (c1928 MS).

<sup>15</sup> Maps of relevance for the area under study pre-dating the publication of Tindale (1940) include those accompanying Mathews (1900), Howitt (1904), Strehlow (1907-20), Basedow (1925) and Elkin (1931; 1938-40). Copies of these maps are provided in appendix 2. The map accompanying Davidson (1938) appears in appendix 3.

group name, for example – or, we might ask – is it a proper name (that is, a proper noun) at all? Boundaries are problematic not in the least for the following reason:

Physiographical maps for many parts of Australia ... do not include detailed landmarks of importance to the natives and may give only English terms which confuse them. Hence many aborigines can not indicate on the white man's map the location of geographical features well placed in their own minds which they would have no difficulty in finding. (Davidson 1938, p.668)

Davidson's methodology was criticised by Tindale for its 'lack of field data and controls' (Tindale 1940, p.141), that is, there is too much reliance on literature sources, much of which is of varying quality. Tindale implies here that his own map, based on many of the same sources as Davidson's but also on a body of field research, is the more accurate and valid picture of tribal distribution. However, and this is a crucial point that will be raised again in our discussion of Tindale's mapping project below, the problems pointed out by Davidson in the passage cited above are the very ones faced by Tindale in the field.

As a final remark, it is worth recapitulating on the point raised in chapter 1 that in recent years the debate over boundaries and representation has been renewed with attempts to redefine and fix boundaries and frontiers in various locations across the country (see the discussion in Sutton 1995). Indeed, the questions posed by Davidson have endured, particularly in relation to land rights and Native title issues, so much so that it is as incumbent on us today to ask where and how tribal names were gathered, where boundary information came from, and who were the informants as it was in Davidson's time.

### **2.3 Writing indigenous placenames**

Carruthers' practice of recording indigenous placenames did not arise by accident – in fact he received the following instructions from the Surveyor General:

You will name all the hills piled by you where not already named, preserving as far as possible the native names. These together with latitude and variation of the needle must be stamped upon the pole<sup>16</sup>. (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/6, 17 April 1888).

The number of placenames recorded by Carruthers shows how diligently he followed the instructions, as does the following passage taken from one of Carruthers' diaries:

Built stone pile on 'Cooperinna' hill ... Met some natives this morning and through our interpreter Tommy Carrunda obtained the native name of this hill. (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/3, 3 July 1889)

Carruthers, however, also recorded indigenous names for features other than hills:

Some Natives showed us a good soakage. The Native name of this water is 'Undulka'. (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/3, 28 December 1889)

From one perspective, these recordings reflect the process of placenames 'transforming space into an object of knowledge' (Carter 1987, p.67). That is, as Carruthers travels through the country and records indigenous placenames, they are drawn into an entirely new range of spatial and communicational contexts in which the expanding colonial administration is the dominant force and writing a major technology. This process becomes almost tangible in the newly built pile with the name *Cooperinna* 'together with latitude and variation of the needle ... stamped upon the pole', if indeed Carruthers followed his instructions to the letter. So this type of symbolic appropriation is more immediate than the final construction of the map. With it we see the transformation of *sounds* into objects of knowledge, and this process of transformation proceeds, as will be seen below, according to the framework supplied by English writing practices.

A notable omission from Carruthers' instructions is any indication of how he should proceed with 'preserving' the native names he managed to hear. Apparently left to his own spelling devices, Carruthers produced a range of recordings characterised by a degree of variability and inconsistency. In one of his field journals, for instance, we find

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<sup>16</sup> The pole was typically placed in a pile of rocks stacked on a prominent hill or peak; sightings or measurements could then be taken from a number of topographically distant points to determine the height and distance by trigonometric calculations – hence the name for the process: triangulation.

the following attempts at the placename *Wawi*: Wa Wee, Uauwe, and Wauwe Rockhole (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/3).

Of course, it is safe to assume that many sounds uttered by *anangu* were either missed altogether by Carruthers or approximated to the nearest equivalent in the English sound system. For instance, we can expect him to have missed or approximated many of the lamino-dental and retroflex sounds represented by [tj], [ny], [ly] and [ɬ], [ɳ], [ɭ] respectively. In Sapir's (1949) terms, these sounds are not psychologically real to the native English speaker. Taking just the first of these, consider the following representations of the lamino-dental stop [tj]:

**1. Carruthers' spelling**

Pindulcharinna WH  
 Gilby Hill  
 Wammatanna  
 Coolpitcharina WH  
 Waterthurinna NW

**2. Current P/Y spelling**

Pintalytjaranya  
 Tjilpi  
 Wamatjanya  
 Kulpitjaranya  
 Watitjaranya

(WH = waterhole; NW = native well)

Figure 5. Variations in Carruthers' representation of the lamino-dental stop [tj]<sup>17</sup>.

In these examples we find the sound given as <ch>, <g>, <t>, <tch> and <th>. While this wide range of spellings may reflect a degree of phonic variation encountered in the field, such as allophonic variation produced by different speakers from occasion to occasion, they may equally reflect the intrusion of English spelling practices as a model for the sounds heard. A tendency to follow English models is most obvious in the bottom two words in column 1, which begin by following the analogy offered by the spelling of familiar sounding English words: 'cool' and 'water'. These models, of course, offer only an approximation, and it is easy to imagine that this level of approximation could well have caused confusion between colonists reading from the map and *anangu*.

<sup>17</sup> The forms in column 2 are reconstructed on the basis of current Pitjantjatjara/ Yankunytjatjara orthographics, so comparisons between columns 1 & 2 assume that the speech varieties heard by Carruthers in the late 1880s are similar to those described by such writers as Trudinger (1943) at Ernabella, Douglas (1964) at Ooldea and the Warburton Ranges, and Goddard (1985) at Mimili in the Everard Ranges. This discussion, however, is not meant to be comprehensive – it is important to consider, for example, the role of intermediaries in the overall process of writing indigenous placenames (see chapter 3).

Other sounds consistently missed or approximated are the velar nasal [ŋ] in word-initial position, which is often represented as <n> in English.

**1. Carruthers' spelling**

Nareena  
Neuwaminna

**2. Current P/Y spelling**

*Ngarinya*  
*Nguwaminya*

Figure 6. Example of missed or approximated sounds in Carruthers' spelling practices.

These examples also show the lamino-palatal nasal [ny] is also approximated to <n> in English in Carruthers' rendering of the name-status morpheme '-nya' (Goddard 1985, p.46).

Finally, it seems that Carruthers failed to distinguish the two P/Y rhotics. An alveolar tap represented as <r> in P/Y and a retroflex glide similar to [ʀ] in Standard English, represented as <ṛ> in P/Y, are normalised to the English <r>. Where <rr> appears it is usually indicative of the English practice followed elsewhere of doubling a consonant after a preceding short vowel.

At a meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1911, this and similar approaches to recording Aboriginal placenames were condemned by the Reverend Brown, a strong advocate for spelling reform. Although Carruthers was not singled out for special mention (Brown was particularly concerned with the eastern seaboard), it is clear that his recordings fit into the category of the widespread 'spell-as-you-please' approach, the target of Brown's ire (Brown 1912). A research committee set up to study the issue of the spelling of Aboriginal placenames eventually recommended the adoption of the uniform system of spelling developed by the RGS to the various State Premiers.

The RGS orthographic system for 'native names of places' was first put forward in London in 1885<sup>18</sup>. The rapid increase in colonial expansion during the previous half

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<sup>18</sup> See Ryan (1996, pp.32-7) for a discussion of the background of the RGS and its role in filling in the blanks on colonial maps. Macdonald (1994) provides a concise account of the Royal Geographical Society, SA Branch activities.

century had led to maps upon which, it was realised, many of the spellings of places were inadequate. That is, in one important respect some of the maps were not fulfilling their function of facilitating order and control: the gap between English writing practices and native pronunciation was such that a person (colonist, official, etc.) could read a placename off a map and find that it was incomprehensible to a local. Spelling reform was needed, in the words of the society's President, 'to reduce the confusion existing in British maps' (Grant Duff 1892, p.116).

Preceding the IPA, the RGS system was designed in the first instance for 'travellers', often scientists, traders and agents of the colonial administration. Following a number of basic principles, such that every letter represents a sound, with the value of vowels as in Italian and of consonants as in English, and using one diacritic to indicate stress, travellers were advised to aim at 'an approximation to the sound of a place-name such as a native might recognise' (Grant Duff 1892, p.117).

The key word here is 'approximation'. Admittedly the logic behind the system is pragmatically motivated: a balance is sought between the representational ideal of one graph per sound (for communication with locals) and the need for legibility (the mechanics of graphic reproduction). The notion that such a system could be sufficient to achieve its intended purpose now seems fanciful at best. Of course, the system was developed before any widespread or formal understanding of the phoneme concept, and is designed for use by amateurs. So while some advances may have been made in terms of consistency, the users of this system were left to interpret and represent native sounds through the frames of European languages and concepts.

When we come to the placenames recorded by Tindale it is necessary to proceed with caution: many of them are not in the public domain and we run the risk of causing offence by inadvertently transgressing knowledge restrictions and other cultural sensitivities (see section 1.2). In light of this I will proceed by restricting myself to more general aspects of Tindale's orthographic practices before turning to the questions of how the placenames were recorded and the uses to which they were put.

In Tindale's recordings as well as in the alterations Tindale made to Carruthers' recordings, it appears that Tindale preferred an orthographic system developed specifically

for use in both ethnological and linguistic work in Central Australia (see Tindale 1935a, pp.261-5; 1963a, p.372-3). This system, the ‘Adelaide University Phonetic System’ (AUPS), was adapted from the IPA by a committee consisting of Professor J.A. Fitzherbert, Charles Chewings and Tindale in 1930-1. Tindale also had an alternative system available to him, Geographic II (Geo II), a later version of the original 1885 RGS system, the main benefit of which was that it contained only symbols found on a typewriter (Sutton 1979). Tindale was less than completely satisfied with Geo II, however. When it came to Australian contexts Tindale found that this system afforded ‘only a moderate degree of accuracy’ (Tindale 1947 MS). So when we come to Tindale’s orthographic practices, they vary at the very least according to the extent to which they attempt to follow the AUPS or Geo II standards<sup>19</sup>.

It is also important to recognise that Tindale does not move conceptually beyond the phonetic level to a more abstract level of linguistic description such as phonemic analysis. This may appear surprising considering his association with Fitzherbert, Professor of Classics and Comparative Philology at the University of Adelaide and BAR member, but there is also some doubt about Fitzherbert’s understanding of this concept (see chapter 5). At any rate, from Tindale’s writings it is difficult to interpret whether he failed to understand the phoneme concept or whether it was not particularly useful for his purposes. In his article on the development of the AUPS system, Tindale notes:

In some [Aboriginal] words the consonants [p] and [b], [k] and [g], [t] and [d] do not appear to the native ear to be significantly different, and may be used indifferently .... The matter should be systematized ... otherwise we will continue to get such needless variations as (tjukur) and (djukur). (1935a, p.265)

Prior to this comment Tindale discusses variations in the pronunciation of the tribal name ‘Pitjandjara’ in different locations such as the Mann and Musgrave Ranges. The most common form he notes is ‘Pitjandjara’ and he tends to prefer this form for the rest of his career. This form, however, includes the type of ‘needless variation’ disparaged in the cited passage ([tj] and [dj]), as Tindale has them here, are in fact allophonic variants). This is an illuminating example of Tindale’s linguistic practice. From one perspective it seems

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<sup>19</sup> Tribal names appear in both orthographies in the catalogue of tribes (1940), while the AUPS is used for the tribal names appearing on the map (compare Map 2 and appendix 15). Interestingly, Tindale sometimes used Geo II for recording texts in the field (see for example Tindale 1932a MS, pp.175-9).

that his primary concern is for phonetic accuracy *in terms of the sound patterns of English*, and that he is either technically unable or unwilling to step outside of the boundaries offered by this essentially English point of view. It is as if the dictates of accuracy and order take precedence over an exploration of an *anangu* perspective. This tension can be seen throughout Tindale's work and is brought out more fully in later chapters of this thesis.

One result of Tindale's non-phonemicised spellings is a degree of variation in the placenames he records as well as in the changes made to Carruthers' recordings. The following examples are from the area to the south of the Musgrave Ranges:

| 1. Carruthers' spelling | 2. Tindale's spelling |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Carbeena Hill           | Karpina               |
| Coolinna Native Well    | Kulinja               |
| Eunyarinna Hill         | Junjuri               |
| Yelooinna Hill          | Jelagunja             |

Figure 7. Comparison of Carruthers' and Tindale's spelling practices.

There is some doubt about whether Tindale actually heard these names pronounced or whether they are merely decontextualised transliterations of Carruthers' recordings. It is unlikely that Tindale visited all of the places whose names he alters on the map, but he may have checked the placenames with *anangu* from the map. Nevertheless, the variations resulting from Tindale's non-phonemic approach are readily apparent (for example, the <k>/<g> variation).

We saw above that Carruthers missed or approximated a number of sounds, and many of the patterns seem to recur in Tindale's writings, although in fairness to Tindale, his recordings (and corrections) show a lesser degree of variation and inconsistency (so from this perspective his work is an improvement). The types of variation and inconsistency can be illustrated by considering the entries in his *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* (Tindale 1937 MS). In general, as with Carruthers, word-initial velar nasals appear to have been heard as a nasal [n] in English; retroflex sounds such as [ɺ], [ɻ] and [ɽ] appear to have been heard as alveolar [l], [n] and [t] as in English; distinctions between long and short vowels are not consistently made; and finally, the P/Y stops [p], [t] and [k] are variously

written as <p> or <b>, <k> or <g>, <t> or <d>. Again, this discussion is intended to highlight some of the main characteristics rather than provide a comprehensive treatment of the topic<sup>20</sup>.

## 2.4 Tindale and placenames

So far this chapter has shown that the activity of surveying involved in part the appropriation of *anangu* placenames in the establishment of order and control. But what about the placenames recorded by Tindale? Can they be viewed as an extension of this process, a later round of colonisation, or were they made and used for significantly different purposes? In the discussion below I will consider some of Tindale's uses of the placenames, some of his methods and sources, and finally some potential problems posed by the indexical functions of many *anangu* placenames.

To begin with a general observation, Tindale's interest in indigenous placenames was an enduring one. Even in retirement he devoted time and energy to working with Bill Watt of the Geographic Names Department of the South Australian Government putting indigenous names on official maps of the State. Of particular interest to Tindale were indigenous names in the Coorong region (for which a scale map was produced) and names appearing in the gazetteer for the north-west region of the State (Bill Watt p.c.). This is an important point because it reflects the issue of geographic accuracy so important to Tindale, as well as the range of his cartographic interests.

While it is not possible to put a precise date on the beginning of Tindale's interest in indigenous placenames, there is little doubt that his understanding of their importance increased significantly through an encounter during the BAR's expedition to Mt Liebig in 1932. On that occasion Tindale recorded a long list of places visited by an informant over a period of almost one year. While reporting on the results of the expedition, he writes:

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<sup>20</sup> A more comprehensive analysis of Tindale's orthographic practices with regard to his Western Desert material has been performed by Petter Naessan and is found in Amery, Monaghan and Naessan (in preparation).

The importance of the detailed recording of native place names, and the absence of adequate maps of the area visited necessitated much research into geographical matters. A list was obtained of 332 successive watering places visited by the above mentioned young man (Cockatoo Creek No. 45<sup>21</sup>) between August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1931 and July 31<sup>st</sup> 1932. The plotting of this itinerary, checked by another given by an older man will be useful in determining the nature and degree of the annual movements of a native group. (1932a MS, p.102)

This is a crucial passage for it contains a number of important themes that were to direct many of Tindale's efforts over the following years. Of particular importance is the notion that placenames can provide insights into mobility, demographics and occupation or ownership of an area of country. We know that one of the first questions asked of an informant before they were subjected to anthropometric scrutiny was the birth and death places of parents and grandparents (1963a, p.371). But placenames also appear in *tjukurpa* (stories), and they too were subject to scrutiny, although not without a degree of inconsistency. At one point, for example, Tindale argues that Pitjantjatjara myths have placenames 100 miles west of present 'places of living', illustrating, according to Tindale, a 'natural' pre-contact tribal drift (1953a, p.172). Yet in other contexts, knowledge of myths and placenames is seen by Tindale as proof of long-term occupation, such as Pitjantjatjara myths and placenames in the Mann Ranges (State Records, GRG 52/1/1958/187, p.3). There is also the claim that in taking over Yankunytjatjara country, Pitjantjatjara people legitimated the process by transferring placenames (Tindale 1974, p.69), an observation as yet unsubstantiated by other researchers and one that remains controversial.

It is likely that Tindale had high hopes at Mt Liebig that such movements as those through '332 successive watering places' presented the possibility that an informant's tribal country could be accurately mapped out. Whatever vision Tindale may have had, however, it was slow to materialise: 30 years later Tindale could still decry the lack of maps 'showing the actual distribution of the place names within tribal areas' (1963a, p.367)<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, although Tindale continued to work with Bill Watt on mapping issues, his hopes were ultimately in vain. Nevertheless, the power and influence of these relatively early formulations in Tindale's thought cannot be overestimated.

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<sup>21</sup> Informants' details were catalogued on numbered index cards. An example from the 1933 BAR expedition is provided in appendix 16.

### 2.4.1 Methods and sources

The BAR expeditions of 1933 (the Mann and Musgrave Ranges) and 1935 (the Warburton Ranges), as well as Tindale's 1934 visit to Ooldea, afforded him the opportunity to pursue the toponymic possibilities glimpsed at Mt Liebig. In the Mann Ranges alone '207 native waterholes and totemic places were localised' (State Records, GRG 52/1/1958/187, p.8). However, a number of unlocalised placenames were also recorded, and many of these, from a Western cartographic perspective, are extremely vague. In a draft document entitled 'Unlocalized Native Place Names in Native Reserves and Vicinity' (SAM AA 338/2/25), Tindale lists 64 places of varying degrees of vagueness, such as: 'Mann Range or west probably', and 'in sandhill country S of Petermann Range'. Some even appear without any directional clue, but simply a remark associating them with a myth, such as 'place in the X legend', for example. The fact that he took a list of these unlocalised placenames to the Warburton Ranges in 1935 in the hope of placing them (Tindale 1935b MS, pp.5-8) is testament to Tindale's concern for accuracy, fixity and order.

The placenames recorded by Tindale, both localised and unlocalised, arose through a variety of cross-cultural interactions. As a general observation, their recording was at times direct (for example, visiting a location) and at other times indirect (for example, while recording the travels of an ancestral being).

There are two main contexts in which Tindale directly recorded placenames. The first can be called an itinerant approach – asking the names of features as the country is traversed. The second approach is slightly more formal and involves the climbing of a peak or high point in the landscape from which places are pointed out – new names are recorded and previously recorded names are confirmed (localised) or corrected. For instance, in 1933, the highest peak in South Australia, Mt Woodroffe, was climbed, and many waters were pointed out (State Records, GRG 52/1/1958/187, p.1). Tindale often drew sketch maps in his journal locating placenames with reference to geographical features, illustrating his concern for accuracy (see for example Tindale 1933b MS, pp. 377, 393).

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<sup>22</sup> This point is echoed by Strehlow (1970, p.92).

As for indirect methods, it is useful to consider the following. First, individuals examined by BAR members had biographical (as opposed to physical or anthropometric) details recorded on 'sociological data cards'. Categories of information include a person's name, birthplace and totemic affiliation, as well as such genealogical information as the places of birth (and/or death) of parents, spouse and offspring. While this approach produced many unlocalised placenames, many of the birthplaces recorded in 1933, for example, are still able to suggest a general trend of west to east population movement.

Second, texts such as stories and songs, especially those associated with the travels of ancestral beings, whose actions and adventures created places in the landscape, are often punctuated with placenames. Of course, many such placenames are archaic, and may thus follow different rules of pronunciation or restrictions in usage (see, for instance, Strehlow 1971, p.71; Myers 1986, pp.57-9). Thus, localising such places in the Western cartographic sense may be exceedingly difficult.

Third, from 1930 at MacDonal Down, BAR members began collecting crayon drawings or maps of country on brown paper (Tindale 1963a, p.371)<sup>23</sup>. Peter Sutton observes in his discussion of the BAR map collection at the SAM that:

Tindale and his colleagues ... [often] wrote directly on the relevant designs of each drawing the names of places and mythological beings and the physical category of many of the geographical features depicted there. (Sutton 1998b, p.389)

So while the drawings made by informants are no doubt a source of placenames, the freedom with which topographical features are often represented in Aboriginal maps (Sutton 1998a, p.364) suggests that it is not possible to 'translate' the places easily onto Western maps. On turning now to an examination of Tindale's tribal mapping project, it is useful to keep this insight in mind.

## 2.5 Tindale's tribal mapping project

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<sup>23</sup> BAR members were not the first to use this research method. Drawings or maps of 'tribal areas' were collected by Daisy Bates at an earlier date (Bates 1913), and Tindale (1974, p.xii) is keen to stress that his own use of this technique was 'independently initiated' by himself and fellow BAR member Robert Pulleine in 1930.

The most telling contextual factor concerning Tindale's map of the distribution of Australian Aboriginal tribes is that it was published to accompany the *Results of the Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition, 1938-39* (Tindale 1940). Although Tindale had been working on the question of tribal distribution and boundaries for a number of years, the H-A expedition presented him with the opportunity to realise what must have hitherto been a dream: the opportunity to interview over 3000 people during 18 months of fieldwork across vast areas of the country (Jones 1995, p.165), an extensive undertaking by any standards. It was at this point, according to Tindale, that 'the study of tribes and the tribal situation came of age' (Tindale 1924-36 MS, p.iv)<sup>24</sup>.

According to Jones, the H-A expedition enabled Tindale to interview 'many of the last Aboriginal individuals with knowledge of the group structures and territories of those regions of Australia overtaken by settlement and pastoralism' (Jones 1995, p.165). Such information, combined with previously published and unpublished material drawn from correspondence, archives and previous fieldwork, in turn enabled him to demonstrate that 'Aboriginal groups did relate territorially to distinct regions that could be successfully mapped' (Jones 1995, p.165).

Even though the tribal distribution map may be the most well-known and influential aspect of his work, one should not lose sight of the fact that Tindale produced far more than a map to satisfy his own intellectual pursuits – he also produced a *catalogue* of tribes and their distribution intended primarily for use in anthropometric and serological studies and theorising. In such contexts, a well-defined or fixed boundary separating distinct populations was an extremely useful theoretical tool, as explained by Tindale in the following passage:

Many anthropologists are studying the distribution of the various customs, beliefs, practices, languages and other cultural traits of the aborigines. Others are keen to have a better understanding of the genetics of the Australian, as expressed in his blood groups and in the distribution of such items as blondness in hair, range of stature, head form and so on.

When they come to plot their data on maps they all need to know the exact distribution of

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<sup>24</sup> See Tindale (1974, p.x) for details of post-H-A work on the tribal map. Tindale considered the H-A work incomplete, and after the Second World War the UCLA-Adelaide Universities Expedition continued the work in little or uncovered areas. Further fieldwork took place in the late 1950s and the 1960s, giving Tindale the opportunity to gather new data and revise those already at hand. The final version of the map was published in 1974.

the tribes whose characters they study. The more exactly this can be done the more accurately the distribution patterns can be read and interpreted .... *Thus the plotting of tribal boundaries can be regarded as of fundamental use for the more exact study of the aborigines of Australia.* (Tindale 1957 MS, pp.284-5, emphasis added).

Of course, the concepts of tribe and tribal boundary have been controversial both in terms of their definition and their suitability as terms for describing land tenure patterns in the Western Desert. As indicated in section 2.5.1 below, Tindale seems to have settled his mind on these matters quite early on and did not substantially waver, continually defending his views in later publications. As well as these definitional questions, Tindale faced a number of problems concerning: (i) nomenclature, or determining the name(s) of tribes; (ii) describing geographical boundaries; (iii) temporal framing, that is, the aim of representing the pre-contact situation Australia-wide; and (iv) sources.

The first two of these problems are perhaps the most serious, if, as noted by Davidson (1938), tribal names are often ambiguous, and Western maps and their contents may be incomprehensible to the very Aboriginal people whose lands they purport to represent. The problem of temporal framing further complicates things, particularly in contexts where a shallow time depth in genealogies precludes inquiries about the limits or whereabouts of earlier pre-contact tribal territory. While this methodological approach poses special problems of inquiry and interpretation for the ethnologist, Tindale did not choose to make life needlessly difficult for himself; this is a calculated decision, a parameter that can be traced to the then current notions of racial purity and corruption brought by contact with Whites, a theme that plays an important role in many of the linguistic developments in the north-west which I will discuss in later chapters. The problem with early sources, as pointed out by Davidson, is that many documents require a high degree of interpretation and are of varying quality.

In the discussion below I will focus on the problems of nomenclature (2.5.2) and problems with boundaries (2.5.3). But first it is necessary to consider some of Tindale's early influences and sources in the development of his mapping project.

### 2.5.1 Early influences, prototypes and sources

Tindale's mapping project began in response to a challenge issued by Edgar Waite, the Director of the SAM and a prominent member of Adelaide's scientific community. Upon returning from fieldwork in the Northern Territory in 1922, Tindale was invited to lecture at various learned societies in Adelaide, including the RGS. Of one such meeting Tindale writes:

The question of Australian aboriginal tribal organization came up and when the late Edgar R. Waite questioned the validity of limits or boundaries, such as I showed on my map of the tribes of the West Coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria [Tindale 1925, p.63] ... I began to gather data from other parts of Australia to test the situation. (Tindale 1924-36 MS, p.iii)

It is notable that an emphasis on *boundaries* drives the project from its earliest beginnings, and according to Tindale the notion of bounded territory was one of his first ethnological field insights. He credits Maroadunei, 'an old Ngandi tribe songmaker from the interior of Arnhem Land' with introducing him 'to the idea of the existence of tribal boundaries, limits beyond which it was dangerous to move without adequate recognition' (Tindale 1974, p.3). This is worth keeping in mind, for years later Tindale would continue to use the concept of 'strangers' and 'trespass' to help to define boundaries (as well as 'tribe' – see Tindale 1974, p.30). It may also be worth keeping in mind the fact that Tindale received only brief and informal anthropological training from Baldwin Spencer prior to the 1921-2 field trip (Jones 1995, p.160).

By 1927 sufficient progress had been made, particularly in South Australia, for Tindale to address a public audience again. The following passage comes from a newspaper report of a meeting at the newly formed Anthropological Society of South Australia:

Mr. N.B. Tindale introduced the subject of the 'Native Tribes of South Australia'. He said that several local groups, bound together by peculiarities of language, organization, and custom formed a tribe, marked by the possession of a name; its members speaking a common language, which might have several dialects, but differing strikingly from that spoken by adjoining tribes, and they occupied a defined territory. Some 95 local group

names had been recorded in literature to date from South Australia, and about 25 tribes were so far definitely recognizable, but the north-western parts of the State had not been exhausted, and probably other tribes would be recorded. A map had been prepared, showing the known distribution of the tribes and local groups. (*The Register*, 5 July 1927, p.10)

There are a number of points of interest arising from this report, not the least being the definition of ‘tribe’ presented to the audience by Tindale. Note also that before Tindale himself ventures to the north-west, he already expects to find tribes as the object of his research.

The 1927 tribal distribution map of South Australia is also of some interest. There is currently some doubt whether the map mentioned in this report has survived – a map dated ‘1929’ has been located in the SAM archive, although at the time of writing there is some uncertainty with regard to this date (Kate Alport, archivist, p.c.). A close examination of the map (‘untitled map of South Australia showing tribal data, 1929?’) reveals that it may indeed be the map in question, with later additions and annotations. A number of clues support this reading including, for example, the crossing out of the Nganetjinni tribe south of Lake Gairnder – the original entry must have been made before the 1928 BAR expedition to Koonibba (see Tindale 1928a MS, p.27, where Tindale ‘discovers’ that ‘Nganetjinni’ is not a valid tribal name). Information also appears on the map from E.A. Colson and Daisy Bates (circa 1930) and Elkin (1931).

While an element of doubt remains over whether this is in fact the map in question, it is nevertheless revealing of Tindale’s ambitions and developing practices (see appendix 4). A number of bounded circular or oval-shaped areas at the top of the map are of particular interest: while on the one hand they seem tentative, exhibiting an element of arbitrariness, on the other it is still possible to read these representations as a transitional stage between the usual ‘name only’ (or ‘names in space’) representations of ethnological maps and the type of bounded territory representations utilised on the 1940 map. The map also contains other types of tentative information that was destined not to appear on the 1940 map, such as ‘tribal’ names that were eventually relegated to ‘alternative name’ status or were later regarded as errors (examples include ‘Luridja’ at the Everard Ranges and ‘Karkurera’ and ‘Memu [*mamu*]’ at the Musgrave Ranges). Miscellaneous notes written on the map indicate that it is a working document and also give some insight into

Tindale's developing system of classification of tribal nomenclature and some of his sources (such as Howitt 1904, Strehlow 1907-20 and Elkin 1931).

I have already noted that according to Davidson (1938), the literature available to researchers in the 1930s was of varying quality, and Tindale concurs on this point (Tindale 1940, p.141). In his brief comment on early sources, Tindale commends Carl Strehlow, Spencer and Gillen, Roth and Howitt in particular, while criticising Davidson and Roheim for their lack of fieldwork. Tindale takes obvious pride in the weight of fieldwork cited to support his own conclusions. He states that 'by 1940 one or more members of all but one tribe had been interrogated, usually in the field' (Tindale 1974, p.133). The question of Tindale's 'field controls' is approached in chapter 3 of this thesis.

## **2.5.2 A confusion of names**

Tindale operated with a fairly strict set of criteria for determining the 'proper', 'real' or 'valid' name for a tribe. The most significant discussion on the subject (1974, p.40-9) employs the following categories<sup>25</sup>, each of which will be addressed in turn below:

- (i) tribal terms without known meaning
- (ii) words meaning 'man', 'men', or 'people'
- (iii) names based on peculiarities in the spoken language
- (iv) terms based on ecological and/or geographical differences
- (v) words incorporating a term for language or speech
- (vi) names derived from compass directions.

Before discussing each of these categories it is worth pointing out in advance a number of biases Tindale brings to this aspect of the project. Firstly, we again find the viewing of indigenous linguistic phenomena through external (colonial) categories, in this case the grammatical category of 'proper name'. For the area under examination in this thesis, the name-status morpheme (Goddard 1985, p.46) is a suffix that applies to people

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<sup>25</sup> These categories are basically the same as those used in Tindale's earlier discussion on these matters (Tindale 1940). The earlier discussion is briefer overall and varies slightly to include an additional category of 'excluded terms' – many of which have been confused with tribal names and may be either descriptive labels, misunderstandings or errors, or terms for local groups rather than tribes, for example.

and places, for example, but not to so-called ‘tribes’, or more properly speech varieties or nicknames such as Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (see (iii) below). This is partly a result of the definitional problems of the term ‘tribe’ and the influence of nation-state ways of thinking whereby the country, the population and the language are all treated grammatically as proper nouns, for instance: France, the French and the French language. The influence of this conceptual baggage is also seen in Tindale’s ideal of autonomy or tribal self-naming, although he does accept exonyms that appear to denote a tribe where an autonym appears to be otherwise absent.

Further insight into Tindale’s approach to linguistic issues can be gained by reflecting upon the catalogue itself. In many ways, Tindale’s methodological strength (but also at times a conceptual straightjacket) was his ability to record meticulously, index, and catalogue data. The creation of a catalogue involves the collecting, sorting, categorising and displaying of knowledge, a set of cultural practices intimately related to post-Enlightenment scientific and colonialist projects, such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries and other genres of written standardised forms and meanings. According to the theoretical perspective adopted in this thesis, the names in Tindale’s catalogue are decontextualised lexical units removed utterly from indigenous contexts and intended to serve scientific and administrative ends. As Tindale himself states: ‘a major purpose of this work is to discover the real tribal units, to determine their proper names and their real bounds, and to relegate alternative names, corruptions, and misapplied terms to their rightful places’ (1974, p.32). As mentioned earlier, the catalogue has often served as a first stop ‘register’ of tribes by those engaged in Native title research, and it must be stressed that this form of knowledge only serves to encourage the decontextualised use of indigenous linguistic materials. Finally, Tindale’s fastidiousness at times appears to border on that of an obsessed collector faced with the awful prospect of losing a part of their collection. A letter written by Tindale granting permission for a researcher to use material from his MacDonald Downs expedition journal stipulates a number of conditions, including the proviso that ‘the tribal name Iliaura, gathered at the time was preserved’ (see Tindale 1930 MS, p.175).

Having made these preliminary observations it is now possible to turn to an analysis of Tindale’s categories of tribal nomenclature.

(i) **Tribal terms without known meaning**

Tindale provides two explanations for this category of names: firstly, they are terms whose original meaning has been lost – they are old names worn by usage; and secondly, in some cases they point to previous tribal splitting or drift because the same name may exist in separate areas (Tindale 1974, p.40). Tindale does not pause to provide examples, however, but moves instead to suggest that it may be possible to find the meanings of opaque tribal names if we read them ‘in the words of other tribes’. While at first glance this may appear to be a reasonable suggestion – if, that is, we are dealing with neighbouring and related speech varieties, but even then the pitfalls of creative etymology remain present. It turns out that what is actually suggested by Tindale borders, if not on the spurious, then at least on the suspicious. He claims that this approach has worked for *placenames* in the Mt Lofty Ranges, bordering Adelaide, when read in the words of the West Coast languages (again no examples are provided). There are obvious methodological problems with this type of practice (as pointed out by Fison 1902) and it is plain that Tindale has a penchant for playing with decontextualised linguistic materials such that, to paraphrase Paul Carter, they are treated like stuffed birds in museum cases (1987, p.328)<sup>26</sup>. If this appears harsh then consider the simple question, for instance, of why Tindale does not opt for the far simpler explanation of opaque names that far more ethnonyms of one kind or another are exonymic in nature than he seems willing to allow.

When we consider the history of contact and ethnographic work in Central Australia and neighbouring regions, there is more than a little evidence to suggest that there was a pervading Aranda-centric view when it came to recording the tribal names of neighbouring and increasingly disparate groups. That is, ethnonyms were in general recorded ‘looking outwards’ from the White administrative centre of Alice Springs, with the assistance of Arandic people. In a letter to Baldwin Spencer in 1903, after many years in Central Australia, F.J. Gillen writes:

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<sup>26</sup> A stark example of Tindale drawing conclusions based upon spurious etymological premises occurs with his discussion of the ‘Djerag’ tribe in Western Australia. In the following passage Tindale attempts to show that the term ‘Djerag’ is a post-contact construction: ‘one of the classic cases of nomenclatorial confusion is the effort of the learned student of kinship systems who possibly misread his own field notes, so that the geographical term Durack Range, named after the Durack family of white pioneer settlers in northwestern Australia, became Durack Ra., Durackra, Durakra and, finally, the Djerag tribe, as an arbitrary phonetic system, using only voiced consonants, took the “tribal name” into its grip’ (Tindale 1974, p.38). However, as McConvell (2002, p.272) points out: ‘*jarrak* is the term for “talk, speech” in a number of languages in the area, and this is the origin of the term’.

I am inclined to think that in all the CA tribes the tribal name comes from without. No one in Cent'l Aust knew the tribal name *Arunta* until I dug it up. The Luritja do not call themselves Luritja atal [*sic*] but a term meaning Western men and the Southern Arunta often speak of themselves as Antikirunya. (in Mulvaney *et al.*, 1997, p.434)

This point aside, it would be wrong to assume as a matter of course (that is, without relying upon grammatical evidence) that the existence of opaque names equates with age or long currency, and Tindale's reponse to this category of names probably reveals more about his interest in boundaries and movements than any deeper insight into nomenclature itself.

**(ii) Words meaning 'man', 'men', or 'people'**

Tindale's main criticism of this category of names is that they may actually denote groups above the tribal level, that is, an 'aggregate of tribes'. This notion of tribal aggregates, notable in the ethnological literature of the nineteenth century in terms of 'nations', is unpacked further by Tindale as 'those who share a particular activity' at a super-tribal level (1974, p.41). The example put forward by Tindale is for a cultural boundary, one side of which consists of circumcising men and the other non-circumcising men or 'women' as they may be contemptuously considered by the circumcising groups.

There may be some truth in the notion of disparaging names or terms of opprobrium for neighbouring groups. A people (us) versus non-people (them) distinction has been recorded in the region presently under study: S.A. White (1916, p.101) records 'Ma-moo' (*mamu*) as a tribal name for people to the north of the Everard Ranges – in speech varieties in the north-west it is usually used to mean something like 'evil being'. Indeed, such a practice has been recorded by many observers. Levi-Strauss, for example, writes of 'the Amerindian tribe whose generic term for their human neighbours translates as "louse-eggs"' (Chapman 1992, p.32).

It should not be ignored, however, that there is evidence that the terms for 'man' in some contexts and 'women' in others served as lexical discriminators for a number of speech varieties in South Australia (see Hercus 1999, pp.15-16). This of course casts some doubt on the efficacy of Tindale's explanation, and it does seem as if his desire to locate *boundaries* blinkers him to the possibility of alternative, and simpler, explanations.

### (iii) Names based on peculiarities in the spoken language

This category of names is particularly relevant for this thesis, for in it we find such terms as ‘Pitjantjara’ and ‘Yankunytjara’, so the discussion presented below examines this category in some depth.

Tindale begins his characterisation of this category of names with the comment: ‘differences in vocabulary may be seized upon to provide some key term to separate one’s own tribe from neighbouring ones’ (Tindale 1974, p.41). He is referring here to the concept of the lexical discriminator, and although the example he provides does afford a rudimentary view of how the concept works in the Western Desert, leaving aside the problem of tribe for a moment, his example suffers in that it contains an elementary error. Tindale (1940, p.142) writes: ‘in the Western (or Great Victoria) Desert the terms of enquiry “what is it?” (naNata-), (Nana-) and (Na:da-) are utilised to make names such as Nangatdjara, Ngadadjara, etc’. The discrimination in this case is based on words for ‘this’ and *not* ‘what is it?’ as he has it. This error also appears in *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* (Tindale 1974).

It is important to be clear about how lexical differences are used to form labels for speech varieties – a distinctive lexical item plus the ‘having’ suffix. So the difference between Pitjantjara and Yankunytjara, for example, is based on the lexical discrimination served by different (nominalised) forms of the verb ‘to come/go’, although there are other differences between the speech varieties than the one distinguished by these labels. Furthermore, although relegated to alternative name status by Tindale, another way to form speech variety labels is *wangka* ‘speech’ + lexical discriminator, such as *wangka pitja*, a form that appears early in the literature but increasingly gives way to the standardised ‘Pitjantjara’ in the majority of published texts after Trudinger (1943). However, the term *wangka pitja* is still heard on the Anangu Pitjantjara Lands today.

After briefly mentioning the terms ‘Pitjandjara’ and ‘Jangkundjara’, Tindale widens his focus to discuss tribal terms based on the word for ‘no’ which appear at various geographic extremes of the continent<sup>27</sup>. Here we find Tindale on familiar ground as he

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<sup>27</sup> According to Dixon (1980, p.42), a form based on ‘no’ is the most common linguistic form used for labelling speech varieties in Australia.

speculates on the insights such linguistic evidence may provide into past tribal migrations and stability. This analysis still suffers, however, from the basic assumption that lexical discriminators refer to tribes.

Returning to the example of Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara, it shall be seen below (chapter 5) that Tindale considered these terms to describe related dialects, spoken by separate tribes. But did these and similar terms in this category actually refer to tribes in the north- west?

As far back as the 1930s the status of such terms was called into question. In 1937, the missionary and linguist J.R.B Love was faced with a perplexing situation:

The people of the Musgrave Ranges give me their name as Wi:rtjapakandja. They name the people of the district including Mt. Olga, Ayers Rock and Mt. Conner as Wi:rtandja; and the people of the Mann Ranges as Pitjandjara (as correctly recorded by Mr. N.B. Tindale). *I am not sure that these are proper tribal names.* Wi:rtjapakani is a verb, meaning run. Pitjanji is a verb, meaning go. When I asked some men if they were Pitjandjara, they assented, in sentences containing different forms of the verb pitjanji. Men belonging to the Ernabella locality similarly used different forms of the verb wi:rtjapakani, when asked the same question. All three names given above may have the syllable djara, or tjara, or tjera, which is an adjectival suffix, meaning having or pertaining to. Thus, Wi:rtjapakandjadjara, Wi:rtandjadjara and Pitjandjara.

Words collected by me as Wi:rtjapakandja seem to be identical with words collected by Mr. Tindale as Pitjandjara. (Love 1938 MS, p.1, emphasis added)

Love seems to have experienced few problems handling the purely grammatical aspects of the process of forming a lexical discriminator, but what the names actually refer to in *anangu* terms was a problem of a different order. An element of confusion is certainly owing to the fact that the Pitjantjatjara (Tindale) and Wirtjapakantja (Love) vocabularies ‘seem to be identical’, thus posing the basic logical problem that if tribes have separate languages (or dialects), then Pitjantjatjara and Wirtjapakantja can not be separate tribes. Unfortunately Love does not spell out exactly how he thinks such terms function if they are not proper tribal terms; that is, whether they are ethnonyms of some sort (at this early stage of his work in the north-west, it is doubtful whether Love had much of a grasp of *anangu* social structures) or speech form labels.

In many ways it is more interesting, as well as more pertinent, to ask how Tindale handles this confusion, remembering that on the Carruthers map he has the area of the Musgrave Ranges as ‘Jankundjara’ tribal country, a result of his 1933 expedition. This confusion was clearly a sticking point for Tindale, who seeks to explain away the problem by appealing to what he calls the ‘vexed question of synonyms’ (1940, p.146)<sup>28</sup>. But in what sense, we might ask, are Wirtjapakandja and Yankunytjatjara synonyms? Tindale begins with the term ‘Jangkundjara’, recorded in 1933, and explains that ‘more recently (1937) another worker heard, but has not yet published, a word (Wirtjapakandja) as the tribal term *for the same folk*’ (1940, p.146, emphasis added). It is likely that Tindale possessed a copy of Love’s (1938) manuscript at the time of writing this, but there is a slight ambiguity arising from Tindale’s referencing (see chapter 4.4 below). The point is that Love’s doubts about the propriety of this term as a ‘proper tribal name’ are not mentioned by Tindale, who refers to Wirtjapakantja as a ‘tribal term’. To this, Tindale adds that ‘in 1939 the last-named term [Wirtjapakantja] was unknown to another individual consulted, estimated to be eighty-five years of age, who used the term Jangkundjara’ (Tindale 1940, p.146). It is suggested by Tindale that Wirtjapakantja may be a new term formed after the break up of the ‘Jangkundjara’ tribe in 1917, so that not every member of the tribe knows it, and that while new terms arise and old terms may go out of use, ‘more than one term may be in use concurrently’ (1940, p.146)<sup>29</sup>.

It seems, however, that Tindale did not remain entirely happy with this explanation. Whereas Tindale (1940) prefers his own recording as the ‘proper tribal name’ and assigns Love’s Wirtjapakantja to the alternative name section of the catalogue, by 1974 the term is assigned as an alternative name for both ‘Pitjandjara’ *and* ‘Jangkundjara’. This is paradoxical given Tindale’s use of the term ‘tribe’ elsewhere: how can the same group of people be both? Instead of accepting the conclusion that such terms are not proper tribal names at all, Tindale appeals to a supposed connotation of Wirtjapakantja as ‘displaced people’ or ‘refugees’ that is applied to both the eastern-most horde of the Pitjantjatjara and

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<sup>28</sup> J.J. East remarks that ‘from several different individuals ... [a researcher] may receive as many different names, and wonders whether they are synonymous or whether he is being hoaxed’ (East 1889, p.4).

<sup>29</sup> Tindale (1934b MS, p.80) records from informants at Ooldea: ‘in the far north lived people known only by hearsay as the Weritjapakanda, the Weritja pakanu and the Jananji’. Tindale had very little understanding of Western Desert speech varieties at this stage and takes the nominalised and past tense forms of the same verb, *wirtjapakani*, as different tribal names. This is clearly an error. Secondly, although many of his informants are said to be ‘Jankundjara’, Tindale does not realise that ‘janaanji’ is the present tense form of the verb that forms the lexical discriminator ‘Jankundjara’. It is curious that these recordings, particularly the former, are not mentioned by Tindale in the 1940 discussion.

a group of Yankunytjatjara who have moved south as if under a domino effect of migratory pressure from the west. I have noted the effects of migratory pressures already, but this explanation seems opportunistic to put it in the most charitable terms. While one should not rule out an association of some sort along the lines Tindale describes, one should not forget that the term is formed on the basis of salient speech differences. It is surprising that Tindale does not consider the speech differences of people at the Everard Ranges, where the verb *walaringanyi* ‘run’ is used by people that Tindale himself calls ‘Walaringonda’, a name that appears as a hordal term under ‘Jangkundjara’ in the 1974 catalogue (1974, p. 212). Clearly, the distinction Wirtjapakantja-Walaringkuntja contrasts speech varieties along a north-south axis, such that Yankunytjatjara-speaking people in and around the Musgrave Ranges can be distinguished from Yankuntjatjara-speaking people in the Everard Ranges who share otherwise similar speech varieties. Importantly, and this is the crucial point, crosscutting this contrast is the Yankunytjatjara-Pitjantjatjara distinction that works along an east-west axis. We know from the vocabulary that people recorded by Love as Wirtjapakantja spoke a variety of what today would be called Yankunytjatjara, but further evidence in support of this is the claim that their country ran through the eastern Musgraves to Operina (*Aparanya*) (Love 1937, p.11), a ‘boundary-like’ point recorded by many travellers through the north-west for the Musgrave people (whatever label is used at the time to describe them). An important conclusion to draw from this is that Tindale did not fully understand the system – or if he did, then he chose to ignore an explanation that deals with relative terms in favour of one that deals with fixed groups whose movements outside of tribal territory is (purportedly) the result of aggressive population pressure from the west.

There is one more fact that demands attention, and it concerns a surprising omission from both Tindale’s sources in the catalogue for 1940 and 1974 and from the bibliographies of these works. Basedow (1904) is by all accounts a paper that one would expect a researcher to at least consider, not least for its vocabulary recorded at and in the vicinity of the eastern Musgrave Ranges. The language recorded by Basedow is said be ‘Wonga-tchitche’ (*wangka tjitji* or *tjitjitjara*, that is, ‘speech having the word *tjitji* “child”’) and the people who speak it are said to belong to the Karkurrerra tribe (Basedow 1904, p.47). We know that the latter term (meaning ‘east’ or ‘eastern’) is, according to Tindale’s analysis, a category (vi) term to be excluded as not a proper tribal name (see below). At one point, Tommy Dodd, one of Tindale’s most favoured informants, did provide him with

an alternative contrasting term for a speech variety spoken from Ernabella (in the Musgrave Ranges) north to Mt Connor – ‘Pibiridjara’ – ‘these people say pibiri = child where others say tjitji’ (Tindale 1963b MS, p.69)<sup>30</sup>. Dodd’s term contrasts with Basedow’s and clearly points to the many ways lexical discrimination could function in traditional contexts.

In the Wonga-tchitche wordlist recorded by Basedow there are two particularly interesting entries. Firstly, Basedow records ‘wörteböğanni’ (*wirtjapakani*) (Basedow 1904, p.48) over ten years before the migration east of the supposed eastern Pitjantjatjara horde who are known by their use of this term. This would be an uncomfortable fact for Tindale. But note also that while Basedow records the speech variety as *Wangka tjitji*, it could also be called *Wirtjapakantja*. Finally, Basedow also records the verb *kulpanyi* ‘go, return to camp’ and so the variety could also be called *Kulpanytjatjara* (depending on context), an alternative name for Yankunytjatjara (Goddard 1996, p.45).

The literature contains a number of observations that have a bearing on this issue. Douglas (1964, p.2) prefers to see such names as nicknames rather than proper names. He explains the confusion of names reported by White travellers through the desert as reflecting their context-dependent relativity; he considers that an observer would record different names depending on such factors as their direction of travel, who is spoken to and where, and also to whom one is referring (1979b, p.110). The picture is further complicated by a number of sociolinguistic factors described by Miller (1971, p.74), such as aspects of choice when identifying with one label or another; Merlan (1981, p.140) suggests that speech variety names or labels such as those I have been discussing are often used to crosscut social space; and Hamilton (1982, p.104) describes the way such labels can be used to refer to people at different points along a *tjukurpa* ‘Dreaming’ track. Other researchers with long experience in Western Desert regions also report on the relative or situational aspect of such terms (Berndt 1959; Edward 1983; Goddard 1985; Myers 1986). The ephemeral nature of such terms in pre-contact times is suggested by Miller (1971), Hansen (1984) and Myers (1986).

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<sup>30</sup> Elkin’s (1938-40) map places a tribal name ‘Djidjitara’ (*Tjitjitjara*) along the Musgrave Ranges, a map that Tindale appears to have consulted (see appendix 2.6).

The clearest picture of the relativity and context-dependency of such terms emerges with Hansen's (1984) study of communicability across a wide range of speech varieties in the Western Desert. One of the most interesting aspects of Hansen's account is the development of 'Pintupi' as a post-contact umbrella term for a diverse range of people originally from diverse places to the west of Papunya. At one point Hansen reveals that his informants are known as Pintupi at Papunya, where Hansen is based, and that in the pre-contact past they were identified by a range of alternative (overlapping) labels depending upon where they were and who was referring to them. Consider the following details and experiences of two of his informants:

Cheekybugger Tjungurrayi said the *Putitjarra* (in bush days living to the west of his multigroup<sup>31</sup>) used to call them *Kakarra wangkatjarra* 'the ones with the eastern talk'. 'They called us two other names', said Tjungurrayi, '*Wangka tjukutjukutjarra* "the ones using the talk/word *tjukutjuku*", and *Wangka Kuwarra* "the ones using the talk/word *kuwarra*".

Fred West Tjakamarra, who was born in the same area as Cheekybugger Tjungurrayi and recognises him as being of the same country, said, 'The *Putitjarra* used to call us *Mantjiltjarra* which means, "The people with the talk/word *mantji*". Cheekybugger Tjungurrayi said again, 'The people to the south of us in the bush used to call us *Minurungkatja* and also *Kayilingkatja*'. He and Fred West Tjakamarra and their group, who are known as Pintupi at Papunya, used all of the above mentioned linguistic terms, i.e. *tjukutjuku*, *kuwarra*, *mantjila*, *minuru* and *kayili* in their pre-contact multigroup dialect. So their multigroup dialect was known by five terms, probably more. (Hansen 1984, pp.7-8)

Clearly the weight of opinion is against Tindale on this point. One problem for Tindale's position posed by these observations is 'which of these myriad terms denotes a tribe and which denotes a local group or horde?'. Certainly Miller would think this question moot, as there are 'no isolatable political or other social units that can be used for identification ... terms that are used to distinguish "us" from "them" are necessarily vague, inexact, and shift as the context shifts' (1971, p.74).

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<sup>31</sup> A 'multigroup' is simply Hansen's term for one or more local groups having only minor speech differences and identified by a shared lexical discriminator (Hansen 1984, p.7). Hansen considers that 'there must have been scores of such multigroup dialect names over the whole Gibson and Sandy Desert area' (1984, p.7). It is fair to assume that a comparable situation would traditionally have existed in the north-west of South Australia.

Of course, a prime cause of Tindale's problem is the desire to treat such terms as fixed and ignore their context dependency, relativity and ephemeral nature. Indeed, hampered by an approach to language heavily biased by orthodox scriptist notions, Tindale misses the important point that pre-contact concepts of 'language' in the Western Desert areas were more a concept of 'speech as process' rather than *a language* in the orthodox linguistic sense of the term<sup>32</sup>. As to the 'vexed question of synonyms', this turns out to be primarily a catalogue problem – in actual usage it is often not clear that such terms are synonyms, and seeing them as such clouds the picture of their crosscutting function. As we have seen, Tindale seems unable (or unwilling) to grasp the wider context-based meaning of such terms, so it is difficult to follow on what basis his claims of synonymy are made – on a semantic basis or on a functional (referential) basis. Either way, the definition of synonymy would have to be stretched to accommodate Tindale's usage of the term. To pursue this point any further, however, would lead us too far astray. Nevertheless, it does seem likely from what we have seen so far that Tindale's catalogue, under the rubric of empirical research, is in large part responsible for creating a situation that to *anangu* is anything but a vexed question.

A deeper socio-historical probing of why the terms 'Pitjantjatjara', 'Yankunytjatjara' and 'Antikirinya' emerge as tribal names is pursued in later chapters.

#### (iv) **Terms based on ecological and/or geographical differences**

The main problem here for Tindale is that terms equivalent to 'hills people', 'forest people' or 'river people', for example, have been erroneously recorded as tribal terms, and they are in fact usually general terms that do not denote a single tribe. Tindale makes the rather curious observation that 'it is often not as easy to recognise the unity of one's own ecological or geographical niche as to summarize that of others' (1974, p.42) in support of his claim that most such terms are exonyms. It is doubtful whether such an observation would find much empirical support. But the main point is that Tindale is not comfortable with the relative or situational aspect of such terms, whose referential functions may change from situation to situation depending on the context of use. It is true that these terms may be general or regional in certain contexts but in others they may denote specific groups of people. The bottom line is that the problem posed by such terms is essentially

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<sup>32</sup> In the Western Desert *wangka* is used to describe the 'speech' of birds, dogs, and even the wind.

related to the demands of the catalogue. Where Tindale views terms as ‘general and usually not definitive’ (1974, p.42), they are relegated from (incorrect) tribal status to the lower rungs of the catalogue hierarchy. Jacobs (1986) discusses the contemporary political implications of such decisions<sup>33</sup>.

**(v) Words incorporating a term for language or speech**

This category of terms includes those of the basic construction *wangka* ‘speech’ + adjective ‘rough, hard, clean, etc.’ to describe the speech of neighbours. Although Tindale recognises ‘the importance of language as a tribal differentiator’ (1974, p.43), he states that terms in this category must be rejected as ‘invalid’. This is a predictable move considering Tindale’s desire for clear and unambiguous reference, but it is unfortunate that such terms are excluded from serious consideration because, as indigenous metalinguistic observations, not only are they of great interest, but also a deeper understanding of them may help to prevent the researcher from falling into error. Tindale’s own example of ‘Wongka’ as a prefix for the tribal term Aranda in ‘WoNgaranda’ is a case in point. In 1903 Gillen writes, ‘Arunta is derived from Arokita mouth and unta loudly or nois[i]ly’ (in Mulvaney *et al.*, 1997, p.434). If Gillen is to be believed, Tindale was probably unaware of this etymology, which may have been lost by the time he began his Central Australian researches. A further example occurs, however, with Wangkangurru, which appears as ‘WoNkaNuru’ on the 1940 map adjoining the eastern boundary of Antikirinya country. Tindale’s justification for considering this a valid term is that the prefix (that is, *wangka*) is ‘an integral part of the name’ (1974, p.43). According to Luise Hercus, however, Wangkangurru is ‘literally *Wangka-ngurru* “the hard and strong language”’ (1994, p.7), thus revealing a shortcoming in Tindale’s understanding.

This raises an interesting point, for, according to Tindale’s logic, if he became aware of the etymologies of the two examples offered here, then he would have been forced to reject them (or at the very least to seek alternative names). But, of course, this did

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<sup>33</sup> Jacobs (1986, p.6) observes: ‘the Adnyamathanha have harboured a longstanding dislike of Tindale’s seminal map of tribal boundaries because it does not show the Adnyamathanha group. Not only does Tindale (1974) not show the Adnyamathanha group, he goes into considerable detail as to the inappropriateness of using “Adnyamathanha” as the intrinsic name of the Flinders Ranges people. Tindale elaborates by stating that the true name of the Flinders Ranges people was Wailpi and that they were only known as Adnyamathanha, meaning “hill” people, by neighbouring groups’.

not happen, and the two terms, based on the sound of a language (or speech variety), have been incorporated into the White administrative system and become standardised forms of reference in the post-contact era<sup>34</sup>. The most plausible explanation for why Tindale considered terms in this category to be invalid is that, to his mind at least, they involve an unsatisfactory level of ambiguity in terms of reference. To what did such terms refer? It might be (i) a group or groups smaller than a tribe or (ii) more than one tribe. In this way they may be seen as analogous to terms such as ‘sandhill people’ and ‘spinifex people’ that Tindale also rejected as invalid.

#### **(vi) Names derived from compass directions**

While for Tindale names in this category are not proper or valid tribal names, he does seem willing to accept them when no other term is available (1974, p.43). Tindale pays this category of names much attention, but this is largely because he digresses into a discussion of the rotation of compass point terms, dabbles in some basic comparative philology, and concludes with the suggestion that this phenomenon may provide insights into the prehistory of Australian tribes<sup>35</sup>.

For our immediate purposes, it is comments made in the first few paragraphs of his discussion that are the most salient. Firstly, Tindale writes that these names in general ‘are not true names but are applied by neighbours whose orientation often determines the name they apply’ (1974, p.43). (There is more than a slight irony here in that this is how we have seen category (iii) terms operate; and while Tindale continues: ‘one who is an easterner to one people may be a westerner to another’, we could easily substitute the terms ‘Pitjantjatjara’ and ‘Ngaatjatjarra’ for ‘easterner’ and ‘westerner’ respectively, or indeed many other possible terms, and make good sense.) Obviously, the relative dimension of such terms is a problem for Tindale.

Tindale was aware of the potential confusion that cardinal point terms could cause relatively early on, as seen by a discussion in the Koonibba Journal, where he considers

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<sup>34</sup> Of course, it is not suggested here that Tindale was responsible for this state of affairs; these processes were well underway before Tindale arrived on the scene.

<sup>35</sup> See Breen (1993) for the most comprehensive discussion of the rotation phenomenon. Tindale’s efforts at comparative philology are briefly discussed in chapter 4.

Kukata terms for north, south, east and west that ‘appear to be included as tribal designations of other peoples, in the area between the Musgrave Ranges and the coast’ (Tindale 1928a MS, pp.107-8). But a view of language and communication that problematises compass point terms to the extent that Tindale does is open to the criticism that it is overly narrow and ethnocentric; it overlooks the fact that for *anangu* they serve legitimate communicational functions. When, for example, in 1926, the BAR members T.D. Campbell and Aubrey Lewis recorded people at Ooldea as members of the Alinjera group ‘northerners’ or Willoorara group ‘westerners’, they did so presumably because this is what their informants told them (Campbell and Lewis 1926). After his 1934 trip to Ooldea, Tindale altered some of the 1926 sociological data cards by adding ‘Jankundja(djara)’<sup>36</sup>. Furthermore, Campbell and Lewis (1926) appears as a source for ‘Jangkundjara’ in Tindale (1974). This has the air of an assumption on Tindale’s part. From the Ooldea journal itself there are few clues, although there may be an analogous case with the way White (1916) is given as a ‘Jangkundjara’ source in Tindale 1940 and 1974, but later revised to ‘Antakirinya’ (Tindale 1986, p.240)<sup>37</sup>. As will be argued later, it seems that Tindale is sometimes guilty of making such assumptions on the basis of the map – it will be seen that there is an element of circularity to the relationship between the map and the catalogue.

It is fitting to conclude this aspect of the discussion with a few words from Tindale on the problematic term ‘Antakirinya’. As pointed out by Shaw and Gibson (1988) and more recently by Naessan (2000 MS), this is a term with a history dating back to at least the early days of contact in Central Australia. According to Tindale this is a valid tribal name. Yet despite Tindale’s efforts in the following passage to explain away the fact, it is a name derived from compass directions. Tindale writes:

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<sup>36</sup> On the first sociological data card of the 1926 expedition (card B1), Tindale adds ‘Jankundja(djara)’ in parentheses after the term ‘Alinjera’ in the ‘tribe’ category, and adds: ‘notes in square brackets added by N.B. Tindale, after visit to Ooldea 1934. “Alinjera” means “North” & indicates man belongs to the Jankundja Tribe’ (SAM 1926 MS). It is not clear whether this reassignment is based on etymology alone, or whether Tindale had other evidence at his disposal.

<sup>37</sup> Strictly speaking, Tindale refers to White (1915) in his 1986 paper. White (1915) appears in a scientific report of an expedition to the Everard Ranges, and from his experiences White also produced a popular narrative account (White 1916). Thus, the two sources are intimately linked and both works would therefore relate to ‘Antakirinya’ people at the Everard Ranges according to Tindale’s 1986 revision. Note that both White (1915) and (1916) are listed as ‘Jangkundjara’ sources in Tindale (1974).

In this work I have drawn attention repeatedly to traps surrounding the acceptance as tribal names of those derived from cardinal points of the compass. It should be noticed therefore that the Antakirinja of the country along the Alberga and Hamilton rivers in the northern part of South Australia regard this as their proper name and no more valid term has been detected. Among the Wongkanguru people who live to the east, the term (andakirila) is stated to mean 'western'. This could mean that the basic meaning is 'west'. Perhaps it is as likely that the term signifies 'direction of the Andakiri'. This seems to receive some support from the Antakirinja themselves, among whom the suffix (-nja) has the meaning of 'name', hence their name has the form 'those whose name is Antakiri'. (Tindale 1974, p.136)

Now most linguists who have considered the matter would agree that, according to etymological and sociolinguistic evidence, 'Antikirinya' is a non-Western Desert exonym of Arandic origin (applied to the most easterly Western Desert groups), meaning variously 'westerner' or 'southerner', depending upon a number of contextual factors (such as the rotation of compass point terms mentioned above, see the discussion in chapter 6). Tindale's etymological attempt in the above passage is fanciful to say the least: in wanting to divest the ethnonym of its relative or situational quality, he attempts to establish its priority to the directional system from which it derives, certainly a case of putting the cart before the horse. This passage reveals not only Tindale's failings with indigenous languages (of which his knowledge of grammatical features was shallow) but also the faulty reasoning which reappears in other aspects of his work.

While this brings to a close the present discussion of Tindale's treatment of tribal names, there remain a number of further problems and unanswered questions that will be considered as I move through the following chapters. There are problems with the grammatical category of 'proper' name from the perspective of communication and translation, for example, where a level of ambiguity exists between European notions of a proper noun and the use of the word 'proper' in pidgin or Aboriginal English contexts (see chapter 3). In other respects, Strehlow (1970, p.99) calls into question the very notion that indigenous people in Central Australia held much store by 'proper' names when he explains:

The people constituting each Aranda local group always referred to themselves (and were referred to by members of other local groups) by the appellation of their major totemic

centre .... The word 'Aranda' was never used as a common tribal name in the pre-European days. (Strehlow 1970, p.99)

This brings us back again to the pressures of the catalogue: a name must be found or as a last resort bestowed by the researcher (see Sutton 1979; Dixon 1980, p.43 on this practice). Of course, administrative demands were another cause for the imposition or taking on of a tribal name to please White people (see Doohan 1992, p.39)<sup>38</sup>. But it is time to leave these matters for now and turn to the question of Tindale's boundaries, the other main element of Tindale's mapping endeavours.

### 2.5.3 The problem of tribal boundaries

When it comes to the problem of tribal boundaries in the area under study it is useful to make a distinction from the outset. On the one hand is the problem that Tindale's boundaries purport to represent definite areas as being the territorial limits of particular tribes. This *geo-political* arrangement suffers from the fact that, while the bounded and fixed territories as represented on the map are recognised in certain post-contact political contexts, they are more the product of White conceptual notions and practices than reflective of pre-contact distribution and land tenure practices in the north-west. So the geo-political problem has at its core the issue of 'boundary'; a definitional problem that gives rise to the question of whether the concept of boundary as used by Tindale is commensurate with *anangu* practices. On the other hand is the problem (or group of problems) relating to the practical demands of gathering data to establish boundary lines on a map. Beginning from the assumption that tribes exist, Tindale's efforts often involve locating an informant who can provide him with information on the whereabouts of tribal limits, or, failing that, local group or hordal limits that can later be pieced together, sorted, catalogued, etc. But as with most things, in practice this does not prove quite so simple and straightforward as it sounds in theory. In the following discussion I begin with the geo-political problem, consider definitional and cartographic limitations, and conclude by considering some of the associated practical issues alluded to above.

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<sup>38</sup> This may also account in part for the adoption of different tribal names at mission settlements described in Myers (1986, pp.28-9).

As should be clear by now, boundary lines on a map are social constructs, and in order to understand them one must ask who creates them, for what purposes, and who observes them. Aboriginal people involved in Native title claims are often forced to recognise the power of colonial maps, whether or not they agree with their contents (the names of tribes or location of boundaries, for example) or are mystified by them. Some groups are arguably well-served by Tindale's representations, while others are not. On the other hand, fixed boundaries, for example, may serve the interests of non-indigenous groups, such as mining companies. Overlapping interests in land by a number of different groups may multiply, from the company's perspective, time consuming and costly negotiations and work area clearances. The Federal Government, too, has shown through the 1998 amendments to the *Native Title Act* 1993 that it favours fixed and clear boundaries in Native title claims (rather than overlapping claims). While these are some of the contexts in which the issue of boundaries currently arises, the question remains: how did Tindale construct these lines; are they reflective of a pre-contact reality?

As indicated in the discussion of background literature in chapter 1, there is an ongoing debate in the literature over the validity of the notion of *fixed* boundaries as a feature of indigenous land tenure in Australia. Prior to the publication of Tindale (1974), observations *vis-à-vis* the fluidity of boundaries in the Western Desert had already been made by researchers such as Elkin (1931), the Berndts (1942-5), Berndt (1959), and Strehlow (1965). It is often assumed that Tindale made little concession to the views of these writers on this matter, doggedly sticking to his tribal definition. However, a draft document in Tindale's manuscript collection suggests that he was aware of the fluctuating basis of boundaries in the Western Desert as early as 1930. While writing of his observations after the BAR expedition to MacDonald Downs of 1930, Tindale notes with some concern:

Modification of the tribal areas under pressure of new conditions is proceeding. In the present paragraphs it must be understood that the distribution of the tribes at the latest time before their disruption of [*sic*] Europeans is being outlined. It is thus *an arbitrary crystallisation of a continuously varying process* of which the full expression, could it be depicted, would show all the movements of a 'carte film'.

*Our information concerning tribal distribution must always be incomplete.* For example no research can now recall the ? group, family or tribe, destroyed in a massacre by

PitjanZara men near Indulkina Creek about two generations ago & from which only one man escaped. (Tindale 1929-34 MS, emphasis added)<sup>39</sup>

The paper as a whole, very much in draft form, deals with the familiar themes of migration towards White centres and ecological and cultural disruption brought about by contact. There is some doubt, however, as to the exact time of writing. It may have been written as early as 1930, soon after the MacDonald Downs trip, or as late as 1933-4, given the source of information concerning the ‘massacre’ was Alan Brumby, who accompanied Tindale and Hackett in 1933 (SAM AA 338/2/25)<sup>40</sup>.

This point aside, the passage affords a number of candid insights into Tindale’s thinking. This appears to be an exceedingly rare recognition by Tindale of the limitations of his project. Much of the blame rests on the technical limitations of cartographic representation in dealing with phenomena in a constant state of flux. Tindale’s neologism ‘carte film’ or cartographic film is particularly illuminating in this regard, for it suggests that ‘a map in the form of a cinematographic film would be needed to show the fluctuating tribal boundary through time, of which he could only offer a still’ (Levi-Strauss p.c.). A further point to take from this is that, while a tribal distribution map is ‘an arbitrary crystallisation’, this is more than simply the result of technical limitations. It also flows from the problem of unrecoverable data: the arbitrary nature of the map is caused in no small part by the theoretical impossibility of reconstructing the complete pre-contact state of affairs. Added to this, from a slightly different perspective, is the remarkable temporal dimension of Tindale’s map whereby the distribution of tribes is *not* synchronic. That is, if we follow Tindale’s logic of representing the *pre-contact* state of affairs, quite clearly the final product representing neatly fitting tribal territories is an illusion – contact occurred at different rates and at different times across the continent, so data gathered in Central Australia, where contact occurred quite late, is temporally (and therefore spatially)

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<sup>39</sup> I am grateful to Susan Woenne-Green for bringing this document to my attention.

<sup>40</sup> Brumby provided Tindale with a vocabulary and other information in 1930 (see Tindale 1957 MS, pp.370-6), so this information may have been passed to Tindale at an earlier date than 1933. In papers relating to the Mann Range expedition Tindale notes that the ‘lone survivor’ of the massacre had passed away, but he is survived by a son, Rufus (SAM AA 338/2/25). A letter from Harry Brumby to Tindale dated 8 October 1933 (SAM AA 338/2/26) suggests that Tindale did at least meet Rufus; whether or not he gained any further information is another matter, and one of conjecture.

incompatible with data reconstructed from sources from the early colonial days in the eastern states, for example<sup>41</sup>.

How long the problem of flux remained in Tindale's thoughts is difficult to say. It is likely though that it was to some extent put aside after a visit to the United States in the late 1930s, where he met the 'environmentally-oriented anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Earnest A. Hooton, the serologist Carl Sauer, and the geographer T. Griffith Taylor' (Jones 1995, p.164). Upon his return to Australia it seems that Tindale redoubled his efforts to see his project through to the point of completion.

In Tindale's published works from the late 1930s the tension between flux and stasis described above remains when areas of the Western Desert are being discussed. The more formal statements on the matter occur in Tindale (1940, p.151; 1974, p.65), and are slightly confusing. For, while he concedes that the boundaries of tribes seem to 'interdigitate or overlap' as people move out from their permanent waters to exploit resources at times of abundant rainfall, he also maintains that they retreat to their 'rather rigidly defined' territories in dry times. Of course, this raises the question of which type of boundary is represented on the map: are the boundaries the relatively fixed and rigid 'dry time' boundaries or an estimate of the extent of 'wet time' limits? The boundary lines on the map seem to fit snugly enough, but is this a further element of arbitrariness creeping into the process, an element of inconsistency, or simply a cartographic limitation?

A clearer picture emerges when we consider the types of boundaries recognised by Tindale, of which there are two main types: 'borders' and ecological-geographical 'barriers', which may simply be 'hard line[s] inscribed by nature' (1974, p.68). The former most obviously partakes of nation-state thinking, and the latter is notable for its notion of 'natural lines' in the terrain – which are the most obvious fixed and stable 'lines' in this discussion – but whether or not they function as boundaries is a different question.

The function of tribal boundaries as borders is central to Tindale's thinking. In the following passage we see Tindale's readiness to frame his data in terms drawn from the discourse of the European nation-state:

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<sup>41</sup> This problem is heightened by the shallow time depths encountered by researchers.

Peter<sup>42</sup> admitted that the Musgrave Range is all JaNkundjara territory. Von Doussa Hills (Tjinindjara) are in their territory but Waldanda (Butlers Dome) is so close to the *border* that Pitjindjara could go there even in olden days. It seems to have been almost a *neutral place of meeting*. (Tindale 1957 MS, pp.203-5, emphasis added)

The severe limitations of this practice will become evident in the discussion below.

In contrast to ‘borders’ are the so-called ‘ecological or geographical’ boundaries that are often ‘clear-cut and stable’ (1940, p.149), although at times for Tindale the contrast may not be so great, as there is often ‘a high degree of correlation between tribal limits and ecological and geographical boundaries’ (1940, p.149). Whether there is some substance to this correlation is a question that will not be pursued here<sup>43</sup>. It is sufficient to acknowledge that while ecological-geographical boundaries figure in Tindale’s observations for the north-west region, they often seem to be used as a support for or confirmation of boundaries determined by other means, such as by interview<sup>44</sup>. Indeed, in a letter to Elkin, Tindale writes: ‘I hope to be able to give boundaries wherever first-hand information warrants doing so’ (SAM AA 338/2/26, c1940).

This brings the discussion to the line drawn by Tindale on the Carruthers map between the Mann and Musgrave Ranges, the line referred to by Tindale in the above quoted passage as the border between the ‘Pitjandjara’ and ‘Jankundjara’ tribes. The following passages describe aspects of the pre-contact arrangement of these two tribes as determined by Tindale in 1933:

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<sup>42</sup> Peter is one of two ‘Aborigine helpers’ from Ernabella organised by Walter MacDougall, the patrol officer who accompanied Tindale on this trip. Peter’s main roles seem to be those of guide and informant; Tindale describes him as Pitjantjatjara.

<sup>43</sup> In a separate paper devoted to this issue, Tindale argues that this type of correlation makes for a higher degree of boundary stability (Tindale 1976). Unfortunately, to take up this issue would lead us too far astray. It is worth noting, however, that ecological boundaries continue to be of interest to those engaged in both linguistic and genetic research. In West Africa, for instance, linguists have attempted to map the distribution of languages according to ecological constraints such as rainfall (Glausiuz 2001). The theory is that higher rainfall is one factor which leads to greater linguistic diversity by allowing groups to be more self-sufficient, reducing the need to maintain contacts with distant groups to fulfil economic needs. This theory is used to explain the relatively low number of languages near the Sahara, and it is possible no doubt to apply the same principles in considering the issue of linguistic diversity in Australia.

<sup>44</sup> For an example of what seems the redefining of the position of a boundary according to ecological-geographical factors see Tindale (1957 MS, pp.167-9).

The eastern boundary of the PitjanZara territory was situated, until the present generation, along a line running roughly south-east between Mount Olga in the north to Mount Harriet in the south. (SAM AA 338/2/26)

On another sheet (which has clearly been torn from the former), Tindale continues:

The country east of this line was occupied by a separate tribe the JaNkunZaZara whose country embraces the Eastern Musgraves & many of the headwaters of the Alberga Creek as far east as Itarinja [i.e., Eateringinna of Carruthers's map], south west of Pine Ridge. (SAM AA 338/2/26)

While vague in terms of overall tribal limits, these passages reveal the importance of the concept of *line* to mark out separate tribal territories. A salient question for this analysis is the ontological status of the line between Mt Olga and Mt Harriet (a segment of which appears on the Carruthers map) for *anangu*: does it exist other than as a Western cartographic representation? The following information on Yankunytjatjara boundaries provided by Alan Brumby, one of the most knowledgeable and experienced colonists in the north-west in the early days of contact, is a most useful counterpoint. During a meeting with Brumby in 1930, Tindale records the following notes:

The natives who live at Everard Range travel as far east as Warrungudinna waterhole, ie Mount Alberga on the eastern edge of the Table land ... Leila creek (= the Alberga) is the NE boundary. South from Mt Alberga the boundary runs to Nilpena and Arkaringa – where there is a sudden change to the Oodnadatta language. They do not go far into the desert country S of the Everards except towards the SW where they take in the Birks gate & Blythe Ranges. They know all the waterholes in the country N & E of these ranges as far as the Everards. They go at least to the Musgraves & are familiar with waterholes on the eastern & NE Tompkins. (Tindale 1957 MS, p.371, original crossings out)

While the limits are still couched in terms of lines, their hard and fast quality as used by Tindale begins to break down, particularly when compared to information presented by Tindale in the 1974 catalogue – in which places such as the Birks gate and Blyth Ranges are located within Pitjantjatjara tribal territory. This presents a slight problem for Tindale in that it runs against his 'invasion from the west' theory of post-contact changes in population distribution. Clearly there are other factors involved in 'tribal' distribution that

Tindale misses or ignores. Indeed, Brumby's comments are more in line with Strehlow's description of the sharing of resources with people from the (Pitjantjatjara) Petermann Ranges hunting in (Yankunytjatjara) Musgrave Ranges. Myers (1986) also writes of the negotiated aspect of resource use in the Western Desert. The rigidity of Tindale's views on this matter are illustrated by the fact that his guide/informant on the 1957 trip, Peter, informed Tindale that he had rights in Nadadjara (Ngaatjatjara)<sup>45</sup> country through marriage and is not involving himself in 'trespass'. Tindale seems reluctant to accept the full implications of this and instead records: 'nevertheless he did sing a song about "strangers"' (Tindale 1957 MS, p.175). What should not be forgotten in all this is the service a well-drawn boundary may be to the 'the more exact study of the aborigines of Australia'. Fixed boundaries are intended to be of use for isolating populations, and later writings suggest an ideal model of tribal distribution based on the analogy of 'the cell of the honeybee' (1974, p.31), a model whose static nature is criticised by Sutton (1990)<sup>46</sup>.

A second group of problems, more closely related to communication issues, are encountered when attempts are made to translate indigenous concepts into Western cartographic representations – which often involves the use of post-contact concepts such as pastoral stations or fences. Against this it should be remembered that a basic problem for those engaged in drawing boundary lines of tribal territory, as already noted, is that of locating or indeed understanding 'landmarks of importance to the natives' (Davidson 1938, p.668). A compounding factor may be that placenames existing on colonial maps, having been bestowed by explorers or surveyors, are unknown to *anangu* and thus not helpful for eliciting information. Tindale himself notes the difficulties for fixing tribal boundaries posed by the 'absence of correspondence between English & native names' (Tindale 1966 MS, p.193). Of course, this approach assumes that boundaries do in fact exist, with the difficulty being essentially that of overcoming the considerable language barrier, a task complicated by the fact that, as Goddard points out, in Western Desert speech varieties there are 'no terms with meanings like "frontier" or "territory" or "boundary"' (in Sutton 1995, p.153). The closest 'equivalent' is *ngura*, a notoriously polysemous concept with range of potential meanings such as: camp, home, place, site, area or tract of country, land

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<sup>45</sup> Tindale places Ngaatjatjara country to the immediate west of Pitjantjatjara country. Tindale observes that Peter had significant contacts in the region, and used to travel as far as the Warburton Ranges with the dogger Brown.

(Goddard 1996, p.102). Further insights into this concept are provided by Myers (1986, pp.54-7), who describes *ngura* as a negotiated and variable space that, importantly, is not rigidly defined. A clear illustration of the fluidity of this concept is provided by Robert Layton; drawing on his experience researching the Uluru land claim in the 1980s, he writes:

Driving across the landscape and heading away from Uluru, one might ask, ‘Ngura Ulurunya palatja?’ (Is this Uluru country?), to be told at first, ‘Yes’; but it is impossible to pin down a point at which the answer becomes ‘No’. (1995, p.212)

One way around this problem is to resort to post-contact landmarks such as pastoral stations or fences. But how satisfactory is this approach? At first glance it faces the serious objection that it begs the question. Boundaries should not be assumed to exist in advance; metaphors drawn from the post-contact period may not be suitable for pre-contact indigenous concepts of space (and, in fact, in the Western Desert they are not). Secondly, at the time when Aboriginal labour was significant on pastoral stations, the populations of workers (or those collecting rations where such stations served as distribution points) was typically fluid. In the north-west the make-up of pastoral populations tended to vary according to season; when work was in short supply people often returned to more traditional pursuits such as hunting and various ceremonial activities. But even if we accept for the sake of argument that tribal boundaries did in fact exist, the presence of a named group or ‘mob’ would not necessarily imply that the station fell within their traditional country. The communication problems associated with this approach are considered in more detail in section 3.4 of the following chapter.

In many respects the problems we are dealing with may be boiled down to one of the difference between bounded space and lines – one culture recognises bounded space as territory, while the other recognises lines or tracks of significant sites. While the former is clearly derived from European notions of the nation-state, the latter is derived from a Western Desert world view built around the complex interrelationship between people, country and mythology (*walytja*, *ngura* and *tjukurpa*). This is a particularly complex matter that has been discussed by Myers (1986) and Layton (1995) for the Western Desert,

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<sup>46</sup> Sutton’s critique is useful for its alternative model of demographic pressures – pulses towards better areas – that suggest a certain level of permeability as opposed to the essentially static cellular structure of the ‘dialect tribe’ of Birdsell and Tindale (see Birdsell 1970; Tindale 1974, p.31).

as well as Wilkins for Arrernte (1993), whose closer linguistic study of these concepts is in many ways applicable to the Western Desert situation. The point here is that when one comes to mapping these two different sets of concepts (or world views) one finds that they are to a large extent incongruous – the *anangu* system, if mapped according to Western cartographic principles, were it possible to do so, would resemble nothing like Tindale's map. According to Bill Edwards, a former superintendent of the Ernabella Mission: 'if one could trace on a map of the area [that is, the north-west] all the sites and tracks of the Ancestral Beings the map would be covered with a mass of interwoven lines' (Edwards 1983, p.9). Again, this issue is revisited in the following chapter.

Finally, when Tindale (1974) writes of plotting tribal boundaries 'on accurate maps with well-informed natives directing one's pen' (1974, p.58), this is obviously a best-case scenario where a multilingual and cartographically literate informant is available. It is hard to see how this could have been possible in the majority – or even many – of the cases in which information was sought; this is particularly so for Western Desert areas, where it is not possible to find a clear and credible reference to such an informant in Tindale's journals and papers.

## 2.6 Conclusions

In tracing the influence of mapping activities on the recording of indigenous placenames and tribal names in the north-west we have seen that the recordings of Carruthers and Tindale were not made entirely objectively: in many respects they involved the reduction of diverse indigenous practices to Western categories. In terms of placenames, both writers appear to have operated with the cartographic 'one name to one place (or feature)' approach, with the result that the multi-valent or indexical aspects of many of the placenames collected were likely to have been missed. In this respect the historical linguistic record is only partial at best: the recordings are generally limited and should not be taken at face value as representing a full or accurate record of indigenous perceptions and practices<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> As recent events illustrate, the issue of the wider cultural associations of a placename can play an important role in disputes centring on traditional Aboriginal beliefs in relation to areas of country. In the Hindmarsh Island bridge dispute, for instance, the cultural associations of *Kumarangk* 'Hindmarsh Island' with women's fertility was not recorded by White ethnologists and the accusation that this association was 'made up' by the

We have seen that the privileging of the referential function of placenames arose out of a concern for referential accuracy in the service of colonial and scientific interests. Beneath these ambitions lies the basic problem of translating indigenous placenames onto Western maps. Despite the apparent rigour with which he approached his task, Tindale's recordings were still made in the face of much ambiguity. The sheer difficulty of establishing the exact location of places, not to mention the disparate perceptions of what constitutes a place or a feature in a 'landscape', casts doubt on their reliability (or utility) for determining the extent of tribal country and the locations of boundaries. Indeed, the fact that so many places remained unlocalised was a problem for Tindale – they could not be used for tracking the movements of people in a sufficiently detailed way for him to determine tribal boundaries. Certainly the ambition of 'showing the actual distribution of placenames within tribal areas' on maps was never realised by Tindale, and perhaps, given the conceptual and other limitations, it was an impossible one.

More damaging, however, are the conclusions that may be drawn against Tindale's practice of recording and categorising proper tribal names – and these conclusions carry implications for both his tribal mapping project and his wider linguistic activities. On the basis of the evidence presented above, the Pitjantjatjara-Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya arrangement as shown on Tindale's tribal map (1940, 1974) is thrown into serious doubt. It appears that his preoccupation with locating tribes and defining tribal territory blinded him to the fact that the terms 'Pitjantjatjara' and 'Yankunytjatjara' were at the time speech variety labels based on lexical discrimination – although some of this confusion may have been due to communicational problems, a topic which will be considered in the following chapter. There is little doubt that in the north-west (both in the field and in the literature) Tindale was faced with a multitude of names which, given his scientific aims, threatened to admit an unacceptable level of confusion over the identity of his subjects. His response to this diversity – setting up his criteria for determining a 'proper name' – reveals more about imposing Western grammatical categories than reflecting indigenous practices. In terms of the theoretical stance adopted in this thesis, it is important to reiterate the point that in the north-west area 'Pitjantjatjara', 'Yankunytjatjara', 'Antikirinya' and related terms were contingent and relational rather than fixed (in the sense of a fixed code). Apart from this,

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women in response to the proposed bridge freely circulated in sections of the media and the wider community.

Tindale's handling of his linguistic material is not entirely consistent and descends at times into error through the making of spurious etymologies. In light of this we may draw the preliminary and tentative conclusion that Tindale's linguistics are overly narrow and limited by the orthodox linguistic myth of a fixed code of forms and meanings. This observation will be built upon in later chapters.

Finally, the question of the influence of maps on the collection of linguistic materials will arise again later in this thesis when I consider the construction of vocabularies and languages. Before discussing these aspects of the historical linguistic record, however, it is necessary to turn more fully to the communicative limitations faced by travellers to the north-west and the roles these may have played in the recording of the types of linguistic materials discussed so far. In relation to Tindale's work in particular, a discussion of these matters serves to reveal more about how his tribal representations of the north-west were made and to advance further the argument that they are largely imposed constructions.

### 3 The problem of communication

Opening the palm of his hand, he began drawing circles in it with the forefinger of the other: ‘This is what happens when a dingo comes up to the sheep yard. As the dingo goes round the sheep come together and start circling and circling and keep circling until you get in there and stop them. The way to help *anangu* is to tell them to talk straight, not in circles. They have to understand the Whitefella way’.

(Conversation with an *anangu* interpreter, June 2001)

#### 3.0 Introduction

In a predominantly scriptist culture like Australia, it seems that there is a great temptation to accord authority to written representations, such as those considered in the previous chapter, without further enquiry into the circumstances within which they were recorded. We may find reasons for this in the power of the myth of objective representation, in the tendency of some researchers (linguists and anthropologists) to use such representations as the Tindale catalogue of tribes and tribal distribution map as a foundation for their own work, and, more cynically, in the actions of those whose political interests are served by simply accepting such historical materials at face value (see chapter 6). Whatever the reason, this neglect is fraught with dangers – it may easily lead to shallow interpretations of such materials and to erroneous conclusions. It has already been seen, for instance, that significant elements of the historical linguistic record of the north-west were constructed under the influence of Western cartographic, ethnological and linguistic concepts. On considering the conditions under which intercultural communication took place in the north-west, further doubt is cast upon the purported objectivity of such records, and this serves to demonstrate just how important it is to question the wider communicative contexts within which the linguistic materials were collected.

The discussion in this chapter is directed by the following basic questions: how was communication conducted, where was it conducted, who were the participants, and what sorts of barriers to communication were encountered? Due to the typically fragmentary nature of historical records, it is not always possible to determine these communicative circumstances across the board – this enquiry is necessarily guided by the availability of historical evidence. Thus, the approach adopted here is to consider a wide range of

documentary sources and to allow a general picture of intercultural communication in the north-west (and contiguous areas) to emerge. Fortunately, when we turn to Tindale's work, which forms the major focus of this chapter, there is sufficient documentary material available to enable a number of important insights into his communicative practices. These insights will cast further doubt on the neatness of his bounded tribal categories in the north-west.

This chapter begins by examining the main medium of intercultural communication in the north-west during the post-contact period: pidgin English (section 3.1). As will be seen, a number of limitations and ambiguities accompanied the use of pidgin, and for some researchers it was considered unsuitable for scientific research. Importantly, due to these limitations and ambiguities, pidgin was particularly ill-suited for mapping work. This part of Tindale's work has been largely ignored, but given the general lack of scholarly regard for pidgins and other contact varieties in the past, this is hardly surprising.

A substantial part of the discussion considers indigenous ways of speaking (Hymes 1972; Saville-Troike 1982) that at times caused insurmountable barriers for researchers (section 3.2). For this purpose I draw heavily on Ian Malcolm's (1980-2) study of variation in speech styles and practices in Aboriginal communities across Australia. Malcolm applies Hymes's (1972) framework to observations compiled from around the country (from the literature and his own personal observations and communications) to provide what he calls a 'sociolinguistic restatement' of communicational events. That is, Malcolm does not offer an ethnography of speaking, but rather a stage of description preliminary to 'the formulation of a descriptive theory of speaking as a cultural system in Aboriginal society' (1980-2, p.99)<sup>1</sup>. The insights provided by Malcolm are particularly useful in our efforts to explore the interface of *anangu* and White communicative expectations and practices, an interface characterised succinctly by Douglas (1976, p.53) as a 'lack of congruence in the overlap between the cultural grid of the investigator and that of the people he is studying'. Without wanting to pre-empt the discussion to follow, some

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<sup>1</sup> As yet, detailed ethnographies of communication for the Western Desert have not been produced. Speech styles are mentioned in the literature as early as Elkin (1938-40), on 'brother-in-law' language; Trudinger (1943, pp.223) mentions (but does not describe) *anitji*, a ceremonial 'language'; and more recently Douglas (1976) discusses special vocabularies, baby talk, and 'in-law' speech, albeit briefly. The most detailed approach to date is that of Goddard (1985, chapter 10, and 1992). In the first of these works Goddard briefly discusses a number of speech styles including *ayilpiri* (or *alpiri*) a rhetorical style used in public speaking, the oblique or sideways style *tjalpawangkanytja*, light-hearted speech styles and *anitji* mentioned above. In the later article Goddard expands on *tjalpawangkanytja* and a number of light-hearted speech styles.

indication of the culturally prescribed ways of communicating that caused barriers to White enquiry include, for example, the practices of deference and avoidance. In the former case, an informant may refuse to speak on a matter if a more senior person is present, and in the latter, an informant may not be able to communicate with another person (which causes obvious problems if the latter person is the interpreter). The main point is that in contexts in which information was keenly sought after, interpreters and informants had some control over the sort of information provided to researchers and may simply have decided not to respond at all.

In section 3.3, I consider Tindale's interactions with his interpreters in 1933 (that is, the point at which he begins in earnest his researches on Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara) and the types of problems he encountered in this aspect of his work. Tindale's interaction with interpreters, go-betweens and informants also has been under-researched, perhaps partly as a result of his manuscript materials only relatively recently becoming available for scrutiny.

The final point of discussion relates to the problem of translation, particularly with regard to the concepts of 'boundary' and 'proper name' (section 3.4). It should be appreciated that the communication problems examined in this chapter not only deeply affected Tindale's mapping work, but also his collection of vocabularies to be discussed in chapter 5.

Before moving on to examine these questions for the light they shed on the construction of the historical linguistic record, it is important to make a few general observations about the tenor of intercultural communication in the wider Central Australia region to prepare the ground.

The history of intercultural communication in the north-west differs little from that of other frontier areas in Australia; it is characterised by fear, distrust and misunderstanding. From written accounts by those in the vanguard of colonial expansion, it is clear that much of this derives from White approaches to communication. Consider for instance the conceit of explorers and others who, in their written accounts of communicational events, equate linguistic and military power. Giles provides a stark example from the Central Australian frontier. Faced with a 'harangue' from an indigenous

person, he uses his rifle to punctuate the flow of speech with ‘a full stop’ (1995 [1889], p.135). The infamous Mounted Constable Willshire stretches the conceit to its limits when reflecting on the pitch of an armed assault; in a much quoted passage, he writes:

They scattered in all directions, setting fire to the grass on each side of us, throwing occasional spears, and yelling at us. It’s no use mincing matters – the Martini-Henry carbines at this critical moment were talking English in the silent majesty of those great eternal rocks. (Willshire 1896, p.41)<sup>2</sup>

Behind the literary pretensions of writers such as Giles and Willshire are, no doubt, actual and grave historical events that would have served only to heighten the sense of fear and distrust in frontier areas. Alfred Warren, a cook on the Elder expedition, avoids such romantic vagary when he writes: ‘Mr Lindsay & some of the party have been singing God Save the Queen to the Blacks & fired a shot out of their Revolver. [T]hey were very much frightened for they never heard a gun go off before’ (Warren 1891-2 MS, 6 July 1891). While the singing of songs was a non-violent feature of early intercultural exchanges in the north-west<sup>3</sup>, it is nevertheless possible to see this episode as not only a demonstration of power, but also an impromptu initiation to the new colonial order. To be sure, many early encounters extended to mock ‘christenings’ for the newest of British subjects with the bestowing of new, often childish or derogatory, names<sup>4</sup>.

From a slightly different perspective, attempts to communicate in the language of the ‘other’, in the rare cases of such events being recorded, are also notable for the light they shed on the general background of fear and mistrust in frontier regions. Consider the following account from L.A. Wells of Carruthers’ attempt to communicate while proceeding up the Nicholson River on a survey of the NT-Qld border in 1885-6:

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<sup>2</sup> This incident occurred well to the north of the area under study at a place called ‘Black Gin Creek’ (presumably near the Victoria Downs station) during the pursuit of Aborigines believed to be involved in cattle killing. Willshire gained notoriety for his alleged involvement in the murder of *anangu* on Tempe Downs station to the north-east of the Musgrave Ranges.

<sup>3</sup> During the 1933 BAR expedition to the Mann Ranges, Hackett meets ‘a native, who would have no word of English, sing[ing] a verse of some hymn, taught by a missionary several years before’ (1937, p.303). The missionary in question was Wade (SAM AA 338/2/25), who with his wife and another man, Page, travelled through the north-west in 1928 (Terry 1928, p.276). Inga Clendinnen (2002) discusses the singing of songs in early intercultural exchanges, an often neglected part of contact history in Australia.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of these practices in South Australia, see Foster, Mühlhäusler and Clarke (1998).

Whilst fixing camp for the night, Mr Carruthers & one of the men walked up channel for a short distance & were surprised to see a native walking leisurely along the bed of the River, then dry, with his spears across his shoulders & his arms over them. Mr C., who could mimic a native's talk, called out something resembling native speech [*sic*], when the native half looked round, but took little notice, thinking it a comrade; but on repeating the call, he looked right round, & seeing the whites he bolted. (State Library of South Australia, PRG 315/1, p.14)

Wells writes this account many years after the event, and the effect is clearly intended to be comic. But this is not an isolated incident so far as Carruthers is concerned: in written accounts he seems to be on the receiving end of more than his fair share of jokes, mostly relating to his putative limited communicative skills. Although some of his actions inspired mirth in his colleagues, Carruthers is another who could resort to shooting when his attempts at communication failed (see section 3.4).

From the opposite perspective, *anangu* attempts to speak the language of the intruders, perhaps a few words or phrases, were often greeted with surprise. For example, in a tense standoff near the Musgrave Ranges, Giles is warned to 'walk, white fellow, walk' (that is, go away!). Although startled at hearing (pidgin) English, he ignores the command and refuses to yield ground. Again, as so often occurred in frontier exchanges, gunfire rather than speech is used to demonstrate the will of the colonists (Giles 1995 [1889], p.94-6).

When we come to consider the more sustained and complex communicative interactions that arose in response to the expanding colonial economy, administration, and scientific research programmes, it is important to keep these early communicational exchanges in mind, for the fear, distrust and misunderstanding colours much of what follows. Indeed, as the epigraph to this chapter suggests, these characteristics of intercultural communication remain – particularly in legal contexts in which traditional *anangu* speech styles are stigmatised and poorly understood<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> For discussions on the issue of intercultural communication in legal contexts, specifically relating to indigenous Australians, see, for instance, Strehlow (1935), Liberman (1982), Koch (1991), and Eades (1995).

### 3.1 Pidgin English

The primary means of intercultural communication in South Australia has gone by a number of names over the years as it developed with the sealers and whalers to the south of Adelaide in the days before official colonisation, then spread outwards with the expanding colonial frontier<sup>6</sup>. Whether known as pidgin, broken, cattle station, or Aboriginal English, it has long been considered a degraded, corrupt, impure, broken or ridiculous form of English. According to one by no means atypical observer, Edgar Sayer: ‘in whatever country we find pidgin English it is still an inferior growth, or development from originally pure words or sentences of some language or other’ (Sayer 1939, p.2). The reasons for such prejudice are many and complex, ranging from scriptist notions of what a ‘proper’ language is to underlying notions of race and primitive mentality. Unfortunately there is insufficient space here to give this point the full attention it deserves, but nevertheless as we move through the following discussion, concentrating on the grammatical and functional restrictions of pidgin English, the presence of such prejudices will become evident.

A useful prelude to this discussion of the limitations of pidgin is the following, albeit necessarily brief, overview of the history of pidgin in the north-west, from its introduction and early diffusion to the current state of affairs.

The first context for sustained contact in the Far North of South Australia was the building of the overland telegraph between Adelaide and Darwin in the early 1870s, which ran through the traditional Arabana and Arrernte country to the east of the area covered by Carruthers’ (1888-92) surveys. Firsthand accounts of the resulting intercultural exchanges are scarce, but it is likely, judging by later events about which much more is known, interactions took place in which White goods (tea, sugar, flour, clothing, tobacco, matches) were exchanged for information regarding resources such as water and wood supplies, as well as sex and labour. By the time the explorers Giles and Gosse arrived in the north-west, pidgin had diffused (a few words or phrases at least) to surrounding areas: Gosse (1874) records it to the east of the area surveyed by Carruthers, while Giles (1874) encounters it as far west as the Musgraves. A subsequent and significant phase of diffusion

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<sup>6</sup> Socio-historical and grammatical aspects of the contact language are discussed in Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler (in press).

appears to have taken place in the 1890s. Just prior to this period, the government geologist Henry Y.L. Brown observed that people of the Musgrave Ranges knew little ‘broken English ... but they contrive to make their wants known and to communicate by signs’ (Brown 1890, p.6), but by 1903 Basedow exchanged information as far west as the Mann Ranges in a mixture of *wangka* and pidgin (see Basedow 1914)<sup>7</sup>. By 1914, S.A. White observes:

For many miles on either side of the overland telegraph line, there is little chance to-day of finding a native who cannot speak a few words of pidgin English, and who has not spoilt his appearance by attaching some filthy rags of cast-off European clothing to his body, be it only an old felt hat upon his head. (1914, p.150)

Although by this time the diffusion of pidgin was probably much wider than White suggests, his observation remains of interest for its linking of degraded speech and poor appearance. That is, cloaked in terms drawn from the romantic discourse of the noble savage, White expresses the view that the corrupting effects of civilisation are manifested not only in physical appearance but also in the use of degraded English.

There is little doubt that signs and gestures played a prominent role in communicational exchanges, most obviously when verbal communication failed, but also as a supplement to more successful speech acts involving pidgin<sup>8</sup>. Of particular interest to later discussions is the significant role that gesture played in the collection of vocabularies: Lindsay (1893), Wells (1893), Helms (1896), Love (1938 MS), and Tindale (1933c MS), for instance, all recorded words for objects that were either presented to the recorder or the informant, or pointed out in passing (see chapter 4).

Apart from the collection of linguistic materials such as vocabularies and placenames, there is evidence that indigenous speech varieties were used by Whites, and may have provided substrate influences in pidgin-based communicative exchanges. Two major informants for Tindale, Alan Brumby and E.A. Colson, both had (limited)

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<sup>7</sup> No doubt the experience of Wells, the expedition leader, would have facilitated communicative exchanges. For *anangu*, of course, knowledge of pidgin would have been largely restricted to those with contact experience, much of this due to an increase in prospecting and dogging activity in the 1890s and early 1900s.

<sup>8</sup> Huebbe, for example, recounts a ‘long conversation of which little could be understood on either side’ and in which gesture is eventually used (Huebbe 1895-6 MS, p.37). For a discussion of the potential for successful communication with signs and gestures in contact contexts, see Dutton (1987).

knowledge of Western Desert varieties from their close contact with *anangu*<sup>9</sup>. It seems that there were others in close contact with *anangu* at the time who also had picked up some *wangka*, although as Finlayson observes in the 1930s:

All the old hands (whites, that is) have a curious disinclination to admit any knowledge of the [Pitjantjatjara] language – apparently it is ‘infra dig’, and implies an absence of that contempt which is the essence of the average man’s attitude to the blacks here. (in Tonkin 2001, p.67)

At a much earlier date, Willshire (1891) records what may possibly be a foreigner talk (Ferguson 1981) version of a Western Desert speech variety near Tempe Downs station in the Northern Territory – although it is hard to know how seriously he took his own advice that ‘the chief thing in speaking the language is to put the words together and say them quickly’ (1891, p.20).

While the time has passed for us to gain a much clearer picture of early communication in the north-west, there are people with knowledge of pidgin (or cattle station English) still living at places like Indulkana and other communities through the *Anangu* Pitjantjatjara Lands. Since the mid 1960s people have moved to Indulkana from surrounding pastoral stations, and older people when speaking English employ characteristic pidgin features<sup>10</sup>. Pidgin is a threatened speech variety, as the main domain for its use has disappeared since the mechanisation of the pastoral industry and the introduction of equal wages. Places such as Marla, a shopping and fuel centre, and the mining centres of Mintubi and Lambina do provide contexts for speaking English, as do community stores and organisations, but as the use of English by younger people moves closer to Standard English, many elements of the former contact language are being left behind.

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<sup>9</sup> Brumby had some knowledge of the speech variety spoken at the Everard Ranges: we know this from the vocabulary he gave to Tindale in 1930 (Tindale 1957 MS, pp.370-6). From the extent of his travels (see below) he may have known something of the speech further west. According to Elkin, Colson had a ‘partial knowledge of the dialect used in the Musgrave Ranges’ (Elkin 1931, p.63). Like Brumby, Colson also travelled further west.

<sup>10</sup> For example, the use of transitivity markers and the multipurpose preposition ‘alonga’.

### 3.1.1 Ambiguities and limitations

So what sorts of problems did pidgin English pose for its users? A good place to start is with the general observation that pidgins are typically limited in terms of lexical and grammatical resources and operate within a limited functional range. Measured against this are their strengths: they expand and contract both formally and functionally according to changing communicative demands; to borrow a biological metaphor, they are highly adaptive to more complex communicative situations, and are highly mobile. The problems relating to potential ambiguities and limitations, however, are what concern us most here.

Firstly, ambiguity or confusion may arise through the process of semantic variation, whereby familiar English forms when used in pidgin contexts may be taken to have wider, multiple or specialised meanings<sup>11</sup>. Forms such as *piccaninny* ‘child, small’, *sit down* ‘to exist’, *tumble down* ‘to die’, *catch* ‘to get’, *boy* ‘a male Aboriginal employee’, *mob* ‘a group of “detribalised” Aborigines living on a pastoral station or on the fringes of a White settlement’, *country* or *run* ‘a loosely defined area of traditional land’ (compare the polysemous concept of *ngura* in Western Desert speech varieties<sup>12</sup>), *clean skins* ‘uninitiated males’, *hot time* ‘dry season or summer’, *him* ‘him, her, it, they’, and *kill* ‘to hit, to kill’ are in this category<sup>13</sup>. A case deserving our special attention is *proper* ‘very, true or real’, discussed at section 3.4 below.

Concerns about potential ambiguity and confusion are heightened in contexts of particular concern to this thesis, such as those involving the mapping of supposed tribal boundaries and territories. Researchers occasionally note, much to their chagrin, that pidgin resources for the accurate expression of spatial and temporal concepts are severely limited, thus confounding and restricting their activities. T. Harvey Johnston, a member of the 1939 Board for Anthropological Research expedition to Ooldea, provides a lucid

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<sup>11</sup> For the sake of argument these forms are presented as decontextualised words with English glosses. In actual use they would be characterised by variation and adaptability, depending on the communicational context.

<sup>12</sup> Goddard (1996, p.102) describes *ngura* with a variety of possible meanings ranging from ‘camp’ to ‘area or tract of country’, as noted in chapter 2. As also noted, Myers (1986, pp.54-7) provides a detailed discussion of the concept.

<sup>13</sup> Further details of semantic aspects of pidgin appear in Foster, Monaghan and Mühlhäusler (in press), from which some of the examples in this discussion have been drawn.

example. In his mapping attempts to lay down *kapi* ‘water’ travelling routes between Ooldea and the range country well to the north, he finds that: ‘it is difficult to estimate distance when depending only on the aboriginal guide or informant, his terms “close up”, “little way”, “long way”, so many “days” or “sleeps”, being so indefinite’ (Johnston 1941, p.33)<sup>14</sup>. (It should be recognised, though, that even if Johnston had been able to communicate directly in a Western Desert speech variety he would have probably met with similar difficulties. From the work of David Lewis (1976), among others, it is now known that *anangu* traditionally relied on ‘mental maps’ based on intimate knowledge of the country in question, built up over long periods of personal experience. To a great extent this body of contextual knowledge obviated the need for accurate distance and spatial orientations in the Western cartographic sense.)

Ambiguity could at times accompany the recording of placenames, as can be seen in the following account provided by Basedow:

An appropriate native name was wanted for the imposing, bare, granite mount in the heart of the Everard Ranges. An old warrior was consequently addressed as follows: ‘What name that one hill, Billy?’ The old man looked up smirkingly at the white men and, as they usually do, repeated the last syllables of the query as near to the original as he could. ‘Ill Billy’ came the guttural reply. ‘No, that one hill, Billy’, shouted Carruthers. ‘Ill Billy’ shouted the old chap with a pitiful smile and a peculiar little gesture with his hands. ‘Well, if it must be’, said Carruthers, ‘we shall name the hill Illbillee’. (Basedow 1914, p.233)

This incident has attracted some discussion in the literature. Annette Hamilton (1979 MS, p.51) surmises that the placename recorded here is incorrect; she considers that the story may be ‘entirely apocryphal’ or that the name recorded may be a mishearing of ‘Ungulbalinja’, but this seems an unlikely explanation<sup>15</sup>. Basedow’s source is W.R. Murray, who was a member of Carruthers’ party at the time of the incident, and we know

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<sup>14</sup> Tindale (1974, p.49) provides a further example of ambiguities arising from the use of pidgin English when discussing matters relating to spatial orientation.

<sup>15</sup> The Carruthers map includes both ‘Mt Illbillee’ and ‘Ungulbullarina Rockhole’, with the latter perhaps being a mishearing of the word Hamilton suggests. *Ilpili* ‘tea tree’ is a resource-related name, and as discussed in chapter 3, places are often referred to by a variety of names depending on the context. While this might seem a minor point, it is nevertheless instructive in terms of the potential ambiguity such practices could cause for Whites. It is also worth noting that there is an *Ilpili* west of Papunya in the Northern Territory.

from Huebbe (1895-6 MS) that Murray did not mind a joke<sup>16</sup>. In this case the humour rests on a pun, but it also makes fun of the difficulties of intercultural communication involving pidgin (as well as satirising Carruthers' communicative abilities). So while the anecdote itself may fit into the genre of bush tales characterised by the use of pidgin that appear in the fictional literature of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this does not preclude the veracity of the placename. The situation actually turns full circle when Wells mentions in his field journal a 'Blackfellow' accompanying the Elder expedition party by the name of Billie, 'so named after Mt Illbillee' (State Library of South Australia PRG 315/2, 10 June 1891). Now, it may be objected that these particular ambiguities relate more to attempts at interpreting the historical record than to any problems faced by the recorders at the time. But, even if this point is conceded for the sake of argument, there still remain in the historical records other ambiguities associated with the recording of placenames. Indeed, many arise due to the limited resources of pidgin, such as when the general term for a geographical feature in *wangka* is recorded as the name of the feature<sup>17</sup>. (Of course, there is also the deeper problem of failing to manage the ethnosemantic differences in categorising features of the landscape *per se*<sup>18</sup>.)

Much of the variation, ambiguity and context dependency involved with the use of pidgin may be accounted for by the fact that for many speakers it no doubt remained a limited jargon: a small number of phrases and words for use in a limited contextual domain (see Mühlhäusler 1997, p.5). At an idiolectal level, different speakers would have available to them different resources, depending on their contact experience: a female house servant, for example, would communicate in a different range of contexts from a station hand. It is difficult to quantify such knowledge, but it may have ranged from a few words or phrases

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<sup>16</sup> Playing with the notion that the 'natives' were cannibals, Murray jokingly suggests to an *anangu* person: 'murra pika kweah miia (hands sick no good for food)' (Huebbe 1895-6 MS, pp.88-9), due to the sores on his hand. Unfortunately Huebbe does not record a response, if indeed there was one.

<sup>17</sup> An example appearing on the Carruthers map is 'Purndu Saltpan' to the south-west of the Everard Range. This term, recorded by David Lindsay in 1891, is based on *pantu* ('saltpan, salt lake' Goddard 1996, p.124). Aspects of this practice are discussed in Monaghan (2002).

<sup>18</sup> Problems arising through the categorisation of water resources are noted by Giles (1995 [1889], pp.225-6). To some extent the resources of the English language were misleadingly applied. Basedow, for instance, criticises Giles for misnaming Lake Wilson, which he finds 'a wide expanse of glistening salt and sand, a desert scene, indeed, but not the faintest sign of water ... in reality the "Lake" is a large salt pan' (1914, p.137). In his diary for the Laverton to Oodnadatta expedition in 1907, Frank Hann criticises the explorer John Forrest for having 'springs on the Brains for not one single place that he called springs and running water is there the signs of springs or water' (in Donaldson and Elliot 1998, p.343). Huebbe extends this type of criticism to 'ranges' in which 'not a single prominent point is visible' (1897, p.33). For a discussion of the limitations of English in new Australian contexts in the nineteenth century, see Ramson (1970).

to a few hundred for any one individual. The limitations of pidgin in interactions between bosses and employees were nevertheless major hindrances to mutual understanding. Observing the situation around Oodnadatta, the Berndts provide the following account:

Many of the aborigines, with some exceptions, know very little English, and their employers even less of the local dialects and languages. They communicate by means of 'pidgin' English and signs, with a few aboriginal words, often incorrect, thrown in for good measure. Often this leads to confusion and misunderstanding on both sides, when anything other than familiar routine is discussed. (R.M. and C.H. Berndt 1951, p.159)<sup>19</sup>

An *anangu* perspective is provided by Yami Lester, who talks of the 'different' English spoken between Whites and Blacks at Granite Downs station in the 1950s. According to Lester, at first *anangu* thought this English was 'the proper way' to speak English and they learned it (Lester 1993, p.51), but among themselves, *anangu* would use their own speech variety (Yankunytjatjara). It is likely that *anangu* may have occasionally used pidgin on stations when discussing work-related matters<sup>20</sup>, but among Whites it was considered inappropriate, as recounted by the long-time Oodnadatta resident Horrie Simpson, who was rebuked when using it to address his teacher (in Dallwitz 1992, p.6). For many Whites pidgin served an important social distancing function<sup>21</sup>, but for others its use by bosses with their employees involved a loss of dignity and the use of Standard English was encouraged (see Bleakley 1961, p.336). Apart from such social distancing functions, other limitations were posed more specifically by the perceived impurity of the medium. Some reeled from the very thought of its use in religious contexts (Bates 1938, p.154), while others debated its suitability for use in scientific research.

One of the harshest critics of pidgin was T.G.H. Strehlow, who gives the matter his full attention in the introduction to *Aranda Traditions* (1947, pp.xviii-xx), where he describes pidgin as 'English perverted and mangled' and 'ridiculous gibberish'. Moreover, according to Strehlow, the medium reinforces the widespread stereotype of Aborigines as

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<sup>19</sup> The Berndts, reporting earlier from Ooldea, note that a knowledge of English was gained from three main contexts: the mission, white employment, and prostitution (1942-5, Vol.13, No.1, p. 62). For the Berndts this linguistic ability was seen as a benefit, and this may explain why they did not use the term 'pidgin' at the time, wanting to avoid the negative connotations of the term.

<sup>20</sup> Elkin (1951) records this for eastern regions of Australia.

<sup>21</sup> For a fuller discussion of the functions of pidgins see Mühlhäusler (1997, pp.80-5).

childish and simple, as well as the view that their own language (or languages) is poor and primitive<sup>22</sup>. Behind Strehlow's invective is a concern that White scientists have used pidgin to record Aboriginal texts (such as BAR members at Mt Liebig in 1932, which Strehlow probably witnessed), and to prove his point he offers an example of *Macbeth* translated into pidgin: 'The old tale immediately becomes utterly childish and ridiculous .... the whole account is an inadequate, untruthful, and malicious caricature of a great story' (1947, p.xix). In short, Strehlow saw pidgin as inappropriate for the job of representing the complexities of indigenous oral texts, and by extension wider sections of the culture.

Despite such protests, many researchers were forced to use pidgin – it would have been the standard medium between researchers and interpreters, if not between the researchers directly with their informants. Elkin records it while eliciting information about kinship and social organisation (1938-40, Vol.10, No.2, p.214), the Berndts (1942-45) record it and probably used it at Ooldea, and Tindale occasionally records words and phrases used by his interpreters. From the following report by the journalist Max Lamshed, we know Tindale used it himself for extracting genealogical data:

Conversation through an interpreter may proceed somewhat along these lines: - 'You askem what name father longa this fella'<sup>23</sup>. And when that matter is elucidated – 'Where him bin sit down now?'<sup>24</sup> And so on, through the list of brothers, husbands, wives, and children. (in Tindale 1932a MS, p.316)

In this instance, Tindale puts his questions to the interpreter in pidgin. Finally, in terms of more focused linguistic research, Trudinger was forced to use 'half-caste' interpreters and informants when working on his Pitjantjatjara grammar in the early 1940s at Ernabella (1943, p.205, see also chapter 5 below), while Capell (1945-6, p.145) recommends its use for eliciting information for language salvage work. Despite the negative attitudes and limitations, pidgin was used and seems to have been treated as a necessary evil.

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<sup>22</sup> In the early 1930s there had been some debate between Elkin and S.D. Porteus about the use of pidgin rather than indigenous languages in the psychological testing of indigenous people. Elkin's review of Porteus' *The Psychology of a Primitive People* suggests that people like the Arrernte with a long history of contact and literacy through missions had a better notion of White culture than those limited to pidgin. The implication of Elkin's remarks is that pidgin allows the indigenous person only limited insight 'into civilised modes of thought' (Elkin 1932-3, p.111). This was a relatively common debate with a long history in other colonial areas such as New Guinea (Mühlhäusler, p.c.).

<sup>23</sup> 'Ask this person his father's name'.

<sup>24</sup> 'Where is he living now?'

## 3.2 Cultural barriers to communication

Among the numerous contexts in which intercultural communication took place in the north-west, it is those relating to the exchange of information concerning placenames and other geographical details, vocabularies, and information relating to genealogies and texts that concern us most here. In the following discussion the cultural barriers that influenced such exchanges are brought into sharper focus. Restrictions of space will unfortunately prohibit a fuller account of Aboriginal speech practices here, and the reader is referred to Malcolm (1980-2) for further details. For the purpose of discussion, the main problems can be grouped together and glossed as those arising from communicative *restrictions* and those arising from communicative *attitudes and expectations* (although in actual practice these are neither mutually exclusive categories nor as straightforward as presented here).

### 3.2.1 Restrictions

It is well-recognised that many traditionally-oriented Aboriginal communities in Australia observe conventions that restrict the transmission of knowledge within the community and in a more general sense help to regulate communicative behaviour in a wide range of traditional contexts. While the particulars of such conventions vary across the continent (as shown by Malcolm 1980-2), at their core is often found an ‘economy of oral information’ (Michaels 1985)<sup>25</sup>, which, when we come to consider intercultural communication, places indigenous ways of speaking in stark contrast to the Western ideology of openness and free flow of information. It is perhaps here that we find the most basic point of difference between the communicative practices of indigenous Australians and colonists.

In the Western Desert, as in much of indigenous Australia, conventions govern such issues as: who has the right to speak or the authority to provide information; who has the right to hear; and which topics are suitable for discussion in a given context. While this is a complex matter in which we can only skim the surface, a basic observation is that communicative practices vary according to constraints such as age, gender, ritual status and kinship status of the people directly (or indirectly) involved.

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<sup>25</sup> Also referred to in the literature as an ‘economy of knowledge’.

In the north-west, seniority is recognised and deferred to – importantly, someone may feel uncomfortable speaking on a topic if a more senior person is present and thus choose to remain silent. Seniority is attained by passing through stages of initiation and many years of ceremonial participation. An initiated man is often referred to as *wati*, or *tjilpi* ‘elder’, while an uninitiated man remains a *tjitji* ‘child’ and is not privy to the knowledge of the higher status men. It is also worth pointing out that the learning process does not allow for the asking of questions by the novice, who instead must passively or rote learn the information that is presented. According to Kaurna Elder Lewis O’Brien (p.c.), this is a widespread practice that can be understood in part by the fact that asking questions disrupts the process of committing information to memory and so is not allowed – although there are other factors involved also.

Separate spheres of male and female knowledge lead to what Malcolm calls ‘restricted topics’ (1980-2, p.61). In the north-west, restrictions are placed on knowledge that is considered *miil-miilpa* ‘secret/sacred’, and although there is some cross-over in actual knowledge, where women may know some men’s knowledge for example, the right to speak on such matters is strictly observed along gender lines. That gender issues could serve as a communication barrier to research is illustrated by H.K. Fry’s account of an encounter during the BAR Mt Liebig expedition, where his interpreter ‘flatly refused – “too much shame” – to interrogate a pregnant woman regarding the origin of the unborn child’ (Fry 1933, p.254). A further problem for researchers is that many words and placenames are *miil-miilpa* and whose improper use could lead to the severest of penalties.

Certain kinship relationships in the north-west require avoidance to be practised, with communication, where necessary, conducted through a third party. Tindale encounters this ‘problem’ with his interpreters when they are unable to address initiates Tindale is interested in interviewing, after a ceremony that places the interpreters and the initiates in an avoidance relationship (Tindale 1933b MS, p.273). More generally, however, it was often necessary for interpreters to establish kinship relations with informants before research could proceed. Elkin encountered this ‘problem’ in the Musgrave Ranges in 1930. Elkin reports his interpreter engaging in a lengthy discussion with potential informants to establish kin status before, to Elkin’s relief, he could press on with his enquiries (Elkin 1976, p.206).

In the Western Desert restrictions can also extend to the use of personal names (Dousset 1997). In day-to-day affairs kinship terms are the usual terms of address, although nicknames and personal names may also be used depending on the context. Many of the ‘personal names’ recorded by Tindale during the 1933 expedition, for instance, are related to informants’ *tjukurpa* or Dreaming associations and may have been reserved for use in restricted domains<sup>26</sup>. Apart from this, the well-reported practice of name taboos and the ‘removal’ of homonyms upon the death of an individual also extends to the area under study in this thesis. It is worth keeping in mind that such practices may have an influence on activities such as eliciting genealogies and vocabularies (although, for vocabularies, the significance of this point could easily be overstated – see the discussion in Black 1997, pp.56-8).

The restrictions outlined above place limits on the type of interactions and communication between Aborigines and White researchers. Information obtained may vary depending on who is present, who is exercising their right to speak, who remains silent, and what the topics of research are – this variation may even mean that the same question receives a different answer from the same person as these constraints vary<sup>27</sup>. At the very least, it should be clear that when it comes to White communicative approaches – such as question and answer interrogation – discomfort, misunderstanding and conflict may accompany communication.

### 3.2.2 Attitudes and expectations

While restrictions often posed problems for researchers, other obstacles arose through Aboriginal strategies of evasion (Malcolm 1980-2, p.78). When confronted by unwanted questions, particularly from strangers, a traditional (but also contemporary) response of Aboriginal people is often to refuse to answer the question or offer indirect, partial or ambiguous answers. Strehlow (1935) describes the evasive responses he encountered while

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<sup>26</sup> See the sociological data cards relating to this expedition, South Australian Museum, 1933 MS.

<sup>27</sup> This may become a serious problem in Native title contexts, where witnesses may be cross-examined on the basis of information provided to an anthropologist or linguist that is recorded in field journals years before. This type of event may cast negative light upon the witnesses’ oral testimonies and the credibility of their evidence in general. As mentioned above, different contexts may give rise to different responses to questions.

attempting to locate informants to bring in to Mt Liebig for BAR research in 1932<sup>28</sup>. In 1933, in a different set of contexts, Tindale continually comes up against a ‘stone wall’ of silence and evasion, and despairs: ‘if only our interpreters were better or we could ask about the ceremonies ourselves!’ (1933b MS, p.461). It seems that at this point in his research he is largely unaware of the reasons for the ‘stone wall’ (that is, the questions relate to secret/sacred knowledge), thus blaming the interpreters rather than the appropriateness of his methods of enquiry.

As the Strehlow example suggests, evasive responses are not necessarily related to restricted topics and may arise more generally as a response to White communicative practices and other research activities (such as the taking of plaster casts, blood and other anthropometric measurements). While curiosity may have been a factor in encouraging Aboriginal people to travel from distant areas to the vicinity of the scientists’ camps on the various BAR expeditions, the foodstuffs and other European goods on offer may have been equally influential. Regardless of the motivations, once there, the scientists’ camp must have presented a spectacle of wonders. One journalist, pausing to reflect on such matters, proceeds to enquire of a group of people what they make of the scientists and their work. Through his own interpreter, he discovers:

They said they could not understand why the white men came all this way to ask the so many questions, smear white stuff<sup>29</sup> over them, and stick prickles in their ears. By prickles they mean the needles used for blood tests. (in Tindale 1932a MS, p.293)

As the journalist’s informants indicate, the intense question and answer elicitation method employed by the scientists may have seemed as strange as the plaster casts and blood samples. Of course, the incomprehensibility ran both ways. As Malcolm (1980-2) observes, Aboriginal communicative events may not involve strict turn taking, other practices such as interjection, gammoning or feigning may occur, and perhaps most

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<sup>28</sup> Strehlow’s example relates to his attempt to elicit information about the whereabouts of a particular person, Titus, from a ‘stranger’. Strehlow writes: ‘I was getting furious with him ... I felt that he was suspicious as to my intentions, and was purposely giving me replies which were of no value whatever in my quest for Titus and his camp’ (1935, p.328). It may be worth reconsidering the high level of fear and distrust in frontier areas here. Kramer (c1928 MS, 8 July 1928) provides an account of meeting a woman in the Musgraves who would only approach when convinced he was not a policeman, or a dreaded *walkatjara* (‘stripe-having’, a reference to the stripe on the leg of a policeman’s trousers, Mona Tur p.c.).

<sup>29</sup> The ‘white stuff’ is plaster for face and body casts taken for anthropometric study.

significantly there is a right not to respond – and at such points, as we have just seen, frustration can arise for the White questioner. In the following passage, written by Lamshed<sup>30</sup>, we are fortunate in having an eyewitness account of how Tindale responded when confronted by such problems:

He spends hours on end with them, seated around a fire with a group as full of questions as the census taker, and as persistent as the income tax collector. Every native examined is allotted a number, and Mr. Tindale's first task is to find out the name and the tribe of the subject; then whether he is married or single; whether he has children; if so, how many; whether they are males or females; and similar queries. Of course, nearly all this has to be done with the aid of an interpreter, because, though Mr. Tindale knows a considerable number of the natives' words, he cannot converse with his subject. All this adds to the difficulty of getting information, for often the interpreter misunderstands the question and the native misunderstands the interpreter.

The natives' memory is often short. Often questions seem to be evaded deliberately, but probably it is because the gist of them is not comprehended; but, with a wonderful display of patience, Mr. Tindale repeats it in the same tone of voice half a dozen times, and usually gets some approach to satisfaction.

Some of the subjects show comprehension of what is wanted, but others are heart-breakingly obtuse, and it is almost impossible to get anything from them. Usually some of the fellow tribesmen sitting around the fire come to the rescue, jabbering excitedly to the interpreter. Mention of the tribe by Mr. Tindale is greeted with shouts of excited delight. (in Tindale 1932a MS, p.309)

Many points raised in this discussion so far reverberate in this passage, but for present purposes it is Tindale's dogged persistence in pursuing his questions that is most noteworthy. Of course, this clearly involves navigating the gulf between himself and his interpreters and between his interpreters and his informants, as Lamshed clearly brings to our attention.

Little is known of the interpreters used by Tindale in 1932. Some details are known about one, Theo, who is described as a 'half-caste' from Hermannsburg with some experience, having worked for Geza Roheim previously in Central Australia (Kramer

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<sup>30</sup> Such was the interest in BAR research with the 'wild natives' that the *Advertiser* in Adelaide provided financial support for a number of expeditions – in return a journalist, Max Lamshed, was granted access to the scientists' camp. His observations were later serialised in the *Advertiser*.

1932c MS). Evidently Tindale got on well with Theo and during the planning of the 1933 BAR expedition thought him suitable for a role as camel driver-cook, as well as for interpreting (Tindale 1933a MS, p.2). Other interpreters mentioned by Lamshed in his serialised articles are: Mickey, Tom, Wheeler and Rolf (in Tindale 1932a MS, pp.307-25), but apart from some correspondence on general matters concerning interpreters between E.E. Kramer, Fred Colson and T.D. Campbell, few concrete biographical details of these people are known at present<sup>31</sup>.

A major point of interest is how informants, many of whom were ‘brought in’ from the west and thus had little previous contact experience, responded to the culturally inappropriate nature of direct and repeated questions. A great danger for researchers in these circumstances is the phenomenon described by Liberman (1982) as ‘gratuitous concurrence’ or answering to please the questioner (although as Malcolm points out, there is an element of evasion involved with this practice). So in such circumstances researchers need to take special care to avoid posing potentially leading questions. From my own observations during weeks of courtroom and on-site evidence during the De Rose Hill hearings it is clear that these practices still occur, and that pressing questions are often extremely discomfiting and may lead to an outright refusal to speak. Granted, some of the questioning occurred in a hostile atmosphere created by the respondents’ lawyers, but this was not always the case.

It should not be overlooked that the demands placed on the interpreter could be equally as taxing – even more so if one considers the following account provided by Laurie Sheard, a young man with little previous ethnological experience, who accompanied Charles Mountford on the 1940 BAR trip to the north-west:

Tonight I have been working on the taboos and the prohibited relations and something of the marriage relationship. It is damned hard work after a long day, and with a B. fool of an interpreter to break through all the time. He would lead us up a tree as easily as anything. His only virtue is that he is a liar with a bad memory, and by enough roaring we can break through to the original questions and answers. (Sheard 1964, p.101)

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<sup>31</sup> The correspondence discusses potential interpreters (their knowledge, abilities and availability) and other logistical matters relating to the expedition (see Kramer 1932a MS, 1932b MS, 1932c MS; Fred Colson 1932 MS). A relative of E.A. Colson, Fred Colson was employed to provide logistical support for this expedition, such as transport, supplies, and interpreters.

From this and other journal entries it is clear that Sheard struggled repeatedly with his interpreter in his efforts to gather ethnological data against a background of distrust and possibly *mutual* misunderstanding (unfortunately we only have Sheard's perspective in this). Sheard's experience is indicative of the wider research situation in which Whites wanted all their questions answered and in which interpreters were placed under dual pressures – on the one hand to disclose and on the other to withhold. As shown above, an interpreter may have been unable to relay a question for cultural reasons. The interpreter referred to in this case is Tommy Dodd, an important interpreter and informant for Tindale in subsequent years, who is discussed in section 3.3.2 below.

I turn now to examine more closely the backgrounds and contributions of some of the main interpreters, informants and go-betweens used by Tindale for his research in the north-west. My attention, however, is not solely restricted to Tindale. I will also consider the role of such people in the work of those who Tindale relies upon for producing his second order constructions in the historical linguistic record.

### **3.3 Interpreters, informants and go-betweens**

For travellers to the north-west in the days of horse and camel travel, securing the services of an interpreter and guide for the location of water supplies (and of subjects for study) was a crucial undertaking. But who were these people? In general, we can characterise them as people having gained knowledge of pidgin English from relatively close contact with Whites. Often they were employed in multiple roles (besides interpreting they might perform roles as guides, camel 'boys' and camp labourers), and while the ability of people to speak local speech varieties would have been ideal, often it did not occur. When, in 1895 for example, Huebbe met a group of *anangu* near Indulkana who had travelled south from Ernabella, his 'boy' could not understand their language (Huebbe 1897, p.6), presumably the result of his having been brought from the east. At Warrina, then the railhead and a point of departure for expeditions, Lindsay was unable to employ anyone at all for this role (Lindsay 1893, p.9), and resorted to offering 'gifts' or inducements as the party travelled along, enticing *anangu* to accompany the party. This resulted in communication taking place mainly in *wangka* and gestures, with mixed results. A major implication of this is that the wordlists recorded by Lindsay, Wells and Helms were

produced without the aid of an interpreter. In his preface to 'Language of the Everard Range Tribe', J.M. Black remarks that 'a black boy from Oodnadatta and another from the Alberga, who accompanied the expedition, were useless as interpreters' (Black 1915, pp.732) – so this wordlist is in the same category as those just mentioned. It is likely that Carruthers found himself in a fortunate position with the services of Tommy Carrunda, who had some experience as an interpreter, having worked previously with Britten Jones in the adjacent country to the east (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/3, 3 May 1888) and who appears to have had some knowledge of Western Desert speech varieties. But our particular concern in this section is Tindale and his interactions with his interpreters on the 1933 expedition, which I will come to in a moment.

As suggested above, the roles of interpreter and informant were not mutually exclusive activities. The question of who the informants proper were is a particularly difficult one, and in many cases is unanswerable – the written records often present informants either anonymously or refer to them by English 'nicknames' or a general term such as 'native' or 'Black'. In many cases of frontier contact informants are recorded as knowing little or no English and being in a state of acute anxiety. On the other hand, Tindale often meticulously recorded sociological data relating to his informants as best he could – so we know more about these people and in some cases descendants can be traced today. In general, there were two contexts for obtaining informants: either itinerant encounters or the more organised 'bringing in' of people to large camps. The primary purpose of Tindale's and Hackett's trip to the Mann Ranges, it should be remembered, was to bring in people to Ernabella for study. Again, for the sake of a better appreciation of the wider contexts in which communication proceeded, it is worth considering that fear and distrust were often only one remove away, if not actually present. In this regard it is worth noting that Tindale records the presence of negative propaganda spread by doggers who were in competition with the scientists for the peoples' services (Tindale 1933b MS, p.605)<sup>32</sup>.

Before moving on to the question of Tindale's interpreters in 1933, it is worth pausing to consider the backgrounds of Alan Brumby and E.A. Colson, both of whom played a significant role in influencing the locations of research and also served as

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<sup>32</sup> Tindale's and Hackett's visit coincided with the start of the dingo pupping season.

informants and go-betweens. Brumby spent many years in close contact with *anangu*, living with a Yankunytjatjara woman, Muniyi, around the late 1920s-early 1930s, before becoming the manager of Kenmore Park station in what is now Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands (Bill Edwards, p.c.)<sup>33</sup>. We have already noted Brumby's contribution as an informant in the previous chapter; he provided vocabulary, tribal distribution and other information to Tindale in the early 1930s.

Colson appears in a number of places in the literature of the north-west: he drove Elkin during his 1930 trip to Ernabella, and was cameleer and guide for Michael Terry's western expedition in 1930 (Horne 1993). At the time Colson was involved in the dogging industry and pursued his activities to the west of the area under study<sup>34</sup>. Of particular importance is the information he provided to Tindale about tribal matters. It seems that Colson was a major informant for Tindale in relation to Antikirinya, at one point confirming the tribal name (Tindale 1930 MS, p.76) and later providing tribal distribution and other ethnological information (Tindale 1932a MS, p.20; SAM AA 338/2/25). A more detailed discussion of these contributions is offered in chapter 6 when I turn more squarely to Tindale's Antikirinya representations.

### 3.3.1 Tindale and interpreters

During the preparations for the 1933 BAR expedition, Strehlow and Tindale exchanged correspondence on a number of logistical matters. Although engaged in linguistic work on Arrernte at the time, Strehlow expresses his wish to accompany Tindale on the preliminary trip to the Mann Ranges. On the subject of interpreters, Strehlow writes:

I must confess that I know nothing about the possibilities of the Ernabella interpreters; it does not, however, sound very reassuring to hear them being described as 'cheeky'. Cheekiness would not necessarily interfere overmuch with the work of the Party from the medical and physiological view-point; but if one wants to learn something of the ethnology and the sociology of western natives, 'cheeky' interpreters who realize to what extent you

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<sup>33</sup> For further biographical details see Barnes (2000).

<sup>34</sup> For further biographical details see Horne (1993).

have to depend upon their good-will are intolerable, and work would be probably very exasperating under such circumstances. (Strehlow 1933 MS)

Besides the potential problems posed by mischievous interpreters, Strehlow was also aware of the difficulty of going in cold, so to speak, and drawing Tindale's attention to the fact that neither of them has any 'real point of contact' with the Ernabella people, he suggests they start from a cattle station to the north where Arrernte people, with whom he is familiar, would help with a metaphorical 'letter of introduction' to the neighbouring Western Desert people. Thus they could go 'from one tribe to another' – gaining the confidence and trust of the people, and, of course, better data. In Strehlow's opinion, moreover, the possibilities for obtaining the services of good interpreters were likely to be better in the pastoral country north of the Northern Territory border.

Mainly for logistical reasons it seems, the BAR decided on a southerly route (as opposed to the northerly route suggested by Strehlow), departing from Oodnadatta and using Ernabella as a base camp. For his part, Tindale's main preference was for the route that would get them 'into most contact with the *real* western desert natives' (Tindale 1933c MS, emphasis added). The desire for purity, in this case for 'full blood natives' untainted by the corruptions of White contact, was a particular concern of the BAR's, and Tindale's sentiment is just one example among many that appear in documents relating to the BAR and in the subsequent published writings of BAR members revealing this preoccupation. More will be said on the pervasive influence of these notions in subsequent chapters.

Once underway, Tindale found at his service an interpreter, Tommy, who proved less than satisfactory – Tommy survived only two weeks in the job until Brumby arrived with two replacements from Oodnadatta. During this time Tindale was frustrated in his attempts to elicit sociological data, placenames, ceremonial details and other linguistic material. Tommy is described as 'not very good' (Tindale 1933b MS, p.23) and 'poor' (Tindale 1933b MS, p.29), although he did prove more useful when it came to going through the wordlist material collected by Tindale (1933b MS, p.85). Towards the end of Tommy's tenure Tindale despaired: 'the interpreter cannot help much & cannot be taught to tell me what the old men say. He is thus pretty hopeless except on things on which he is some authority himself!' (Tindale 1933b MS, p.61).

In his journal Tindale recorded little about Tommy other than his poor abilities, and thus provides few biographical clues. For example, Tindale does not even mention whether Tommy was engaged at Ernabella or whether he travelled with Tindale and party from Oodnadatta to Ernabella (but given the misgivings about Ernabella interpreters, however, the latter is more likely). Having said this, it is likely that the interpreter was the same ‘Tommy’ as the first person appearing in Tindale’s numbered list of examined subjects (SAM AA 338/2/26)<sup>35</sup>. The recording of the interpreter is not at odds with Tindale’s practice, who later entered the two new interpreters as I.64 and I.65, and beginning enquiries with the interpreter does seem to fit in with his methodological bent. It would be wise, however, to avoid making too much of this possibility. The important point though is that if this is indeed the case, then Tommy was only 19 years old, and on this basis alone it is hardly surprising Tindale could not get any details via him when communicating with the old men – he was simply too young (Tindale, born in 1900, was also a relatively young man at the time). The two replacements, brought out from Oodnadatta by Brumby, Jimmy Smooth Face (I.64, aka Jaldalpanu) and Paddy (I.65, aka Murundu) were both 45 years old<sup>36</sup>.

Paddy is described as a ‘camel boy’ and Tindale also recorded that he was based at Oodnadatta, the major contact centre in the Far North, when not otherwise employed (SAM 1933 MS, sociological data card I.65). Tindale does not indicate the nature and extent of Jimmy’s contact experience, although it is likely that he too spent time at Oodnadatta. Apart from this, both men were Yankunytjatjara speakers with ties to people in the Ernabella area. As noted above, Tindale encounters problems when these two are placed in an avoidance relation with potential informants after their central role in an initiation ceremony. But this was not the only context in which Jimmy and Paddy failed to come up to Tindale’s expectations. On a number of occasions Tindale was frustrated with them when they refused or were unable to provide information. For breakdowns in

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<sup>35</sup> For the 1933 expedition Tindale appears to have kept two types of records for his examined subjects. The first is a numbered list that includes only minimal details (name, sex, age, tribe)(SAM AA 338/2/26) and the second is a series of sociological data cards containing a much wider range of ethnological data (SAM 1933 MS). These cards are numbered and prefixed with ‘I’, the letter identifying materials relating to the 1933 BAR expedition. In the case of ‘Tommy’, the corresponding sociological data card (I.1) gives this person’s ‘native name’ as Koneia tjukur (see appendix 16).

<sup>36</sup> Tindale calculated Paddy’s age by using his approximate age when Carruthers was in the region (SAM 1933 MS, sociological data card I.65).

communication in highly sensitive, restricted contexts, see Tindale (1933b MS, pp.387-9, 461, 715).

In other contexts, however, it is safe to assume that their close ties would have facilitated communication to some extent. A useful contrast is provided by the presence and performance of another interpreter, described by Lamshed as ‘Jim’, who was present at Ernabella for the work of the main party in a role for which he was clearly ill-suited. According to Lamshed’s observations, on the one side, ‘his influence over his tribesmen was negligible, and his commands were ignored with ill-disguised scorn’, and on the other, ‘his invariable prefatory formula was “Me speak true. Me no lie” – and all the time the party suspected that the rascal lied through his beard’ (in SAM AA 338/2/25). It is likely that Jim arrived from Oodnadatta with the main party and that Tindale’s work with him was minimal. Although Paddy is at one point described as ‘cunning’ (Tindale 1933b MS, p.277), and despite the lapses and shortcomings noted above, Tindale seems to have enjoyed good relations with his two main interpreters.

Having considered the 1933 expedition, it is useful to turn to a major figure in intercultural exchanges in the north-west, Tommy Dodd, who assisted many researchers as guide, interpreter and informant over many years.

### **3.3.2 Tommy Dodd**

An account of intercultural communication in the north-west, no matter how brief, would be remiss in failing to mention Tommy Dodd, or Tjunduga as he was also known, a senior figure often in demand for his multilingual abilities and his wide store of traditional (and post-contact) knowledge. There are numerous references to him in the literature of the north-west, but in some ways he remains an enigmatic figure. Dodd travelled widely, working as a camel hand, dogger, stockman, guide and interpreter for patrol officers and researchers<sup>37</sup>. Most significant for our purposes is his work with Trudinger during the early days of the Ernabella Mission, his work with Mountford and Sheard in 1940, and his work with Tindale during a number of field trips in the 1950s and 1960s. On these occasions, as interpreter and informant, Dodd provided a wealth of information on the ‘totemic

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<sup>37</sup> A useful biographical summary is provided by Edwards (1996). See also Dodd (2000).

landscape', to borrow Strehlow's (1970) phrase, drawing maps, and providing details about placenames, as well as vocabulary and grammatical information about Western Desert speech varieties.

Much of the enigma surrounding Tommy Dodd is owing to conflicting biographical details, and it is worth pausing briefly to consider Dodd's case, for it reflects on the wider issue of ethnonyms and their apparent variability and fluidity in the north-west.

Most accounts agree that Tommy Dodd was born at Henbury station in the Northern Territory about the year 1890. There appears to be some disagreement, however, about subsequent details. According to Bob Verburgt (1999, p.34), a patrol officer with whom Dodd worked closely, 'Tommy was brought up by the Aranda people' (that is, at Henbury), while Tindale maintains that he was brought up 'among Jangkundjara people in the Everard Ranges' (Tindale 1974, p.23). It is possible of course that he spent part of his childhood in both places. Little is known about his mother, although Dodd did provide Tindale with some biographical details. On one occasion Tindale (1957 MS, p.259) records that she spoke 'Aluna' and was 'one of the Antakerinja hordes who speak Aluritja language' (evidently Aluna is subsumed under the wider category of Aluritja speech varieties). Yet later her speech variety is changed to Pitjantjatjara (Tindale 1974, p.23), which seems to be a reshuffling of ethnic/linguistic categories<sup>38</sup>. We also know that Tommy's first wife Rosie was Arrernte, with connections to the station country to the east of the area under study (Mountford 1940 MS, pp.61-3, 157; Edwards 1996). According to Tindale (1957 MS, p.259), Tommy's father was a man named Shuttle Martin, although further biographical details are not provided. As for Tommy's identity, there is much variation in the literature. Consider the following descriptions:

'half-caste' (Trudinger, in Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church of Aust. 1940, p.14);

'half-caste Aranda' (Hilliard 1968, photograph caption, facing p.112);

'Arrernte' (Lester 1993, p.24);

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<sup>38</sup> This is certainly a puzzling situation. In Tindale (1974, p.210) 'Aluna' is listed under 'Antakerinja' as a 'language name of the southern hordes who speak like the Kokata'. However, in the same work Dodd's mother is said to belong to a Pitjantjatjara horde, the Maiulatara, and to be a speaker of the Pitjantjatjara language (1974, p.23). Tindale does not provide a clear indication of the basis upon which he makes these changes, although it may have something to do with Tindale's dissatisfaction with the term 'Aluritja', or variations of it (see the discussion under 'Kukatja', Tindale 1974, p.229). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the term 'Antakerinja' arises here in a context where it seems to be an ethnonym attributed to people who speak a Western Desert speech variety.

‘aged half caste of Henbury’ (Tindale 1957 MS, p.245);  
 ‘F1 aboriginal, Pitjandjara tribe’ (Tindale 1974, p.391);  
 ‘Tom is a Pitjandjara – fully’ (Yengoyan 1972, p.41).

As these passages show, Dodd’s identity is reported by a variety of writers in terms drawn from the discourses of race (Trudinger, Hilliard, Tindale), tribal ethnicity (Lester, Tindale, Yengoyan), and both (Tindale). So far little has been said about the role of notions of race in the linguistic construction of the north-west, and here I will simply note its appearance and defer its discussion to chapter 5. More apposite at this point are the comments of Lester, Tindale and Yengoyan describing tribal ethnicity. Lester, a Yankunytjatjara speaker presently living south-east of the Everard Ranges, knew Dodd, and Yengoyan interviewed Dodd in depth in the 1960s at Amata (see Yengoyan 1972). According to Yengoyan (p.c.), he was aware of Dodd’s Arrernte background at the time of his research but was simply reporting what ‘he [Dodd] told me’. Unfortunately, Tindale’s writings give little indication of how he comes to the ‘Pitjantjatjara’ construction, although it may have had something to do with Dodd’s mother’s putative Pitjantjatjara links. The most pressing question arising from this variation is whether it represents a case of fluidity of ethnic labels, of shifting personal identity, or something else. Although it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions on the basis of the slim evidence presented above, we do know that the discourse of ‘tribal ethnicity’ was introduced by contact. A notable example is the emergence of the Pitjantjatjara tribe and language to a position of power and prestige, particularly in dealings with White administrators and agencies (consider for instance that Lester is described as Pitjantjatjara by Lewis (1976) at a time when there was no written Yankunytjatjara language and the term ‘Yankunytjatjara’ itself had a very low political profile)<sup>39</sup>. This is certainly an area in need of further research. At present too little is known about the complex interplay of spatial, temporal and social factors (such as post-contact politics) that have contributed to the constructions of individuals’ tribal affiliations in the north-west (such as Tommy Dodd’s, for example)<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> As described by Dodd in Yengoyan (1972), Yankunytjatjara is an ethnonym of particularly low status. See also Bain’s observation from Finke in the 1970s that Western Desert people often identified as Pitjantjatjara ‘for the white man’ (cited in Doohan 1992, p.39).

<sup>40</sup> Some insights are provided by Yengoyan (1972), but this work has not been pursued. Having said this, much ethnographic work has been done in the north-west for land rights and Native title purposes, but this information is not in the public domain.

As an interpreter, Dodd seems to have been used primarily for his knowledge of Western Desert speech varieties<sup>41</sup>. John Greenway reports that he ‘speaks fairly good English’ (1972, p.129), Yengoyan finds he ‘could speak English, though not too well’ (1972, p.30), while a frustrated Sheard finds that Tommy ‘seems to have a very scattered knowledge of both languages [that is, English and Pitjantjatjara]’ (1964, p.108). In the latter case this may be more reflective of the types of communication barriers discussed above – at the time Mountford is asking about ‘kuruns’ or *kurun* ‘spirit’, a notably difficult and restricted topic<sup>42</sup>. Lastly, we know that Dodd’s services were important for Trudinger in his efforts to write an elementary grammar and vocabulary of Pitjantjatjara – the speech variety chosen by the mission as its official language for literacy programmes (Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church of Australia 1940, p.14).

When Tindale meets Tommy Dodd in 1957, at Betty’s Well in the heart of the Everard Ranges, his services are required not as an interpreter but as an informant. With Tommy and another man, William (who is described as Pitjantjatjara), Tindale extracts information about placenames, *tjukurpa*, including local as well as Arandic versions of a myth, and tribal nomenclature. The exchange is described in some detail, and arising most noticeably from Tindale’s notes is that tribal locations, as given by the informants, are, like the placenames also discussed, vague and relatively unlocalised. The tribal names are often given in relation to a pastoral station, a town or settlement, or a cardinal direction term is simply offered. For instance (Tindale 1957 MS, pp.263-5):

|         |                         |
|---------|-------------------------|
| Jumu    | away to the north       |
| Kokatja | South of here at Mt Eba |
| PaNkala | Beyond Tarcoola         |
| Arabana | People at Anna Creek    |
| Aranda  | north east.             |

A significant proportion of names are simply not known by Tindale’s informants. Of course, Tindale already has bounded territories for the above groups displayed on his 1940

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<sup>41</sup> Yengoyan (1972) provides details of Dodd’s multilingual abilities. It seems that Dodd provided information on Arrernte to Mountford (1940 MS), who occasionally records parallel Pitjantjatjara and Arrernte vocabulary items in his field journal.

<sup>42</sup> One is reminded here of Bickerton’s (1981, p.13) discussion of the use of metaphor when facing the difficulties of expressing complex matters with the limited resources of pidgins, and wonders whether Dodd adopted (and struggled) with this approach, or was simply reluctant to speak on the matter.

map, and one of the primary aims of Tindale's trip is to check and confirm details on boundaries appearing on the map. Tindale records some information about 'hordes or local groups' near the Everards (which also lacks in detail), but in the main, given the purpose of the trip, there is surprisingly little on boundaries in the record of the exchange. There is one instance where Dodd says: 'the JaNkundjara "finish" near Tieyon [station], [t]hen come the Aluritja speaking Antakirinja' (Tindale 1957 MS, p.263), but that is it. When Tindale and Dodd discuss similar matters in 1963 there is slightly more detail in terms of boundaries, but Tindale finds much of the information provided reflects present tribal locations rather than the 'older ones' on the 1940 map (Tindale 1963b MS, p.69). In itself this comment raises questions about communication that will be addressed in the following section (in particular, how to communicate the temporal constraints of the mapping research).

It is not all that surprising, however, that Dodd did not supply any significant information on boundaries: maps drawn by him show that he was not versed in Western cartographic practices<sup>43</sup>. They are typical of Aboriginal maps described by Sutton (1998a, p.364) as involving a representational freedom at odds with Western practices. Moreover – and this is a particularly important point – while working with the same informant, Yengoyan (1972) writes: 'actual boundary markers are not established in terms of territory. They are established, according to Tom, in terms of ceremonial sites, or areas which are sacred' (1972, p.38), and adds that 'it was these sacred spots which were the areas [through] which groups maintained their relationship to territory, as opposed to external boundaries, which are relatively loose and amorphous' (1972, p.112). A more telling rebuttal of Tindale's 'fixed bounded territory' notion is hard to locate in the Western Desert literature – particularly when it is considered that Tindale and Yengoyan used the same informant. There still remain two elements of Tindale's mapping project requiring our attention before moving on to a discussion of vocabularies in the historical linguistic record: the ambiguity of the term 'proper' (as in 'proper name') and a further critique of Tindale's boundary concept.

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<sup>43</sup> The Mountford-Sheard collection at the State Library of South Australia has two restricted maps by Tjunduga (Tommy Dodd) entitled 'Aranda myth from Henbury' (Men's Drawings Pitjandjara 1940, no.60) and 'Todmorden Country' (Men's Drawings Pitjandjara 1940, no.62). The latter map includes areas around Mt Chandler within the area under study. Greenway describes Dodd drawing a map for him (1972, p.198). The map in question, entitled 'Ernabella Country', is in the SAM Archives (SAM AA 338/15).

### 3.4 ‘Proper’ names and lines in the sand

In 1889, near the western boundary of the state, Carruthers and members of his party became embroiled in a conflict with *anangu* that could well be described as a ‘territorial dispute’. When a group of *anangu* entered the surveyors’ camp and began an exploration of their own, their inquisitiveness was eventually perceived as a threat to order and they were told to leave. Carruthers records: ‘I told Tommy our interpreter that they were not to cross a marked line that I drew north of the camp’ (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/2). Perhaps dissatisfied with Tommy’s ability to relay his demands<sup>44</sup>, or with *anangu* defiance of them, Carruthers took matters into his own hands and ‘intimates’ to *anangu* what the line means – no doubt some sort of physical demonstration using signs and gestures (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/3). When an ‘insolent’ person persisted in crossing the line, Carruthers physically led him back over to the other side, and this was repeated a number of times in what must have been increasingly comic fashion – until, as we have seen in other contexts, language failed, tempers frayed and guns were drawn. Carruthers writes: ‘I however was prepared for what proved to be his last attempt to disobey orders’, and a shot was fired (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/2, 14 Oct. 1889).

The line in the sand was clearly an attempt by Carruthers to create a hard and fast boundary, a concept familiar enough to himself, but one that seems to have been untranslatable (given the circumstances) into a Western Desert speech variety. While the line signally failed as an act of intercultural communication, eventually leading to an exchange of hostilities across a gulf of mutual misunderstanding, it seems that the problems stemmed not from the line itself (there is a Western Desert concept of *walka* ‘mark’), but more from its intended function of partitioning separate territories.

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<sup>44</sup> Elsewhere, Carruthers provides the following details of Tommy Carrunda’s abilities to communicate with *anangu* in the west: ‘our interpreter Tommy Carrunda had some difficulty in understanding the meaning of a lot of their words [that is, the ‘Tomkinson Ranges tribe’], very few of them were similar in meaning to those of the Musgrave and Mann Ranges tribes. A few however were very useful, especially those relating to water, springs, rockholes, distance and quantity. Unfortunately Tommy could not make them understand that we wanted their Native name for our hills and other prominent features’ (State Library of South Australia, PRG 10/7). With regard to the earlier discussion of communicative practices, this looks suspiciously like an ‘evasion’ rather than a complete communicational breakdown: it seems odd that Carrunda would not have been able to converse with the people in question given his interactions in neighbouring areas. Carruthers’ observation that words concerning distance and quantity were ‘very useful’ also seems odd.

Now, in his search for territorial boundaries in the Western Desert, Tindale (1974, pp. 38-40, 66-7) appeals to an indigenous concept of 'line' that he finds in the linear representations of 'ground drawings'<sup>45</sup>. Tindale considers such drawings to be linear representations of 'tribal space', and offers two reasons in support of this: first, the ecology of arid areas often restricts the (traditional) living patterns of indigenes to a series of semi-permanent or permanent waters; and second, 'several Western Desert tribes ... have independently selected the English word "line", as, in translation, describing their territory' (1974, p.39). Tindale develops this point in the following terms:

The linear concept may be confirmed enough in some men's minds that they may record a territory as extending in a straight line from *a-b-c-x-y-z-a*, so that the starting place and termination, although the same place, are yet represented at opposite ends of the line. (1974, p.67)

Tindale's point is that a straight line drawn on the ground (or indeed on paper) may 'conceal' an enclosed (or near enclosed) space due to differences in indigenous mapping practices. Tindale does not offer a direct illustration of this particular practice, but instead provides two examples of tribal or hordal territory (figures 8 and 9) that represent respectively a near elliptical and a near quadrilateral enclosure. These are said to be 'very typical' (1974, p.66), although a perusal of such drawings held at the South Australian Museum suggests that these two are perhaps not as typical as Tindale suggests.

From a critical perspective, the crucial point to be made here is that much doubt exists as to whether a pre-contact concept of *bounded territory* is represented in ground drawings. From a Western representational perspective it may appear so (particularly if this is the object of one's enquiry), but the main point, which Tindale seems to overlook, is that enclosing an area is not the purpose of such drawings. In a sense, much of the area enclosed is effectively 'negative space', to borrow a term from art theory. That is, it is the sites or water holes that are important, and the lines linking such places drawn in the telling of the associated story are not boundary lines but travelling lines. The work of Lewis

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<sup>45</sup> Such drawings, commonly representing the travelling routes of *tjukurpa* or creation figures, have two main compositional elements: circles and connecting lines (see figure 9 below). The circles usually represent water sources. In chapter 2 it was mentioned that such drawings transferred to paper were a principal aid in Tindale's placename research.

(1976) in particular supports the notion that there is a fundamental difference of perception here.

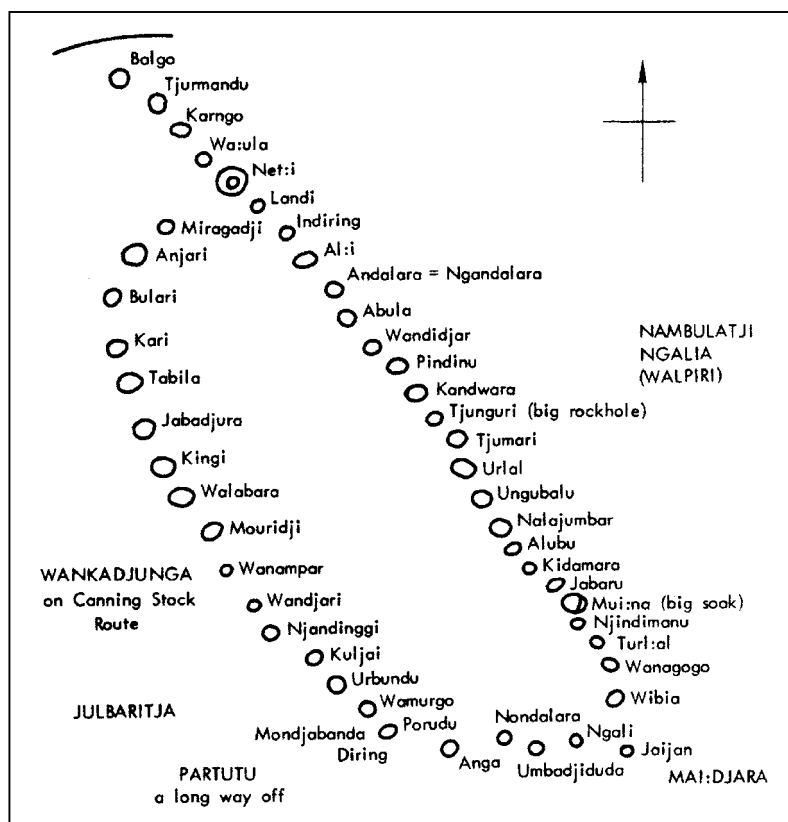


Figure 8. Kokatja man's drawing of the country south of Balgo in Western Australia (Tindale 1974, p.39).

Following Lewis, an illustrative analogy can be drawn with the map of a rail network: for users of the system it is the stations and lines that are most important. At some places lines cross, trains can be changed, and if a 'circle line' is present in the rail system this is in some respects merely incidental (unless one wishes to travel in a complete circle or avoid time-consuming transfers). But even if we leave these issues aside, the major problem remains that indigenous representational practices are incongruous with Western cartographic practices.

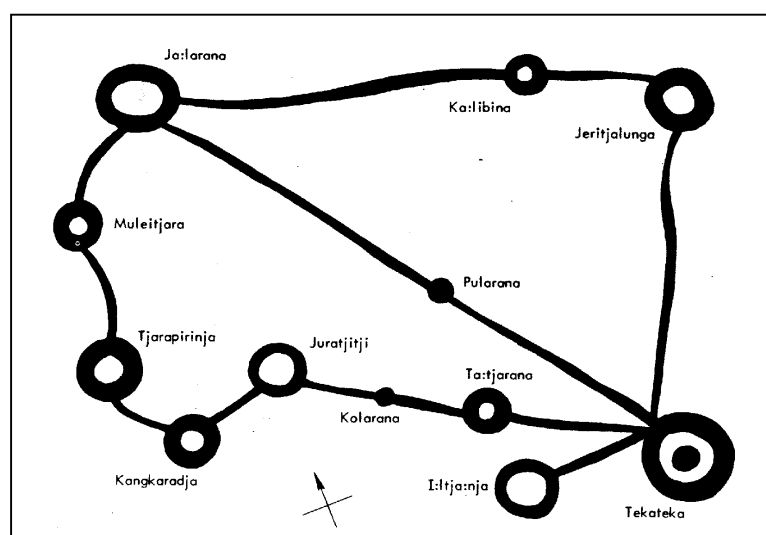


Figure 9. Native map of part of Tekateka hordal area, Ngadadjara tribe (Tindale 1974, p.40).

Apart from the problematic use of ground drawings, Tindale also appeals to a number of non-traditional constructs to assist in locating (or ‘establishing’ as the case may be) tribal boundaries. Prominent among these is the pastoral station. For the purpose of examining this aspect of Tindale’s work we are fortunate in having available to us a number of audiotape recordings of interviews conducted by Tindale at Leonora (in Western Australia) in 1966 on the subject of tribes and boundaries<sup>46</sup>. In these interviews, Tindale is forthright about his aims. In the first interview, for example, he explains to his informants: ‘I want to find out where your boundary is ... which station is your country, which station is other peoples’ country’ (SAM AA Western Australian audiotapes, 4A-B, A13351). Many of the subsequent questions are directed toward identifying the tribal groups who may have lived on pastoral stations in earlier years. Of course, there are a number of problems with this approach, the most obvious being that it muddles the distinction between pre- and post-contact concepts and arrangements, leaving room for

<sup>46</sup> The three audiotapes in question were recorded at Leonora on 13 April 1966 (SAM AA Western Australian audiotapes, 4A-B, A13351-3). In the following discussion they will be referred to as the ‘Leonora tapes’. These tapes offer an important insight into Tindale’s interviewing practice. Aspects of the tapes relevant to the main discussion will be addressed below. Due to constraints of space it is not possible to offer a full analysis of the contents of the tapes. It is useful, however, to consider the following general observations. The interviews contained on the Leonora tapes follow a standard question and answer structure, with many questions remaining unanswered. The interviews are conducted in English. Tindale’s English is of the Standard variety, although he appears to ‘simplify’ his speech at times, and occasionally uses forms associated with pidgin or Aboriginal English. There does not appear to be an interpreter present. Communicational difficulties seem to arise at a number of points, examples of which will be discussed below. No doubt a wider survey of Tindale’s audiotape collection would be a worthy subject of future research. I would like to thank Philip Clarke for bringing these tapes to my attention.

confusion at a number of points. For instance, it is not entirely clear whether Tindale is using ‘station’ metaphorically (for ‘bounded tribal territory’ or similar) or literally. In the former scenario Tindale would in fact be begging the question by relying upon the post-contact notion of ‘fence’ to gather information on supposedly pre-existing ‘tribal boundaries’<sup>47</sup>; and in the latter, where ‘station’ is used as a ‘spatial anchor’, there is the further problem of identifying a fixed station population over time. I have already touched on this problem in chapter 2; like traditional local group populations inhabiting a range of loosely defined *ngura* (see Yengoyan 1972), those present on pastoral stations did not typically form a distinct and stable group. While post-contact cover terms such as ‘the X mob’ where ‘X’ may have been the name of a pastoral station certainly existed<sup>48</sup>, the people who constituted a mob could vary quite considerably over time. For instance, the information supplied by Basedow (1921a MS, pp.4-5) and Gross (1954 MS) indicate that those present at Anna Creek station are described as Arabana and Andegilliga (Antikirinya) respectively<sup>49</sup>. However much this approach may have assisted Tindale, a degree of confusion or misunderstanding seems to be almost ever-present: on one occasion Tindale asks an informant ‘who would live at Kaluwiri station?’ and receives the reply ‘Mr Cox’ (SAM AA Western Australian audiotapes, 4A-B, A13351).

At the beginning of a subsequent interview with different informants, Tindale’s questions are obviously leading. Consider the following exchange:

NBT: And we wanted to find out the boundary of the country, you know how boundary of station goes?

I: Yeah.

NBT: In the eh the olden days Aboriginal people wouldn’t go into another man’s country. They come to a boundary and then they’d stop there and turn back.

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<sup>47</sup> Remember that there are ‘no terms with meanings like “frontier” or “territory” or “boundary”’ (Goddard in Sutton 1995, p.153) in Western Desert speech varieties. Despite this, some attempts to find a translation equivalent for ‘tribal boundary’ were made. In his *Australian Vocabularies* (MS 1938-63, p.249) Tindale includes the following terms as Western Desert equivalents of ‘boundary, tribal’: *ngura bulka*, and *ngura tapia*. The first relates to an important *ngura* or country but not a bounded area, and the second looks suspiciously like a joint Western Desert-English construction: ‘*ngura* stop here’. At an earlier point, Tindale (1935b MS, p.75; see also 1937 MS, p.77) records the word ‘*parna*’ as ‘fence’. More usually the term *pana* is used for ‘land’ (Goddard 1996, p.70).

<sup>48</sup> The discussion in Hansen (1984, pp.77-8) shows the high degree to which speech variety labels (or related ethnonyms) have become associated with stations and settlements in post-contact times.

<sup>49</sup> Adding to the confusion, according to Tommy Dodd ( Tindale 1957 MS, p.265), the people at Anna Creek station are ‘Arabana’.

I: Turn back.

(Interview with Andy Fisher Nugupai and Sandy Toroda, SAM AA Western Australian audiotapes, 4A-B, A13351.)

While Tindale appears to have appealed to pastoral stations as spatial anchors for locating tribes, he also faced the difficult problem of establishing temporal anchors. In his writings Tindale does occasionally use the ‘anchor’ of major natural events, such as floods or eclipses, or historical events, such as the passing of Carruthers through the north-west. Otherwise, it seems that Tindale often looked to an informant’s father’s country and father’s language as a way of obtaining pre-contact tribal arrangements: this method appears in the Leonora tapes, for example. The logic behind this approach is that given a suitably aged informant, a researcher in Tindale’s position could ‘step back’ to the 1870s or 1880s, the period of first contact for many areas of the Western Desert. Against this, however, it should be remembered that in the Western Desert speech variety labels are transitory, overlapping and highly context-dependent. For instance, when Wick Miller conducted his research at Warburton in the 1960s and asked the question: ‘what is your language?’, he came across a number of inconsistent replies: ‘some gave a single name, others two or more ... some were very uncertain and hesitant’ (Miller 1971, p.73). Interestingly, when Miller compares the list of names collected with the names recorded by Berndt (1959), he finds that a number of the latter did not appear (although they could be elicited upon subsequent enquiry) and concludes that they had ‘gone out of fashion’ (1971, p.73). The particularly short time span between Berndt’s and Miller’s recordings (about twenty years) is far less than Tindale’s two generations, and points to the difficulties faced by the researcher in looking for stable and codified language names.

This leads us to the final point of discussion for this chapter. In the Leonora tapes Tindale also appeals to placenames in an attempt to somehow delineate tribal territory. A frequently asked question is of the type: ‘have you heard about place X?’ or ‘is that [place] in your country?’. On a number of occasions he runs through a list of placenames (both *anangu* and colonial) in hope of finding connections or clues. In many ways this is foundational for those questions relating specifically to the connections between people, place and language to follow. In the Leonora tapes this includes questions of the type: ‘have you got a name for place X people?’ or ‘the people who speak your language ...

would they go to place X?'. In the following extract (SAM AA Western Australian audiotapes, 4A-B, A13351), we see that obtaining satisfactory answers to these and related questions is anything but straightforward<sup>50</sup>:

- NT: What language did your father speak?  
 I: Same.  
 NT: And what's the best name for your language?  
 I: My language?  
 NT: Your lingo ... what ... best way [to call it]?  
 I: Madu [i.e., Matutjara].

Discussions. It seems that Tindale is unsure at this point.

- NT: What I'm trying to find out is a really proper name for your language.

There are a number of points of interest in this extract. First, although from such a small sample of sentences it is difficult to characterise Tindale's English, it does seem, however, that he resorts to a foreigner talk register, with elements of pidgin or Aboriginal English thrown in for good measure. This contrasts with his general use of Standard English in the tapes and I would suggest it is a response to the particular communication problem at hand. Indeed, during this point in the interview, communication seems to teeter on the verge of breakdown, with Tindale rephrasing his questions in pursuit of satisfactory answers. Remember that Tindale's primary interest is in gathering names that would provide him clear and fixed reference. Yet it should be appreciated that the very language of his questions is ambiguous. The constructions 'best name', 'best way [to call it?]', and 'a really proper name' for his informant's language (or lingo) are unclear – what is a 'best name' and what is a 'really proper name', we may well ask?

From what we do know of Tindale's work we can gloss 'best name' as, ideally, 'preferred tribal (or hordal) autonym' or something similar. It appears, however, that Tindale's informant has problems with this construction, leading Tindale to rephrase the question. Uttered in what appears to be a tone of frustration, the rephrased term 'really

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<sup>50</sup> In this extract 'NT' represents Tindale and 'I' an informant (whose identity has not been clearly established, although he is likely to be one of the two informants identified by Tindale as Andy Fisher and Sandy 'Tarola').

proper name' is a more interesting, if particularly ambiguous, construction. Is 'proper name' being used in a Standard English grammatical sense or in a pidgin English sense? In the first possible case, the phrase is ethnocentric and reductive; Tindale is imposing Western grammatical categories onto indigenous linguistic practices<sup>51</sup>. In the second possible case, if 'proper' is taken as a pidgin English intensifier, with a meaning similar to 'very, true or real', there may indeed be a number of responses the informant could provide (as noted by Miller above). It seems that the latter case is the more likely explanation ('really proper name' is after all an awkward Standard English construction), but this still leaves us with the perplexing question of why Tindale offers this statement at all – given a 'best name' is offered by the informant – which only seems to add to the overall sense of ambiguity surrounding this exchange. As indicated earlier, these tapes offer a rich insight into Tindale's field practices and as such await a more thorough discussion than I have been able to afford here. Nevertheless, I have considered the tapes in sufficient depth to illustrate the type of difficulties involved in eliciting data on tribes and boundaries.

### 3.5 Conclusions

The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from the above discussion is a cautionary one: given the barriers to intercultural communication and a reliance on interpreters and pidgin English (or, when all else failed, signs and gestures), much of the historical linguistic record needs to be approached with extreme care. It has been seen that a number of ethnocentric assumptions and biases about how communication takes place formed a significant part of the intellectual baggage of travellers to the north-west and helped to impose limits on the types of linguistic materials recorded as well as their quality. Limitations were also placed on communicative interactions by culturally prescribed indigenous practices, and until as late as the 1950s (and perhaps later still) the use of pidgin English was characterised by ambiguity and miscommunication. For Tindale's mapping work in particular, this medium of intercultural communication was particularly ill-suited.

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<sup>51</sup> Of course, the category of proper name is not a fixed and bounded category and may itself cause problems of ambiguity. See Jespersen (1934 [1924], pp.64-71) on the problem of drawing a hard and fast distinction between proper and common names in English. Sapir (1921, pp.123-4) also points to the inherent vagueness of conventional grammatical categories or 'parts of speech'.

In the face of communication difficulties Tindale seems to have resorted to the use of post-contact concepts and leading questions, which further problematises the neatness of his tribal categories and boundaries, and undermines the credibility of his research. While Tindale maintained that it was possible to locate tribal boundaries with a well-informed native guiding one's pen (see chapter 2), we have seen that one of Tindale's main indigenous informants in the north-west, Tommy Dodd, was not versed in Western cartographic practices, and according to the anthropologist Aram Yengoyan, with whom Dodd spoke at length in the 1960s, Tommy provided no indication that fixed boundaries existed.

Finally, the types of difficulties described above arose in situations of intercultural exchange, from contexts ranging from exploration to scientific research and colonial administration. When we come to consider the historical linguistic record in contemporary contexts (particularly the legal one), past approaches to communication must be taken into account when assessing the evidentiary value of linguistic materials. It has been seen that past approaches to communication have often been inappropriate (at best they have been overly narrow), and problems built in to the historical records should be recognised rather than compounded by ignoring the contexts within which they arose.

## 4 Multiplying Babel

All who have had to examine the accounts of new languages, or families of languages, published by missionaries or travellers, are aware how not only their theories, but their facts, have to be sifted, before they can be allowed to occupy even a temporary place in our handbooks, or before we should feel justified in rectifying accordingly the frontiers on the great map of the languages of mankind.

Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 1885 [1864]

### 4.0 Introduction

In many ways, the mapping of tribes and territories discussed so far can be seen as part of the response in Australia to the set of circumstances described by the linguist J.R. Firth as the ‘multiplication of Babel by discovery’ (1937, p.63). According to Firth, the great wave of European colonial expansion from the sixteenth century was accompanied by a vast broadening of the linguistic horizons of Europe. Through such activities as exploration, conquest, trade, and the work of missionaries came a wealth of new knowledge concerning exotic languages. This undreamed of diversity, this Babel writ large, was ‘at once a challenge to those minds which sought ordered simplicity and unity in the world and also at the same time a collector’s paradise’ (Firth 1937, p.63). Indeed, the new found diversity challenged a number of long-held assumptions about the origins and inter-relationships between languages and races, and in so doing called forth new scientific responses to these questions.

This chapter is concerned with the responses to diversity that arose in the face of the Australian Babel. We have already noted that the collection of linguistic materials in colonial contexts typically involves the reduction of indigenous speech to written forms according to Western frames and concepts, but this is only part of the story. In this chapter I extend this perspective by considering the collection of vocabularies in the north-west. Accordingly, the following discussion has two aims: to uncover the set of cultural practices and assumptions operating behind the collection of vocabularies; and to examine Tindale’s use of these vocabularies. In the former case we will see that, while the collection of vocabularies was often pursued under the banner of science, the final products of these activities are not culture-neutral; and in the latter case, by tracing aspects of Tindale’s

metalinguistic practices, I will argue that Tindale's catalogue of tribes and map, as scientific tools, are productive (rather than simply descriptive) and at times circular.

In order to be able to place the north-west vocabularies in the wider contexts within which they were collected and constructed, it is necessary to begin with a broad approach. Thus, the main discussion begins with a historical overview of the new scientific responses to linguistic and racial diversity brought about by voyages of discovery (section 4.1). Apart from this general background, I also consider two late nineteenth century projects involving the collection of vocabularies mainly by correspondence from diverse locations in Australia by Taplin (1879) and Curr (1886-7), both of which in a number of ways may be seen as precursors to Tindale's tribal mapping project. Although the collection of vocabularies had been occurring in Australia for many years by the time of Taplin and Curr<sup>1</sup>, I begin with these projects for their special relevance to the area under study: both contain vocabularies from areas contiguous to the north-west, recorded soon after contact (at a time, moreover, just prior to the collection of the first vocabularies in the north-west); and their influences filter down to the work of Tindale, both directly and through the work of those upon whom Tindale relies for his catalogue of tribes and tribal map.

The work of Taplin in particular was a significant influence during the planning of the Elder scientific exploration expedition, whose officers collected the first vocabularies in the north-west. These vocabularies are examined in detail (section 4.2).

In section 4.3 I return to the issue of the relationship between mapping and linguistic activities and tackle the issue of the objectivity of Tindale's catalogue of tribes and tribal distribution map as scientific tools. To further illustrate the workings of the catalogue and map, I examine a number of early Western Desert vocabularies (besides those from the Elder expedition) assigned by Tindale to a position in the catalogue of tribes (section 4.4). While much of this discussion focuses on Tindale's uses of these materials, I will also examine some of the conditions under which these vocabularies were recorded in the field. The previous chapter considered a number of communicative problems and difficulties faced by travellers to the north-west, and with these insights in mind I will

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, by this time, significant vocabularies had been collected from many areas of Australia over the previous 100 years of settlement. See Dixon (1980, pp.8-17) for an overview of this and other aspects of the history of work on Australian languages, although it should be noted that some exception to this analysis is taken in chapter 5.

attempt to answer the basic and by now familiar questions concerning the conditions under which the vocabularies under consideration were recorded: who were the informants, were interpreters used, where were they recorded and why were they recorded?

The analysis in this chapter relies in part on the basic distinction between the *collecting* of vocabularies and the *uses* made of them when they are assigned to a scientific catalogue such as Tindale's. In other words, Firth's notion of discovering linguistic diversity is of a different order from the act of *making* languages, one of the ultimate results of the collection of vocabularies and the construction of other written artefacts such as dictionaries and grammars (Harris 1980). Indeed, Firth's point that the 'collecting [of vocabularies, of languages] has gone on throughout the centuries, and curiously enough continues to-day on lines which were familiar nearly four hundred years ago' (1937, p.63) is slightly misleading – while the collecting has often been pursued under the banner of science, the products are anything but culture-neutral. After Harris (1980), languages are made rather than discrete objects already existing in the world awaiting discovery, cataloguing and comparison.

Finally, it should be pointed out that this chapter does not consider Tindale's own vocabulary collecting activities, which are analysed in the following chapter.

#### **4.1 Progress in linguistic discovery**

From the mid sixteenth century, one begins to find scientific responses to the newly discovered diversity of languages and peoples resulting from European colonial expansion. The most notable of these responses are characterised by the twin pillars of the new scientific knowledge – inventory and comparison. The year 1555 saw the publication of Conrad Gessner's *Mithridates*, a comparative project based on the Lord's Prayer in 22 languages. The English translation of the full title of this work: 'Mithridates: On the Differences of Ancient Languages as well as those that are in use today in the Different Countries of the Entire World' (Jankowsky 1995, p.179) captures the ambitious and expansive mood of the time. Given the prominent role of missionaries in the vanguard of cultural and economic conquest, the use of the Lord's Prayer as a standard for comparison seems not only a practical choice (although it is also hard to ignore its symbolic value), but

also an enduring one. Indeed, this method was still recommended by Leibniz almost 150 years later.

Leibniz holds a foundational place in the nascent science of language. He not only stressed the need for a thoroughly scientific approach<sup>2</sup>, but also realised the potential value of placenames for analysing strata of linguistic associations with particular geographical areas (a practice still followed, albeit with more refined methods, in linguistic time depth analysis in Native title research<sup>3</sup>). Like many other savants, Leibniz relied heavily upon correspondence to provide his data, and it is of more than passing interest that besides the standard of the Lord's Prayer he also realised the utility of what may be considered an early concept of basic vocabulary. In 1698, Leibniz writes:

When the Lord's Prayer is not easy to obtain, we could still ask for words that are in it, such as: father, heaven, name, to come ... earth, bread, give ... We could also ask for the names of other things, as, for instance, for some limbs of the human body and their use, such as: eyes, ears, to hear, to see, etc. And the same for relations and next of kin, as father, mother, daughter, brother, sister, man, woman, child, etc. The same for foods, drinks, clothes, arms: also for the names of some familiar animals, for the four elements and what pertains to them. (in Aarsleff 1982, pp.93-4)

This comment gives some insight into the type of instructions given to Leibniz's correspondents at the time, and it will be seen when the discussion turns to the collection of linguistic material in Australia that these intuitions about basic vocabulary reappear in the types of words requested by Taplin (see question no.43 in appendix 5) and in the instructions given to the officers of the Elder expedition (see appendix 6.2).

By the close of the eighteenth century, the project set in motion by Gessner and fellow savants reached an encyclopaedic apogee with P.S. Pallas' compilation, *The comparative vocabularies of the languages of the whole world* (Robins 1967, p.169). Sponsored by Catherine the Great and appearing in 1787, this work set out to provide an

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<sup>2</sup> The scientific approach advocated by Leibniz includes a thorough survey of languages followed by comparison to determine samenesses and differences, with the ultimate aim of demonstrating 'their filiation and their origin' (Jankowsky 1995, p.179).

<sup>3</sup> See for example the discussion in Evans (2002).

inventory of the world's languages, and contains 'a list of 285 words translated into 51 European and 149 Asiatic languages' (Mühlhäusler 1996, p.9)<sup>4</sup>.

It seems that for missionaries and others of predominantly religious leanings, the standard response to the new-found diversity was to explain it by appealing to the twin canonical linguistic myths of the Bible – the Adamic origin of language and the subsequent dispersal of tongues and populations after Babel. Such views had long formed the basis of Western approaches to linguistic and racial diversity, and it was simply a matter of extending the family, so to speak, to accommodate the newcomers. By the nineteenth century, however, a significant shift in emphasis had occurred, whereby more fine-grained attempts at scientific explanations of both linguistic and racial diversity had begun to take place. This can be seen as largely resulting from the interplay of a number of developments, such as the 'discovery' of Sanskrit, progress in the natural sciences and a significant rise in European nationalism – although this simplifies what is in fact a rather complex history.

The 'discovery' of Sanskrit derives from William Jones' much quoted address to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1786, in which he declared that a comparison of Sanskrit, Greek and Latin reveals an affinity 'so strong indeed that no philologist could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists' (in Seuren 1998, p.80). Jones goes on to extend speculatively familial relations to Gothic, Celtic and old Persian. Although the similarity of Sanskrit, Greek and Latin had not passed unnoticed before this time, their relationship as formalised in this address is commonly held to mark the beginning of the science of comparative philology that was to develop so successfully in the nineteenth century. To be sure, the notion of descent from a common source suggested by Jones was to remain a cornerstone of comparative work for many years. This notion was later developed into its most famous form – the *stammbaum* or family-tree model – by August Schleicher, under the influence of biological models and Darwinist ideas<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> According to Seuren (1998, p.62), the collection and analysis of vocabularies of North American origin began in earnest by amateur gentlemen in America in the latter part of the eighteenth century, although for many years vocabularies from the Americas had already been arriving in Europe. Mühlhäusler (1996) discusses responses to linguistic diversity in the Pacific region.

<sup>5</sup> See Alter (1999, pp.7-14) for a more detailed discussion of these developments, particularly for the links between comparative philology and the natural sciences.

While strictly speaking the stammbaum model represents relationships between languages, it has often been used to draw erroneous conclusions that maintain a close link between language and race. In many respects this derives from the Romantic views of linguists, most notably Wilhelm Von Humboldt, who saw language as a product of the mind-set of races. Thus, in the search for Aryan origins in the 1850s, for example, a figure as influential as Max Müller held that the Aryan language could shed light on the Aryan race – although he refuted this position in the 1870s (Henson 1971, pp.5-6)<sup>6</sup>. In other respects, the notion of a unified culture and genetic population moving through time has appealed to those seeking an ideological underpinning to nation-states, an infamous example being the category ‘Aryan’ as manipulated by the National Socialists in Germany (see Hutton 1999). Such constructions, however, are based on a myth<sup>7</sup>.

#### 4.1.1 The surveys of Taplin and Curr

It is against this general intellectual background that the work of Taplin (1879) and Curr (1886-7) should be viewed: by collecting vocabularies of Aboriginal languages from diverse areas, both were engaged in shedding light on the great mystery of the origin of the Australian ‘race’ and the question of how to assign it to its proper place in the overall scheme of the races of humankind. In many ways, the collection, construction and the use of Western Desert vocabularies discussed in this chapter can be seen as an extension of these early Australian projects. Indeed, as shall be seen, much of this activity was motivated by such questions as Aboriginal racial origins, subsequent migrations, and the relatedness of tribes, and was performed against an overall mood of cultural salvage in the face of a rapidly disappearing race<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Boas (1968 [1911], p.155-66) offers a detailed and thorough refutation of this putative link. Boas concludes: ‘a consideration of the human languages alone must not be understood to yield a history of the blood-relationships of races and of their component elements, but that all that we can hope to obtain is a clear understanding of the relationship of the languages, no matter by whom they may be spoken’ (1968 [1911], p.165).

<sup>7</sup> Boas debunks the myth of a genetically related group, the Aryans, as ‘carriers of this language throughout history’ (1968 [1911], p.162). See Chapman (1992) for a demystification of the category ‘Celt’.

<sup>8</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the greatly influential ‘doomed race theory’ in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Australia, see McGregor (1997). The extent to which salvage work and scientific work went hand in hand is illustrated by the fact that later, when appealing to American institutions for funds for research work in Central Australia, Tindale would play the ‘doomed race’ card, so to speak (see chapter 5).

Taplin's *The Folklore, Manners, Customs, and Languages of the South Australian Aborigines*, a project sponsored by the South Australian Government, presents a body of ethnological and linguistic information drawn from correspondents and previously published material from around the country and overseas. From the perspective of this thesis, it is particularly important for bringing together diverse linguistic materials: of the 48 questions contained in the questionnaire sent out by Taplin, approximately one third relate to linguistic matters (1879, pp.5-7, see appendix 5). A number of these questions relate specifically to grammatical matters (nos 30-41), but my main interest is in the answers to question no.43, which asked for corresponding 'native' words to 70 provided from English. Much of the material contained in the responses is presented in the 'comparative table of words selected from 43 Aboriginal languages' (1879, pp.142-52)<sup>9</sup>. The accompanying notes prepared by Taplin are also of interest (1879, pp.154-55) and are discussed below.

In bringing together 43 vocabularies of Aboriginal languages from around Australia, as well as a further 4 vocabularies from the 'Eastern Polynesian, Maori, Malay, and Chinese languages' (1879, p.154), Taplin sets out to make comparisons both within Australia and with the wider Pacific area. One of the more notable aspects of this endeavour is Taplin's curious choice in arranging the 43 Australian vocabularies according to what appears to be a prior theory of Aboriginal migration within the continent<sup>10</sup>. That is to say, the 43 languages are arranged more for comparing the languages along the proposed migratory routes than for exploring relationships between the vocabularies along other spatial axes. In a sense this is putting the cart before the horse – a more orthodox comparative approach would be to arrange the vocabularies and then to draw conclusions on the basis of linguistic (and other) evidence. At the very least Taplin's approach involves the drawback that in some cases it impedes ease of comparison between apparently related languages from contiguous areas – as would be preferred in categorising the languages into

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<sup>9</sup> Taplin received 24 replies to his survey from within South Australia and the Northern Territory (which was administered from Adelaide at this time). The supplementary material contained in the comparative table comes from other sources, some of which date to the 1840s or earlier (e.g., the lists of Threlkeld, Teichelmann and Schürmann). See Taplin (1879, p.153) for further details.

<sup>10</sup> Taplin writes: 'the writer believes that this continent has been peopled by the aborigines through several streams of immigration, from different sources. One stream probably came from the east coast down the Darling and Murray; another across the continent, by way of the great depression, from the Gulf of Carpentaria; and a third round by the western coast to Swan River and King George's Sound' (1879, p.154).

family groupings<sup>11</sup>. It is notable then that when Taplin comes to the question of racial origins, it is ultimately by appealing to ethnological evidence rather than linguistic evidence that he determines an Asian origin for Australian Aborigines (1879, pp.13-14). This fact may also go some way towards explaining why, despite the fact that Taplin acknowledges that ‘by the similarity of words, the relationship of tribes may be ascertained’ (1879, p.154)<sup>12</sup>, nothing much is ventured in the way of analysing such relationships. Indeed, when it comes to drawing conclusions based on comparative linguistic matters, Taplin restricts himself to a few general and sketchy remarks on lexical change, a comment on the possibility of making a typological distinction based on personal pronouns, and a few comments on lexical similarity firstly within the 43 Aboriginal languages and secondly among the entire 47 languages (see 1879, pp.154-5).

Before moving on to Curr, there are several further points of interest in relation to Taplin’s work that are worthy of attention. Firstly, Taplin’s own contribution on the ‘Narrinyeri’ tribe contains a table of anthropometric measurements (although none of the correspondents were requested to supply similar observations), suggesting an interest in the wider anthropological issues of the day (see 1879, pp.53-7). Secondly, one is tempted to see his suggestion of creating a language map for Australia as prescient of Tindale’s tribal mapping project, although the precise nature of any direct influence this suggestion may have had on Tindale has not been established (see Taplin 1879, p.154). Finally, the appearance of material relating to the ‘Antakerrinya’ tribe (1879, pp.89-92) is of particular interest, for it is the earliest mention of this term in the historical records. This wordlist is discussed in chapter 6.

Curr’s *The Australian Race*, appearing in four volumes, is by far the more extensive work. This undertaking was inspired by a small-scale project in which Curr compared vocabularies collected from pastoralists in contact with Aboriginal groups and discovered, he writes, ‘some order in what had heretofore appeared a mere jumble of

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<sup>11</sup> For example, the two vocabularies from Pt Lincoln are separated (nos 16 & 35), the Adelaide Tribe (no.14) is separated from the ‘mid north’ tribes (nos 31 & 32), and ‘Lake Kopperamana’ (no.7) is separated from the two ‘Dieyerie Tribe’ entries (nos 27 & 28). Concerted efforts to construct language families did not take place in Australia until the mid twentieth century with the introduction of lexicostatistical methods, although it is possible to find occasional remarks, such as the Tindo family in South Australia suggested by Black (1917, p.3), and, of course, in the pioneering work of Wilhelm Schmidt (1919).

<sup>12</sup> Taplin’s definition of ‘tribe’ is given in question no.2 of the questionnaire: ‘by “tribe” is meant all those aborigines who speak one language’ (1879, p.5).

related tongues' (1886-7, Vol.1, p.xiv). Thus enlightened, he embarked on a more comprehensive survey of the settled districts across the country, conducted through a questionnaire published in the press<sup>13</sup>. In total, Curr provides the equivalents of 124 English words in more than 250 languages (1886-7, Vol.1, p.6), most of which are represented in a comparative table in Volume 4, and on an accompanying map<sup>14</sup>.

In contrast to Taplin, Curr engages more actively in the analysis of his linguistic data (although with some dubious results, as shall be seen below). From comparisons made between the vocabularies, Curr provides further support for the notion that the languages of Australia derive from a common source, an idea already expressed by Matthew Moorhouse (1962 [1846]), which is acknowledged by Curr<sup>15</sup>. To illustrate this point further, Curr constructs a table of 20 common words that appear in various cognate forms in many of the vocabularies collected (1886-7, Vol.1, pp. 7-9). Apart from this, he also points to a number of common semantic peculiarities and grammatical features (or absences) across the language sample. It should be appreciated, however, that while Curr does offer an explanation for the variation or diversity represented in the comparative table as due to a combination of geographic separation and word taboo, he does not attempt to trace any regular patterns of sound change. In other respects Curr displays an anti-Humboldtian attitude on matters of mentality, race and language, but racial classification according to physical type is nevertheless prevalent in his thinking.

From the above discussion it should be clear that neither Taplin nor Curr engage in the comparative method in its more technical aspects – such as attempting to map regular sound changes or classifying languages into larger family groupings. Both men display an interest in grammatical material, but in the main their analyses remain at a lexical level. Of course much of this may be due to the quality of the material at hand (the lack of

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<sup>13</sup> By printing the survey in the press, Curr was obviously casting a wide net – although there are, as mentioned in chapter 2, significant gaps in his data due to the limits of White settlement and the availability of interested correspondents. It is noteworthy that not all of Curr's correspondents were White – part of vocabulary no.155 was 'drawn up by an aboriginal trooper of the Native Mounted Police' (Curr 1886-7, Vol.3, p.78).

<sup>14</sup> Appendix 8 illustrates the types of vocabulary items requested by Curr. This wordlist is Curr's no.45, entitled 'West of Lake Eyre', provided by John Warren and John Hogarth who were pastoralists at Anna Creek station (1886-7, Vol.2, pp.16-17).

<sup>15</sup> While Curr cites Moorhouse on this point (1886-7, Vol.1, p.10), Dixon attributes this notion to George Grey, and claims it to have been a 'great breakthrough in Australian linguistic studies' (1980, p.11). Grey was an early Governor of South Australia with whom Moorhouse, the Protector of Aborigines, was familiar.

correspondents trained in phonetics is merely one of a number of problems faced by the questionnaire methodology), but also to the intellectual limitations and lack of training of the two men. Taplin was a missionary with a background in classical languages (his grammar of Narrinyeri takes the standard missionary approach of following the model of Latin<sup>16</sup>) and Curr was a pastoralist and self-described amateur ethnologist. This, however, is not to belittle their efforts: despite these limitations, both works are of enduring cultural significance.

It is for their efforts in contributing to the multiplication of Babel in Australia that Taplin and Curr continue to be remembered, playing a vital role in instigating the collection of data, cultural materials that may otherwise have been lost. Their importance as sources for later projects is attested by the number of times material from their compilations is cited in later works – Tindale’s (1940; 1974) catalogue of tribes being the obvious, but by no means only, example. Indeed, it seems that Curr in particular was an important influence on Tindale’s own tribal distribution project. This is evident from the fact that a copy of Curr’s *The Australian Race* (1886-7) held at the State Library of South Australia is littered with amendments and marginalia in Tindale’s hand. Some of these amendments will be discussed below, but to give a general indication of their nature, many are simply alterations to the titles or names of the vocabularies into Tindale’s preferred orthographic system, but in many other cases Tindale seems to provide an alternative name, presumably from his own research activities. Evidence of Tindale’s close reading of this text is illustrated by his efforts to transfer errata from the errata pages of the various volumes to correct the text. In other respects, both Taplin and Curr may have influenced Tindale’s adoption of the questionnaire as a data collection methodology briefly in the 1920s, before later turning his efforts to personal fieldwork (see Tindale 1940, p.141).

The following section turns to the vocabularies collected during the Elder expedition. The influence of these earlier projects, as well as the general intellectual background outlined at the beginning of this section, will be readily apparent.

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<sup>16</sup> This grammar was first published in 1878 and is reprinted in Taplin (1879).

## 4.2 The Elder scientific exploration expedition, 1891-2

The Elder expedition, proceeding under the auspices of the South Australian branch of the Royal Geographical Society, was by all accounts the most highly organised and ambitious scientific expedition to leave Adelaide in the nineteenth century. Its principal aims are stated in a pamphlet entitled: *Handbook of Instructions for the Guidance of the Officers of the Elder Scientific Exploration Expedition to the Unknown Portions of Australia*. The officers are informed:

The object of this Expedition is to make an exhaustive Scientific Exploration of these [unknown] regions, and to determine and map with certainty and accuracy the position and nomenclature of all geographical physical features, and ascertain the nature of its fauna, flora, geological structure, and climatic conditions<sup>17</sup>. (RGS 1891, p.3)

To assist in the filling in of the blanks on the map and the gathering of scientific data, the core members of the party included two surveyors experienced in outback conditions, David Lindsay and L.A. Wells, and three scientists – a medical officer, H.J. Elliot, a geologist-meteorologist, Victor Streich, and a naturalist, Richard Helms. The expedition was instructed to proceed in radial traverses across the ‘unknown’ country to enable the surveyors to make a comprehensive inventory of significant geographical features. Like Carruthers, they were instructed to record ‘native names’ of features wherever possible. For their part, the scientists would engage in collecting specimens and data relating to their areas of expertise, and obtain the native names for their specimens if possible. Of particular interest are the following instructions relating to the collection of linguistic material:

As complete a vocabulary as possible of each tribal language is much to be desired. Rules for a uniform orthography are contained in appendix. Efforts should be made to ascertain to what extent words are common to several tribes, such words as fire, water, head, foot, man,

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<sup>17</sup> According to Bruce Macdonald (1994, p.6) ‘more than 150 new species of insects were collected and 19 new species of plants were included in the 700 specimens collected by Richard Helms ... collections of land and fresh water molluscs, lichens, fungi, birds, mammals and reptiles (116 specimens) were also made’. In terms of published linguistic materials, Lindsay produced two wordlists (Lindsay 1893, 1894), Helms ten (Helms 1896), one of which is a comparative English-Arabana-Dieri-Antikirinya list, and Wells four (in Lindsay 1893). Although overlooked by Macdonald, the words contained in these lists may also be viewed as scientific specimens.

woman, boy, girl, &c., are suggested for special enquiry. A list of additional words is given in the appendices. (RGS 1891, p.12)

According to the instructions this task was to fall under the purview of the medical officer, although it was the recordings of the surveyors, Lindsay and Wells, and the naturalist, Helms, that were eventually published. The recordings of Lindsay and Wells appeared soon after the completion of the expedition in a Parliamentary Paper (Lindsay 1893), while Helms eventually published his wordlists in a paper primarily concerned with ethnological observations (Helms 1896). Lindsay also published a subsequent short paper dealing with language and related matters (Lindsay 1894).

As indicated in the passage quoted above, guidelines in the form of an orthographic system and a list of English words for eliciting respective 'native equivalents' are attached as appendices to the instructions (RGS 1891, pp.35-7, see appendix 6). The orthographic system is that developed by the Royal Geographical Society for 'native names' of places discussed in chapter 2, while the list of English words is a slightly amended version of Taplin's (1879) wordlist. Thus, it can be readily appreciated that the linguistic work of the party was intended to contribute to the recent surveys of Taplin and Curr by extending the range of data collection to previously unknown areas. Indeed, vocabularies from areas to the east of the 'unknown' area appear in Taplin's work.

Apart from this obvious connection, it is difficult to determine the exact nature of the influence of Taplin and Curr upon the officers of the expedition. From the writings of Lindsay and Helms, however, we see an interest in making observations with comparative questions in mind. Lindsay (1894) makes a number of comments regarding dialectal affinities across the South Australian section of the traverse (see below), and his eye for the wider sphere is demonstrated in the same paper by his drawing attention to the similarities between items in his vocabulary and words contained in Willshire's (1891) vocabulary of the western MacDonal Ranges in the Northern Territory. Helms goes further in a technical sense than Lindsay in constructing comparative tables, one consisting of 14 words drawn from 7 of the vocabularies he records during the course of the expedition (1896, p.310), and another recorded at Warrina before the expedition commenced, consisting chiefly of words from non-Western Desert speech varieties (1896, pp.313-6). Helms also makes a number of comments under the heading 'territory of tribes'

(1896, pp.276-7), which offer a brief outline of tribal distribution across the northern areas of South Australia, and which form part of the discussion in chapter 6.

The scientific work of the party with human subjects was not limited to collecting vocabularies – the medical officer was instructed to accompany his vocabularies with anthropometric observations. Thus, it can readily be appreciated that wider comparative purposes were envisaged, further tying in the work of the expedition to the racial discourses of the day (RGS 1891, p.11)<sup>18</sup>.

When it comes to considering more critically the linguistic materials produced by the expedition for the north-west area, a number of questions arise concerning the conditions under which the vocabularies were collected. I have already noted in an earlier chapter that interpreters were not used, but who were the informants and where were the vocabularies recorded? Furthermore, in a general sense, one may well ask what sorts of materials are produced by a scientific expedition expected to follow the sorts of guidelines discussed above. That is to say, given these contextual conditions, what sort of knowledge do the wordlists constitute and how has this knowledge been used? I will now turn to these questions.

### 4.2.1 Orthographics

In the discussion of the recording of placenames in chapter 2, I have already noted a number of issues arising from the practice of reducing *anangu* speech to writing. To avoid covering the same ground by providing the same analysis for the material under examination in this section, it is sufficient to point out that the basic orthographic issues relating to the recording of placenames, such as the cultural biases involved, also apply to the recording of vocabularies. A notable difference, however, is the critical importance of orthographic standards and accurate recordings of vocabulary for comparative philological work. While steps can be taken to minimise variation (for example, the orthographic guidelines provided to the officers of the Elder expedition), there is a raft of contingent

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<sup>18</sup> Lindsay (1893, p.9) and Helms (1896, p.296) both record the taking of physical measurements by the medical officer. Helms cites a lack of instruments as the reason why he personally did not engage in such activities.

factors that may work against the maintenance of standards, such as the level of training or experience of the recorders, how diligently they approach their task, and the availability of interpreters. So having discussed aspects of the instructions as they relate to linguistic matters, it is worth pursuing the question of the degree to which Helms, Lindsay and Wells attempted to follow them. To this end, it is possible to triangulate the vocabularies of the three men recorded in the vicinity of the Everard Ranges. The following figure triangulates a selection of these words (the full vocabularies collected at the Everard Ranges are presented in appendix 7).

| English      | Helms    | Lindsay           | Wells        |
|--------------|----------|-------------------|--------------|
| arm          | yurri    | yari              | tarri        |
| beard        | kunya    | kundga [whiskers] | kunnja       |
| blood        | dulgu    | pika              | pika         |
| eye          | kallu    | karu              | kuru         |
| foot         | yinna    | china             | jina         |
| head         | gnulla   | ulla [forehead]   | kada         |
| leg          | tunda    | junnda [thigh]    | tuennta      |
| tattoo scars | chipalle | -                 | jiburri      |
| moon         | piya     | biya              | biya         |
| rainbow      | chitungu | chutiungu         | tchutunngell |
| sun          | chindu   | ginntu            | jinntu       |
| cold         | biani    | worri             | warri        |
| fire         | muggatti | mukkati           | mukkati      |
| corroborree  | -        | kaiendudni        | kaiendudni   |
| kangaroo     | -        | whirru            | merrlu       |

Figure 10. Triangulation of several words collected by Helms, Lindsay and Wells at the Everard Ranges, 1891<sup>19</sup>.

From these examples it is clear that at least some attempt was made by the three to follow the guidelines (provided in appendix 6): we do not get the type of variation found with Carruthers' writing practices (who, remember, was not provided with orthographic guidelines and fell back on his English spelling intuitions), yet neither do we find the greater degree of consistency shown by Tindale. Assuming that the same informant was used by all three men (which seems possible, see section 4.2.2 below), we see that there are a number of individual peculiarities. A notable peculiarity with Helms, for example, is

<sup>19</sup> In figure 10 the bracketed forms in Lindsay's column represent his own English glosses rather than those provided in the left hand column. Note also that in Helms's vocabulary (1896, p.317) there is some indecision as to the correct English equivalent of 'tunda', which is given as 'leg, thigh?'.

that he appears to hear ‘softer’ versions of word-initial lamino-palatal stops when compared to Wells: Helms often writes <ch> or <y> where Wells has <j>. Some explanation for this practice can be drawn from the following comment:

*B and p, g and k, l and r, and y and j are often substituted one for the other, so that it became difficult to decide to which letter the sound preponderates; and in certain words it seems optional whether ng or only n is used. (Helms 1896, p.309)<sup>20</sup>*

Apart from this, an occasional overt departure from the guidelines can also be seen. For example, Wells writes <tch> (see ‘rainbow’) where the guidelines suggest <ch> or <j> would be more appropriate. Perhaps Wells was dissatisfied with these alternatives and chose his own solution. Helms uses <gn> word-initially (see ‘head’), which is not included in the system (although <ng> is), and for which he is pilloried by Tindale (1974, p.154)<sup>21</sup>. Furthermore, Helms, like many other recorders of vocabularies in Western Desert areas, had knowledge of German and utilises umlauts in his Blyth Range vocabulary (1896, p.318-20)<sup>22</sup>.

Unfortunately, both Lindsay and Wells have little to say about their use of the orthographic system or their wider recording activities, although Helms does provide some general comments that reflect on the type of problems encountered. He writes:

To get the correct pronunciation is often difficult on account of the variations of expressions given to certain sounds by different individuals, and can only be obtained from a frequent repetition of the words. In some cases I found it difficult to determine between *a*, *o*, and even *u*, so variably were the words pronounced. This difficulty is still more enhanced by the desire on the part of the natives to attempt to modulate the word, because as soon as they are desired to repeat it they seem to imagine that the word has not been pronounced to one’s liking, and alter it; and should you pronounce it ever so incorrectly,

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<sup>20</sup> This passage obviously also applies to some of the other differences between the three recorders, which, due to constraints of space, I will not elaborate.

<sup>21</sup> Tindale writes: ‘another recorder who had possible hearing defects, or lapses in transcription techniques, was R. Helms (1895) [*sic*]. In his account of the aborigines encountered during the Elder Exploring Expedition, he heard [N] as [gn] and was seemingly tone deaf to initial [n·] and [nj] sounds’ (Tindale 1974, p.154). This criticism seems overly harsh coming from Tindale, whose own early writing suffers from similar ‘defects’.

<sup>22</sup> The Blyth Range is indicated on the Carruthers’ survey plan (Map 1) in Tindale’s hand, appearing west of the Everard Ranges and just on the South Australian side of the SA-WA border.

they at once agree, and are sure to pronounce it the same way. They are often evidently under the impression that the word is well enough known to the interrogator, who only gives it a different expression, and to please him repeat it in his style; being very quick of hearing, they can repeat almost every sound with a marvellous accuracy. (Helms 1896, p.309)

The circularity described by Helms in this passage, whereby the recorder imperfectly mimics the pronunciation of the informant who in turn mimics the recorder and so on, highlights the ease with which misunderstanding can arise when introducing foreign cultural practices in contact situations – ‘what sort of game is this?’ the informant may very well muse<sup>23</sup>. Importantly, Helms faces the problem of determining ‘correct’ pronunciation in the face of such variation, and the dilemma for him is that the more he attempts to determine the ‘correct’ pronunciation, the more variation seems to increase. All this of course assumes that Helms is on the right track in ascribing the problem to this type of circularity, although such factors as speed of speech, the conditioning of vowels by consonants and other well-known phonetic processes may also have played a role in the apparent variation. Whatever the exact cause of this confusion may have been, the exchange as described by Helms bears a striking similarity to the contact phenomenon known as ‘baby-talk’ (Bloomfield 1935, pp.472-3).

Aside from this, problems of communication also existed within the party and are well worth considering for the light they shed on the context within which the recorders worked and related to each other, as well as on how the products of their linguistic labours were viewed. In a letter to the Honorary Treasurer of the RGS, Thomas Gill, after the completion of the expedition, Helms writes:

Prof. Tate<sup>24</sup> advises me to write to the Doctor [Elliot] for some of his notes. You will remember that I suggested to him that he and I should write the paper jointly (which would have meant that I should have to do the most of it) but he has never replied. He also promised me to give me a large vocabulary he received from the manager of the

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<sup>23</sup> As Boas points out, an informant from a non-literate culture may readily be misled into believing an investigator understands what he reads out from his notes in the informant’s language, whereas in actual fact the investigator may have no understanding of the language at all (Boas 1968 [1911], p.212).

<sup>24</sup> Ralph Tate was a noted natural scientist who served as President of the Royal Society of South Australia and was a member of the Horn scientific expedition to Central Australia in 1894 (Alderman 1976, pp.243-4).

Murch[ison] River Station but never did so. If you could persuade him to let me have his notes I will make the best of them and give him due credit for it. The trouble with some of his words would be that he refused to adopt the correct system of spelling. Wells also took notes at times and copied deliberately from my vocabulary, when I was writing, from over my shoulder and promised to give me certain [unclear] in return but always put it off so that I got tired of asking him. The fact is he thought them too valuable to let me have them for he fancied himself very clever with the blacks but in my opinion he is a perfect ass, as regards handling wild natives. Wells' vocabulary is gone into [Magarey's ?]<sup>25</sup> hands so if you can send it to me I might get a few words out of it I have not got. But if there is any difficulty about it don't bother because the spelling is so bad that it will give me a deal of trouble to make the words pronounce correctly. The Dr's notes on the physiology – the measurements and the diseases would be of more value.

If you can send me a few copies of the 'instructions'; or the sheet with the instructions how to spell &c. and the sheet with the instructions to the medical officer. I am inducing people to collect vocabularies &c. for me and these sheets are handy to give to any one. (Helms 1893 MS)

These comments strike one as remarkable given the otherwise well-maintained sheen of propriety accompanying scientific endeavours in the Victorian era. Yet these comments cut deeper than the personal vanities and rivalries of the expedition personnel. When it is considered that the vocabularies are presented as *knowledge* – and by the scientific standards of the day one would assume that the authors purport to a high degree of objectivity – the process is cast in some doubt. Indeed, they appear to be treated as prized specimens, and if Helms is to be believed, hoarded and closely guarded. There is also some irony to Helms's remarks for, if indeed Wells did copy over his shoulder, then one would expect to find similar 'bad' spellings in both lists. In fact, when compared to more contemporary speech as recorded at the Everard Ranges (for example, Goddard 1985), it may be concluded that Wells performs on the whole rather better than Helms in this regard. Nevertheless, it is clear that the communication problems *within* the party did not contribute to the overall success of the linguistic and other activities<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> This could relate to Alexander Magarey, a RGS member associated with the Elder expedition.

<sup>26</sup> Such rivalry and dissatisfaction no doubt reflect the tenor of the wide rifts between members of the expedition that eventually led to the controversial resignation of the scientists in Western Australia.

## 4.2.2 Constructing wordlists

This section begins by reiterating the point just made that the vocabularies under discussion are presented as knowledge and that they are constructed within the discourses of nineteenth-century colonial and scientific endeavour. Those of Lindsay and Wells are presented in ordered columns, listing corresponding English and ‘native’ forms on a one-to-one basis<sup>27</sup>. This abstraction, implying that the forms thus arranged are translation equivalents, disguises a number of assumptions about language upon which such lists are based. Firstly, and most obviously, is the assumption that one-to-one translation is in principle possible – an assumption arguably resting on the Aristotelean view that the world is the same for all people, and that different languages vary to the extent that they apply different labels to the same objects of reality. This view was criticised in chapter 2 of this thesis as surrogationalist (Harris 1980), and it was pointed out that it rests at the heart of Western assumptions about language, supporting the orthodox view of a language as consisting of a fixed code of forms and meanings. As has been argued so far in this thesis, meaning is not located somehow ‘in’ words, but arises through the contexts in which communication takes place. The relevant point here is that while this assumption allows the type of decontextualisation seen in wordlists to proceed, it is nevertheless problematic. While the issue of translation remains controversial for many linguists and philosophers of language, it is well known from the study of many non-Western languages that, contra Aristotle, different languages divide up reality according to different principles (Sapir 1929)<sup>28</sup>.

Of course, much of this stems from the requirements of comparative philology, such as the need for ‘corresponding labels’ for objects in the world to be compared. Also required, ideally, is a standard orthographic approach to the representation of speech in writing. In this way one can appreciate Helms’ concern for producing the ‘correct’ representation of pronunciation in his endeavours. So in a sense these requirements lead to restricted ways of ‘seeing’ or approaching ‘native’ languages: other aspects of language,

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<sup>27</sup> Helms (1896, pp. 317-31) presents the bulk of his wordlists in a more discursive form, often describing items of material culture and the habits or habitats of zoological and botanical ‘objects’. Also notable is that a Latin term is often favoured over an English name for the latter classes of ‘objects’. When Helms engages in making comparisons between ‘dialects’ or ‘languages’, however, he follows the orthodox practice of constructing comparative tables.

<sup>28</sup> See also Lakoff (1987) for a discussion of some Australian examples.

such as synonyms for example, are ignored in favour of single terms (although Helms does occasionally record synonyms in his discursive lists) and a deeper investigation of speech varieties encountered. Thus, as cultural artefacts of Western literate (colonialist and scientific) culture, the wordlists provide less insight into *anangu* speech and linguistic practices than of the culture that produced them.

Yet another assumption is uncovered when we consider the productivity of these and other wordlists in terms of constructing languages (or dialects) and tribes. The wordlists of Helms in particular favour the construction of the ‘language of the tribe of area X’. Both Lindsay and Helms report their inability to obtain the name of the ‘tribes’ they encounter in the north-west. Helms provides a list of tribes, including the Everard Range tribe, the Blyth Range tribe and the Barrow Range tribe. He explains: ‘this geographical nomenclature I was obliged to adopt because I could not ascertain the correct tribal names from the natives, through ignorance of their language’ (1896, p.239)<sup>29</sup>. But while this may be a solution to the problem of reference, it nevertheless harbours a number of assumptions, and is not as entirely objective as it is no doubt meant to appear. The basic assumption upon which this construction rests is that the speech of one or a very small number of speakers is representative of the language of the tribe. On this matter it is useful to consider the following point raised by Dell Hymes:

It is [often] taken for granted that ... [word]lists represent distinct languages or dialects. If the list is obtained from one individual, it is treated as representative of a dialect or language to which the speech of that individual belongs, not as representative of the individual in and of himself. (Hymes 1960, p.26)

While Hymes is referring specifically to the use of wordlists in glottochronology and lexicostatistics, this basic insight applies to the wordlists under study and the uses made of them discussed below. Helms and Lindsay make frequent use of the term ‘tribe’ in their writings, often referring to newly encountered groups as separate tribes from those previously encountered, and one suspects that their usage of the term is fairly loose. That

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<sup>29</sup> Lindsay writes of the people encountered at the Everard Ranges: ‘we were unable to obtain the name of the tribe, or elicit much information from them’ (1894, p.41). The vocabulary appended to the article is simply entitled ‘Everard Ranges’, although there is also a smaller vocabulary entitled ‘Mount Sir Thomas’, obviously for comparative purposes (1894, p.44). In the body of the article Lindsay often refers to ‘tribes’ and their ‘dialect’. Wells entitles his Everard Range list simply: ‘Collected from the Everard Ranges (Mount Illbillee)’ (1893, p.77).

is, it is difficult to determine precisely how they make their differentiations, although both seem to make assumptions about boundaries and territories from time to time and occasionally make reference to differences in physical stature<sup>30</sup>. It will be seen directly that it is more than likely that the wordlists were constructed from linguistic material collected from a very small number of informants (only one or two), so care needs to be taken when ascribing the linguistic material, by extension, to one particular (larger) group or another. A corollary of this process is the further assumption, as demonstrated by Lindsay, that conclusions about a ‘whole dialect’ (a particularly nebulous concept) can be drawn from a limited number of words. Lindsay writes at one point to the west of the Everard Ranges: ‘I was able to ascertain that many words, if not the whole dialect, were the same as those heard further east’ (1894, p.42).

When we come to consider the question of the conditions under which the wordlists were collected, we know, as stated above, that interpreters were not used – and this goes a long way in accounting for the relatively high degree of semantic error or ambiguity found in them<sup>31</sup>. There is little doubt that gesture played a prominent role in recording words. In some cases objects were shown to informants. At one point Helms presents a ‘prepared skin’ to his informant(s) to elicit a name (1896, p.257) and on another occasion takes the extreme measure of drawing his own blood for the same purpose (1896, p.298).

We also know that the wordlists were recorded at or near the Everard Ranges over a relatively short period of time. At the Everard Ranges Lindsay notes an abundance of tracks but only a few people were encountered. One person, who had some contact experience, approached the party and is the most likely source of the Everard Range material. Lindsay writes: ‘the aborigine came soon after daybreak, bringing with him a boy about 14 years of age ... the doctor measured them, and we got the following words from them ...’ (1893, p.9). Lindsay provides the following further details: ‘by the man’s

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<sup>30</sup> When discussing rock paintings Helms assumes that their location within a 75 mile radius around Everard Ranges suggests they were made by one tribe: ‘the Everard Range tribe’ (1986, p.266). Lindsay comments at one point to the west of the Everard Ranges on reaching ‘the limits’ of the territory of those met with at the ranges (1894, p.41).

<sup>31</sup> Returning to figure 10, an example of an error or misunderstanding is Lindsay’s recording of ‘whirru’ (*wiru*, ‘lovely’) for ‘kangaroo’, presumably as his informant is enjoying a meal. Another type of ‘error’ occurs with ‘head’, for which both Helms and Lindsay record the term for forehead (note also that Lindsay misses the initial velar nasal). An example of ambiguity, from a traditional grammatical perspective, concerns the forms recorded for ‘cold’: Helms records ‘biani’ (*puyini*, to be cold), a verb, while Lindsay and Wells record versions of *wari*, an adjective.

behaviour it was evident that he had seen white men before, although his knowledge of English was limited to about half-a-dozen words' (1894, p.41). The Aborigine in question, 'Billy', with three other *anangu*, ends up travelling with the party for about two weeks on their westward journey.

All three Everard Ranges wordlists suggest that the guidelines for procuring words supplied in the instructions were not followed in strict fashion. Helms (106+ words), Lindsay (88 words, although there are differences between the 1893 and 1894 lists) and Wells (72 words) all fail to include more than thirty per cent of the English words listed for special use in the appendices to the instructions. Instead, we find in the wordlists a higher number of terms relating to the human body, physical geography, water sources (especially Lindsay, the leader), flora and fauna (especially Helms, the naturalist), and items of material culture. It is also notable that at the Fraser Range (in Western Australia), with an interpreter available, Helms' vocabulary is extensive by comparison to those collected in South Australia.

It is useful to conclude this section with a few general comments arising from a closer reading of these vocabularies. Firstly, there appear to be a number of borrowings from eastern non-Western Desert speech varieties in the wordlists: 'puringa' (dog) of Helms, 'kaiendudni' (corrobboree) of Lindsay (Wells also records this word but with a slightly different spelling), and 'muggatti' (or slight variation thereof) recorded by all three for 'fire'. Now the term 'borrowings' is used here with some caution; as is well-known, it is often difficult to determine in which direction a borrowing occurs, and these examples are cited merely to suggest that the linguistic ecology of the Everard Ranges was at the time more complex than the type of 'bounded and discrete speech community' implied by some writers in the past, especially Tindale.

In the first case, we have a form also recorded in a non-Western Desert wordlist for 'tame dog' at Charlotte Waters (Taplin 1879, p.144)<sup>32</sup>. In the second case we find a pre-stopped nasal, a sound characteristic of non-Western Desert speech varieties to the east (see Hercus 1994). The third case is curious, given the existence of the widespread pidgin

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<sup>32</sup> The word is given as 'poorinya' by the compiler of the wordlist, Christopher Giles. This list was apparently elicited from a single informant of the 'Antakerrinya' tribe, whose language is Arremte. From the context of the recording of the term 'puringa' by Helms at the Everard Ranges, there is little doubt that the term was intended to mean 'tame dog' or some slight variation of this (see Helms 1896, p.293).

English term ‘mucketty’ (gun, from ‘musket’). It is likely, however, that this is a mere accident: a similar term is in fact found in languages to the east, ‘maka’, which is likely to be cognate with the name ‘Macumba’, the site of an important fire ceremony (see Shaw and Gibson 1988, p.30; Hercus 1994, p.57). Other early sources, although fragmentary, also contribute to the emerging view of a more complex linguistic ecology in the Everard Ranges area. Ernest Giles, for example, writes of a contact encounter at the Everard Ranges in which ‘it was mostly through a few words that Alec Ross knew, of the Peake, Macumba, or Alberga tribes [i.e. non-Western Desert groups] that we could talk to each other at all’ (Giles 1995 [1889], p.354). Although much later in the picture, the Berndts point to shared Western Desert and Arrernte ceremonies at Macumba and cultural transmission across the region generally (1942-5, Vol.15, No. 3, pp.239-66).

Finally, Helms is influential in terms of later writers who seem to regard him as an authority: Tindale includes many of Helms’ ‘native’ words in his own vocabularies (see chapter 5), while writers such as Cleland and Johnston (1937) and Condon (1955) draw from his wordlists for their catalogues of indigenous names of plants and birds respectively.

Before moving on to consider some of the subsequently recorded wordlists, I will turn to the question of how Tindale makes use of the wordlists discussed so far.

### **4.3 Tindale’s loop**

This section returns to the issue of the intimate relationship between maps and language, with the particular aim of attempting to draw out the relationship between Tindale’s catalogue of tribes and the tribal distribution map in more detail.

A major theme in this chapter has been the multiplication of Babel in Australia through the recording of vocabularies – the transformation of indigenous speech into written objects for the purposes of scientific inquiry. Special attention has been paid to the construction ‘language of the tribe of area X’, as seen especially with the vocabularies of Helms (but this construction is also common in Taplin 1879 and Curr 1886-7). Indeed, the comparative method cannot proceed in any purposeful way without some means of

referring to the speech varieties to be compared – as one contemporary linguist suggests: ‘a language without a name does not exist, for the simple reason that it is not possible to talk about it’ (Janson 2002, p.230). In the past, this has led linguists and anthropologists in colonial contexts to invent a name<sup>33</sup>. Tindale himself explains that in certain situations it is necessary to invent a tribal name (which may also serve as a name for the language of the tribe), although he would have us believe these occurrences to be rare (1940, p.142). But there is another sense in which languages are brought into existence less directly via the use of a tribal distribution map and a catalogue of tribes.

In Tindale’s case, one can view this process operating through his treatment of the Elder expedition vocabularies, which involves the assigning of vocabularies to languages on the basis of his 1940 map. This practice may be abstracted for the purpose of discussion in the following way. It begins with the mapping of defined territories belonging to tribes X, Y and Z, who by definition speak languages X, Y and Z respectively<sup>34</sup>. The next step in the process involves allocating ‘unnamed’ vocabularies to tribes X, Y and Z according to the given geographical location of their recording. Thus, the vocabularies effectively become examples of languages X, Y or Z. In other words, from the premise that the map validly locates tribes in space, languages are tangibly brought into existence<sup>35</sup>. There is, however, a circular aspect to the process that begins to appear when items from the original wordlists are extracted and used by others for various purposes, such as creating catalogues of flora or fauna using indigenous names and attributing such names to languages *on the basis of the Tindale map* (see below). In effect this reinforces the existence of separate and distinct languages and diffuses this notion into the wider cultural sphere – it may even feed back into the catalogue, thus further supporting the existence of tribal groups living in bounded territory and speaking distinct languages (and ultimately the map itself).

When we feed the Elder expedition material into this process we find that the Everard Range lists of Helms and Wells become known as ‘Jangkundjara’. Under this

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<sup>33</sup> Sutton (1979) discusses the invention of names for languages in Australia by linguists. See also Mühlhäusler (forthcoming) for comments on the situation in New Guinea.

<sup>34</sup> This is the *ideal* state of affairs as represented in Tindale’s definition of ‘tribe’.

<sup>35</sup> This is not to deny that there is some evidence to suggest that speech variety names in the Western Desert are related to (often vaguely defined) areas of country, but this is a separate issue.

heading in the 1974 catalogue, Tindale writes: ‘this is the Everard Range tribe of Helms and White’<sup>36</sup> (1974, p.212). As for Wells, Tindale’s own copy of Wells’s (1893) wordlist includes the annotation: ‘ = JaNkundjara’ beside the title: ‘Collected from the Everard Ranges (Mount Illbillee)’<sup>37</sup>. The making of this type of annotation was not unusual for Tindale. In fact, as noted with regard to the numerous annotations made by Tindale to a copy of Curr’s *The Australian Race* mentioned above, the making of such annotations seems to have been common practice.

A further example shows how far Tindale was prepared to extend this process, if only for his own purposes. This is a case in which merely being present in a certain area is enough to determine tribal affiliation (and therefore language) of a group of otherwise anonymous people. It occurs at the start of the 1933 Mann and Musgrave Ranges journal where Tindale notes an encounter that Ernest Giles had with ‘Pitjandjara natives’ (Tindale 1933b MS, p.v). However, for Giles in the 1870s, the people with whom he came into contact remained anonymous: he did not learn their name or the name of their speech variety. So this is an obvious example of using the map to determine (or, rather, assume) the identity of otherwise anonymous people.

As is well known, Tindale’s map and catalogue of tribes have long been a basic reference point for researchers; in articles too numerous to list authors cite his representations of tribal boundaries or names of tribes or languages for areas of particular concern to their research. Tindale’s work has been greatly influential on the work of professional linguists in this regard. Capell’s (1963) linguistic survey of Australia and O’Grady and Klokeid’s (1969) work on linguistic classification are two prominent examples of linguists using Tindale’s constructions as a basis for their own projects<sup>38</sup>. Consider the following statements:

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<sup>36</sup> S.A. White’s vocabulary, recorded at the Everard Ranges, is discussed in section 4.4 under the sub-heading ‘Black (1915)’. Although White recorded the words, they were passed to Black for transcription and were thus published under Black’s name.

<sup>37</sup> Tindale’s copy is located at the SA Museum Archives in a folder entitled: ‘Wells, Larry A. Vocabulary of words and phrases with translations (folio) no date’. An ambiguity relating to this title and to Tindale’s citation of this source is discussed below.

<sup>38</sup> A number of other linguistic surveys and maps reproducing aspects of Tindale’s representations, it will be remembered, were discussed in chapter 1.5 above.

Mr. Tindale has given the most accurate locations possible for the various languages [in Tindale 1940]. These have been used as the basis for the locations given in this work. (Capell 1963, p.vi)

The primary source for the names of speech communities was Tindale's 1940 map. (O'Grady and Klokeid 1969, p.301)

Arguably these second order constructions also work to support the construction of the map and proliferate its views. The political implications of following the map's constructions is starkly illustrated by the fact that O'Grady and Klokeid's article played a central role in the linguistic evidence presented to the court in the De Rose Hill Native title case (where the relationship between the Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya speech varieties was brought under close scrutiny, see chapter 6). Further indication of the power and influence of the map and catalogue can be seen in the following comment by Birdsell, who, in an article defending his notion of the dialect tribe, goes so far as to claim that Tindale's work provides proof of the existence of this construct:

The dialectal tribe, maintained totally by systems of face-to-face communication without political reinforcement or structure, was an empirical reality in precontact Aboriginal Australia. This is not only fully attested by Tindale's (1940) comprehensive documentation of tribal names and boundaries, but confirmed by Birdsell's (1953) analysis of the relation between Aboriginal densities and ecology. (Birdsell 1970, p.118)

As mentioned, there is a degree of circularity involved in the overall process. This is clearly illustrated by an article compiling Aboriginal bird names by H.T. Condon (1955), a colleague of Tindale's at the museum. As seen above, when Helms collected his vocabularies at the Everard Ranges and the Blyth Ranges, no names were recorded for the respective speech varieties, and indeed the question of whether they are examples of the same language is left open. But when these vocabularies pass through Tindale's loop examples of two languages are produced. In Condon (1955), using the 1940 map as a guide, the words drawn from Helms' vocabularies are given as 'Jangkundjara' if they are taken from the Everard Range list or 'Pitjandjara' if they are taken from the Blyth Range list<sup>39</sup>. It is interesting to note that Helms (1896) is mentioned under ' Jangkundjara' but not

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<sup>39</sup> Condon writes: 'where possible different names for the same bird have been classified on a tribal or geographical basis' (1955, p.75), and adds that the spellings for tribal names follow those of Tindale (1940).

‘Pitjandjara’ in Tindale’s catalogue of tribes, although the 1940 map has the Blyth Range in ‘Pitjandjara’ country. We would expect, on the basis of consistency, for Helms (1896) to be listed under ‘Pitjandjara’ as well (certainly words from Helms’s Blyth Range list appear in Tindale’s *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* discussed in chapter 5).

In chapters 2 and 3 I indicated that Tindale’s construction of tribes and their proper names for Western Desert areas is fraught with problems. When it comes to assigning vocabularies to these languages and groups, these problems are compounded by the mis-assigning of vocabularies, an almost inevitable effect given the premises by which the process proceeds. Tindale himself found this problem with one of the Everard Ranges vocabularies – that of White (or Black 1915) – whose assignment, as noted above, was eventually changed from Yankunytjatjara to Antikirinya at a much later date. Tindale writes that White’s list and other cultural observations relate to people ‘now recognised as the Antakirinja’ (Tindale 1986, p.239). This leads to a rather confusing situation for works that have drawn on Tindale 1940 and 1974. Condon (1955), for example, gives words from Black (1915) as Jankundjara – so are the relevant words therefore Antikirinya instead of Yankunytjatjara? Again, this highlights that the main problem with the process stems from its initial premise that the boundaries are definite and correct, and that there is a one tribe to one language to defined territory relationship. In this regard one is reminded of the words of the pioneering Scottish phonetician, Alexander Hume, who wrote in the seventeenth century: ‘if the fundation be not sure, the maer gorgiouse the edifice, the grosser the falt’ (in Firth 1957, p.96).

Finally, it is worth noting that Helms (1896) is cited under ‘Antakirinja’ in the catalogue of tribes (Tindale 1974, p.210), no doubt for the vocabulary and tribal distribution information obtained from his informant Billy Weaver (see chapter 6). Under ‘Pitjandjara’ we find Wells (1893) listed, but, surprisingly, Lindsay (1893) does not appear in the catalogue or bibliography – although Lindsay is discussed in a later article (Tindale 1986, p.238). In Tindale (1940) neither Wells nor Lindsay is cited as a source for the map<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> There is a reference to ‘Wells 1890’ in the catalogue under ‘Jankundjara’, but this is in fact the same source as Wells (1893). This anomaly can be explained as the result of Tindale drawing on Greenway (1963, p.353) in the former case and the original Wells (1893) in the latter. Greenway’s bibliographic entry relates to a file in the SAM archives, ‘Wells, Larry A. Vocabulary of Words and Phrases, with Translations (folio no date’, which in fact is Wells (1893).

#### 4.4 Other early Western Desert vocabularies

In this section I continue my examination of early Western Desert wordlists from the north-west. The vocabularies of Basedow (1908), Black (1915), Brumby (1930 MS), Love (1938 MS) and Gross (1954 MS) have been selected for special attention for the simple reason that besides the vocabularies collected by Tindale himself (discussed in the following chapter) they are the most significant to be listed in Tindale's catalogue of tribes (1940; 1974) under 'Pitjandjara', 'Jangkundjara' and 'Antakirinja'<sup>41</sup>. Many of the literature references listed in the catalogue contain mere 'mentions' of a tribe rather than significant wordlists or other information relating to tribal distribution and some are clearly wrong<sup>42</sup>. In certain respects this represents a wide-net approach by Tindale, but the catalogue is not comprehensive; a number of significant vocabularies that form part of the historical linguistic record do not appear at all – so the following discussion is more an examination of Tindale's work than a comprehensive survey<sup>43</sup>. Having said this, an important aspect of the discussion is to continue to assess the conditions and circumstances under which vocabularies were collected in the north-west. With this in mind, a brief summary of each of these sources is offered as well as observations on how Tindale makes use of them. This section is completed by a summary of points arising during the discussion.

##### (i) Basedow (1908)

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<sup>41</sup> Brumby (1930) is not explicitly listed in the catalogue and the vocabulary was, technically-speaking, recorded by Tindale. As such it could more properly be discussed in chapter 5 with the other vocabularies collected personally by Tindale. The fact that the informant in this case was not *anangu*, however, makes this a special case, and in this regard it is more sensible to discuss the material in the present context.

<sup>42</sup> A number of vocabularies listed under 'Antakirinja' are not of Western Desert speech varieties. This point will arise later in this chapter, but will be deferred to chapter 6 for fuller discussion.

<sup>43</sup> Some sources may not have been available to Tindale, such as Douglas (n.d. MS; 1951 MS). Other material that is mentioned in the literature has not been located, such as, for example, the vocabulary collected by H.K. Fry at Ernabella in 1933 (see State Records GRG 52/1/1958/187), and the 'two hundred words and phrases' collected at Ooldea by Campbell and Lewis (1926, p.190). Fry's linguistic work is not mentioned in the catalogue, while Campbell and Lewis (1926) is listed under Jangkundjara. In the latter case, this vocabulary has not been located in Tindale's archival material and there is some likelihood that this reference is assigned to Jangkundjara on the basis of the name of Campbell and Lewis' informants, the Alindjera (*alinytjara*, 'north' or 'northerner'), rather than on linguistic evidence (see SAM 1926 MS, sociological data card 'B1').

The material for this wordlist was collected by Basedow in 1903 during a government expedition to the north-west led by Wells (see Basedow 1904; 1914 for details). An interesting aspect of the wordlist is that it sets up for comparative purposes three parallel vocabularies: Aluridja, Aluridja (Ituarre) and Arunndta (Herrinda)<sup>44</sup>. Given the identities of the Aboriginal members of the party (Basedow 1914, p.59), there is little doubt that they were Basedow's primary sources for his 'vocabulary of about 1,500 words' (1904, p.12). Basedow uses the terms 'Aluridja' and 'Arunndta' as tribal names (1908, p.207), and without wishing to become sidetracked by the complexities masked by these constructions, we can for the sake of argument gloss these terms as 'eastern Western Desert' and 'Arandic'<sup>45</sup>.

Basedow's (1908) paper is listed in the catalogue of tribes under 'Pitjandjara' (Tindale 1974, p.217), and it seems that this is done on the basis of a rather poor assumption on Tindale's part. The expedition's cook's assistant in 1903, Annie, is described by Basedow as a 'native of the Aluridja (Ituarre) tribe' (1914, p.59), and at one point she provides Basedow with the 'native name' of Mt Cecil, Ituarre (1914, p.201), ostensibly demonstrating knowledge of her *ngura* (country)<sup>46</sup>. Mt Cecil is roughly halfway between the eastern end of the Musgraves and the Finke River in the Northern Territory. Thus, if Basedow's report is to be believed, 'Aluridja (Ituarre)' can be considered an eastern Western Desert speech variety spoken *well to the east of traditional Pitjantjatjara country*. In the catalogue, Tindale writes that Ituarre is 'probably a faulty hearing of Pituari' (1974, p.217), a term that he maintains is a 'rarely heard' name for Pitjantjatjara. Regardless of the currency of the term 'Pituari', this is nevertheless an unsound conclusion, based as it is upon a spurious etymology. Indeed, if asked today, *anangu* would probably say the Ituarre wordlist is more representative of northern Yankunytjatjara speech varieties than Pitjantjatjara or, more generally, the speech of westerners.

**(ii) Black (1915)**

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<sup>44</sup> The spellings here are Basedow's, and in the main the article follows German spelling. In other contexts Basedow attempts to follow the RGS orthographic guidelines, although with slight modifications (see, for example, Basedow 1904, p.47). Basedow's orthographic practices are criticised by Tindale (1974, p.155) – and were once described to me by one linguist as a 'word salad' (Michael Walsh, p.c.).

<sup>45</sup> Thus, 'Ituarre' is a Western Desert speech variety, while 'Herrinda', according to Breen (1993, p.21), is the 'Eastern Arrernte dialect'.

<sup>46</sup> Earlier Basedow notes Annie's desire to visit relatives at 'Ituarre' (1914, p.197).

As indicated above, although this wordlist was published under Black's name, the words were collected by S.A. White (a noted ornithologist, who was accompanying a government expedition to the north-west in the role of scientist) and passed to Black for orthographic transcription into the IPA system. The wordlist is entitled: 'Language of the Everard Range Tribe'. Of the 53 words, a high percentage relate to bird life and insects, as one would expect; other words for items of material culture and fauna are also present.

In his introduction to the wordlist, Black makes a number of comments relating to communication problems, most notably that the people encountered at the Everard Ranges did not know any English, and that the expedition 'blackboys', one from Oodnadatta and the other from the Alberga (to the north-west of Oodnadatta), were 'useless as interpreters', finding only one common word between themselves and the people encountered (1915, p.732). These observations are noteworthy in a number of respects. Firstly, they provide important insights into the language ecologies of the region; one would expect more (pidgin) English to be known by this time, not less, and, moreover, it seems that non-Western Desert speech varieties from areas to the east of the area under study are no longer understood in the area. Taken together, these points suggest that the people at the Everards at the time may have recently arrived from much further west (compare Tindale's much quoted comments on migrations circa 1914 in Tindale 1974, pp. 23, 65, 69). This conclusion, although made with some caution, helps to solve the most puzzling aspect of this wordlist: the appearance of the term 'and'grinij'' (Antikirinya), the 'name of one of the clans of the tribe' (Black 1915, p.733). According to this view the 'and'grinij'' clan or sub-group are westerners, with the term, given the communication problems encountered, likely to have been provided by one of the 'blackboys' from the east.

As noted in section 4.3, this wordlist caused some concern for Tindale, highlighting the problem of attributing vocabularies to languages on the basis of pre-mapped tribal boundaries. Although assigned to 'Jankundjara' in the catalogue (1974, p.212, that is, as 'White 1915'), Tindale later considered this list to relate to Antikirinya, but unfortunately he does not fully explain on what basis this change is made.

**(iii) Brumby (1930)**

This wordlist appears in Tindale's 1957 expedition journal (1957 MS, pp.370-6) in Tindale's hand according to the Adelaide University Phonetic System (AUPS). Although the words were provided by Brumby in 1930, the wordlist was misplaced for some time, as Tindale writes: 'the following notes written at the time I have just located. They are useful records of the JaNkundjara' (1957 MS, p.370). There are a couple of points to make in light of this comment. First, the misplacing of the material may explain why Brumby is not cited as a source in Tindale (1940). Second, despite the fact that Tindale considers the material to relate to Yankunytjatjara, Tindale's notes from the meeting with Brumby are entitled 'Language of natives Everard Range', making no direct association to a speech variety. This suggests that it may have been Tindale who makes the Yankunytjatjara connection rather than Brumby.

The list contains 76 'Everard Range' words with a further 4 added under the heading 'Algebuckena to Warrina' that appear to relate to Arabana. The words in the list are fairly typical of other short vocabularies, including terms for body parts, flora, fauna and geographical terms.

As this wordlist is not explicitly referenced in either the 1940 or the 1974 catalogue, it is difficult to determine what use Tindale made of this material, although from his above comments it is clear that he considered it to be Yankunytjatjara. As well as vocabulary, Brumby also provided Tindale with tribal distribution information concerning the Everard Range people with whom Brumby was familiar. A part of the tribal distribution information provided by Brumby, as noted earlier in this thesis, maintains that 'they [the Everard Range "natives"] do not go far into the desert country S of the Everards except towards the SW where they take in the Birks gate & Blythe Ranges' (Tindale 1957 MS, p.371). This account is obviously inconsistent with Tindale's 1940 delineation of Yankunytjatjara tribal territory. According to Tindale, the Birks gate and Blyth ranges fall within the Pitjantjatjara boundary. Brumby's information, however, suggests a much wider territorial range for Yankunytjatjara-speaking people than the strict limits of Tindale (1940; 1974).

A final question arises in relation to this vocabulary when one considers the later reassigning of the White/Black vocabulary to Antikirinya – does this suggest that Brumby's vocabulary also relates to Antikirinya because it is from people living at or near

the Everard Ranges? Unfortunately Tindale does not address this question and it would indeed be difficult to provide a reliable answer on the basis of the place of recording alone.

**(iv) Love (1938 MS)**

J.R.B. Love was a missionary and linguist with links to the Board for Anthropological Research through his association with Professor Fitzherbert, who supervised his thesis work on the Worora language of the Kimberleys in Western Australia. He visited Ernabella and surrounding areas in 1937 (May to October) for the Presbyterian Church, then in the process of establishing the Ernabella Mission. During this six month period he compiled the material appearing in *Notes on the Grammar and Vocabulary of the Wi:rtjapakandja tribe of the Musgrave Ranges, South Australia* (Love 1938 MS). This is a particularly significant document; of the 31 pages, 8 are devoted to grammatical analysis, and the remainder comprise a vocabulary of approximately 600 words – certainly the first relatively detailed analysis of a Western Desert speech variety in South Australia.

In his diary of the trip, Love makes only a few comments on the collection of words, the most significant of which is the following:

I spent half an hour with the house workers – one lubra<sup>47</sup> and three men, and got some words. [T]hey tell me they are of the Wi:tjo pokandja Tribe, who hold the country at least as far as Operina, and that the Pitjintjara are a long way west (Mann Ranges). (1937 MS, pp.10-11)

He also notes spending half an hour with some men at Ernabella collecting words, and of travelling along the Musgraves on camels with a number of boys ‘pointing out objects to me and naming them’ (1937 MS, p.20). Thus, it is doubtful that Love employed an interpreter in any formal way while pursuing these activities. It is worth noting that Tindale’s personal copy has a number of annotations throughout, including a rough table comparing Love’s spellings with his own. Although both use the same orthographic system (the AUPS) there are some differences, particularly with the writing of vowels, but here is not the place to enter into a discussion of these and other differences.

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<sup>47</sup> This pidgin English term was commonly used to refer to Aboriginal women.

In the catalogue of tribes (1940; 1974) there is a reference to ‘Love 1938 MS’ under ‘Jangkundjara’, and this presumably refers to the document presently under discussion. There is, however, some ambiguity in Tindale’s referencing. The bibliographical entry in Tindale (1940) states ‘Love, J.R.B. 1938 ms’, but in Tindale (1974) the corresponding entry under ‘Love’ is ‘letter to N.B. Tindale’, which does not suggest a substantial linguistic work. Nevertheless, in assigning this vocabulary to ‘Jangkundjara’, Tindale appears to follow his usual practice of using the pre-determined boundaries represented on the map as a guide, although not without some ambiguity<sup>48</sup>.

**(v) Gross (1954 MS)**

This wordlist of approximately 180 words was recorded at Anna Creek station (to the west of Lake Eyre) in 1953. Gordon Gross, an entomologist on a fieldtrip with a party from the South Australian Museum, was forced to stop at Anna Creek for mechanical repairs, and to fill in time approached an Aboriginal camp close to the homestead and began to record this vocabulary. Gross claims that before this time he had no knowledge of the language and used a Latin-based orthography to record the words (Gross gained a background in Romance languages during his schooling and from a period living in Timor, p.c.).

After writing up his field notes, Gross provided Tindale with an edited version entitled: ‘Andegillega – language of most natives on Anna Creek and Lambina’ (Gross 1954 MS)<sup>49</sup>. It turns out that ‘most natives’ was actually ‘less than 10 people’ (Gross p.c.). In his original field notes, Gross records the names of his informants (Gross 1953 MS), but did not provide these details to Tindale. Interestingly, Gross recalls that Tindale never asked him for the identities of his informants (Gross, p.c.). It appears that Gross’s informants may have originally been from the Lambina area (north-west of Oodnadatta), as suggested by the title of the vocabulary, and it may have been upon this basis, as well as the ‘Andegillega’ term, that convinced Tindale to assign this to ‘Antakirinja’ in the 1974 catalogue.

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<sup>48</sup> Section 2.6.2 above discussed the ambiguity of Tindale’s treatment of the term ‘Wirtjapakantja’.

<sup>49</sup> There is little doubt that ‘Andegillega’ is a variation of ‘Antikirinya’, given Gross’s occasional hearing of [l] for [r] and a problem distinguishing other retroflex sounds, as can be seen in the vocabulary proper.

## (vi) Summary

From the brief summaries of the vocabularies offered above, it is clearly apparent that there is much variation in the basic conditions surrounding their collection. Basedow (1908) appears to use his interpreter as an informant, but otherwise interpreters are absent from the collection process. Apart from this, the vocabularies vary in numerous other ways, such as the extent to which they have ‘proper’ names or simply geographical identification, whether they provide details of informants, geographical location of recording, or tribal distribution details, and of course their length. Against this variation it may well be argued that a degree of commonality may be found in the general contextual background of scientific research informing their collection (Love, the missionary, being a possible exception). In general though, as with the Elder expedition vocabularies discussed earlier, concrete contextual details are sparse.

Tindale’s treatment of the vocabularies examined is not without its problems. Basedow (1908), for instance, appears to have been mis-assigned by Tindale as a result of a spurious etymology. This may have arisen because Basedow does not provide a particular place of recording. Otherwise Tindale tends to use the map to assign his vocabularies to their place in the catalogue of tribes – as seen with Black (1915), Brumby (1930 MS) and Love (1938 MS), although there is a degree of ambiguity surrounding each of these assignments. Gross (1954 MS) is a relatively late vocabulary, and is in fact the only one discussed so far that was collected post-1940. It is included for discussion mainly for the support it offers the argument offered in a later chapter that Tindale was not particularly interested in the Antikirinya (as a group or in their language).

When the above is taken into consideration, along with the treatment of the Elder expedition vocabularies, and the three sources listed under ‘Antakirinja’ (Tindale 1940) that are non-Western Desert speech varieties (see chapter 6), serious doubt is cast upon the objectivity of Tindale’s metalinguistic practices.

## 4.5 Conclusions

The majority of the vocabularies considered in this chapter arose in the context of scientific enquiry. Indeed, the first vocabularies of Western Desert speech varieties recorded in the north-west were collected by the officers of the Elder scientific exploring expedition. My examination of the collection and construction of these vocabularies reveals a number of assumptions at work behind such practices, as well as some of the difficulties faced. On the basis of the analysis presented above it is possible to draw the general and basic conclusion that even if orthographic guidelines and a list of words to collect are provided to people in the field, the products of their activities will be of variable quality and reliability, and that this may vary from case to case owing to such basic factors as the level of training or experience and the availability of interpreters and informants. Such insights apply *mutatis mutandis* to other vocabularies in the historical record, as we have seen in our discussion of the conditions and circumstances of collection of a selection of Western Desert vocabularies. This aspect of the analysis highlights the importance of considering the contextual circumstances within which vocabularies were recorded and suggests that they should be approached with due care and caution.

A more incisive conclusion, however, follows from the limitations built into many of these vocabularies by the cultural assumptions and practices of the recorders. Arguably, the instructions given to the officers of the Elder expedition, for example, led to restrictive recording practices – other aspects of language, such as synonyms for example, were ignored in favour of single terms (although Helms does occasionally record synonyms in his discursive lists) and a deeper investigation of speech varieties encountered. Although we do know something of the informants of the Elder expedition vocabularies, we do not know for certain what speech variety (or varieties) they represent. They do reveal that a small number of people speaking a Western Desert speech variety (or varieties) were present at the Everard Ranges and other locations to the west in 1891, but little else. Certainly the construction ‘language of tribe of area X’ is based upon an unsubstantiated assumption and in other respects remains ambiguous. This did not stop Tindale, however, from assigning these and other vocabularies to various Western Desert ‘languages’. It may well be argued that my analysis of the Elder expedition materials reveals more about the ethnocentric preoccupations of the recorders (and the planners of the expedition) than *anangu* speech practices and demographic patterns. In this way, as cultural artefacts of Western literate (colonialist and scientific) culture, the wordlists, like other aspects of the

historical linguistic record discussed in earlier chapters, are less insightful of *anangu* speech practices than of the culture that produced them.

One of the most important tasks of this discussion has been to trace the use by Tindale of the vocabularies discussed above. In drawing out the relationship between the catalogue and map I have pointed out that these scientific tools operate on at least two levels. The first of these is reductive, whereby diverse linguistic practices are reduced to tribal categories, and the second is productive, whereby languages are brought into being. The latter occurs not only through Tindale's constructions, but also with their use as a basis or template for the scientific projects of other researchers. As has been seen, Tindale's loop, as I have called it, contributes to the production of second order constructions that may feed back and support the representations of tribes and boundaries at the core of Tindale's work. In terms of the reductive process, we have seen that there is little evidence to suggest that it proceeded on linguistic grounds, and this represents a finding of some importance. Among other things, it suggests that for the north-west area second order constructions such as Tindale's (and those that rely upon his work) may prove misleading if used as linguistic evidence to support a contemporary proposition about tribal and linguistic arrangements in the past (that may arise in legal contexts, for example).

A further implication of Tindale's treatment of the vocabularies listed in the catalogue of tribes for the north-west area is that further doubt is cast upon the neatness and validity of his tribal categories. These categories will come under further scrutiny in the following chapter when we consider Tindale's own vocabulary collecting activities in the north-west.

## 5 Words and Blood

Other sciences are provided with objects given in advance, which are then examined from different points of view. Nothing like that is the case in linguistics .... The object is not given in advance of the viewpoint: far from it. Rather, one might say that it is the viewpoint adopted which creates the object.

Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (1994 [1916])

### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter turns to Tindale's own vocabulary collecting activities (rather than his use of vocabularies collected by others), and for this reason my attention falls more squarely upon the 1930s, the period of his major work on Pitjantjatjara and related speech varieties. In many ways, Tindale's *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara, the Language of the Natives of the Great Western Desert (with some words of the Pintubi, Ngalia, Kukatja, Na:dadjara, Wirongu, NaNatadjara, Aranda, Janjundjadjara [sic] & Wordaka languages)* (1937 MS) represents the high point in his linguistic endeavours of the 1930s. Described by one observer as 'the first detailed vocabulary of the Pitjantjatjara language' (Jones 1995, p.165), it holds a significant place in the historical linguistic record of the north-west.

On coming to consider the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* more closely, however, one is soon faced with a number of interpretational problems. To pick an obvious example, there are many ambiguous references in the vocabulary to dialects described by cardinal direction terms, such as N dialect, NE dialect, E dialect, W dialect and SW (although this term is not accompanied by the word 'dialect' or the abbreviation 'dial.'). In many instances, entries marked in this way are attributed to the 'Pitjandjara' language. While it is clear that Tindale is applying European metalinguistic concepts to indigenous linguistic phenomena<sup>1</sup>, one is not helped in one's interpretive efforts by the fact that Tindale neglects

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<sup>1</sup> Western metalinguistic terminology such as 'language' and 'dialect' are historically associated with the rise of the nation-state (Haugen 1997) and are socially rather than objectively defined. Certainly, comparable social conditions for distinguishing between languages and dialects did not exist in traditional Aboriginal societies. This is not to deny, however, that Western Desert speech varieties do not have their own metalinguistic terminology; as indicated in chapter 2, these practices exist but are incommensurable with European metalinguistic concepts. Pitjantjatjara, it should be remembered, is traditionally a way of speaking, an index of identification with country and other cultural links, rather than a discrete language. It is worth bearing in mind the work of Wurm and Laycock (1961) in this regard, who, reporting on the situation in New Guinea, point to the difficulty of locating a clear set of criteria for determining what constitutes a language or

to spell out the criteria upon which such dialectal distinctions are made. Another odd feature of the vocabulary is the nearly total absence of ‘Jankundjadjara’ entries (less than 1% of the total headwords, see figure 11 below, p.181), a curious fact given the amount of research conducted by Tindale with Yankunytjatjara speakers.

Now, the dialect ambiguity in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* is something that needs to be dispelled before I can address the question of how this vocabulary relates to Tindale’s catalogue and map representations of the north-west. This of course serves to advance my deeper probing of how Tindale’s Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya representations were constructed. The latter ambiguity (that is, the lack of Yankunytjatjara entries) suggests that Tindale may not have been simply recording vocabulary for tribal identification purposes. It was suggested in the previous chapter that in colonial contexts languages are made rather than simply discovered, and with the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* one may well ask whether Tindale was engaged in language making (Harris 1980) and if so for what purposes. Thus a primary aim of this chapter is to examine the particular contexts within which this work was produced and to provide a fuller account of Tindale’s linguistics than I have been able to offer so far in this thesis.

In the previous chapter a number of the points were made with regard to the general intellectual background against which much of the linguistic work in the north-west took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and these are applicable to the analysis presented in this chapter. But when one approaches the principal contexts in which Tindale worked, which in the main were provided by the Board for Anthropological Research (BAR), a more fine-grained analysis is required. As will be shown in section 5.1, the BAR’s quest for ‘pure blood’ (and to a certain extent, ‘pure’ language) determined central aspects of its linguistic work – notably, what was collected, who was examined (or questioned), and where research was conducted. So, in an important way, the quest for purity has been a powerful influence in determining the shape of the historical records and must be given the serious attention it deserves.

The need for this enquiry is illustrated by the fact that, in the past, linguists have often been dismissive of Tindale’s linguistic endeavours. This is perhaps nowhere more

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a dialect (finding that the number of languages and dialects varies according to the criteria used in defining them).

conspicuous than in the pre-eminent work on Australian linguistics, Dixon's *The Languages of Australia*, in which we are informed that in the years between 1910 and the 1960s 'virtually no linguistic work [was] undertaken' in Australia (1980, p.16). At a single stroke, Dixon's appraisal neglects not only Tindale's linguistic work, but also the significant contributions of, for instance, Love, Trudinger, the Berndts and Douglas on Western Desert speech varieties; Chewings and T.G.H Strehlow on Arrernte; and the linguistic work of the BAR in general<sup>2</sup>. All of the above had links to the BAR, either directly or through association with Professor Fitzherbert at the University of Adelaide. During the course of this chapter I will examine some of these relationships as well as some of the work produced<sup>3</sup>. At the very least, Tindale and the others just mentioned contributed to the production of a body of texts of great interest to those currently engaged in cultural heritage activities centring on language, as well as to those engaged in legal contexts such as Native title claims. With this in mind, it is clear that Dixon's analysis (which is partly a function of what Dixon, as a formalist, considers linguistics to be) neglects a significant chapter in the history of Australian linguistics. The following discussion makes some contribution towards filling this gap.

Part of the reason for the neglect of Tindale's linguistics no doubt lies with an assumption held by many anthropologists and linguists that Tindale recorded vocabularies first and foremost for the purposes of tribal identification. Indeed, from the earliest days of his ethnological fieldwork, Tindale did actively engage in the collection of vocabularies. A significant result of his fieldwork in the Northern Territory in the early 1920s, for example, was 'a mass of vocabularies, comprising some 6 000 words in 9 languages' (Tindale 1926 MS). This information appears in a letter to Wilhelm Schmidt, from whom Tindale seeks advice in publishing these results of his linguistic labours. Of course, Schmidt was an obvious person to approach, given his involvement with the journal *Anthropos*<sup>4</sup>, and his

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<sup>2</sup> Dixon does acknowledge some of the work of Trudinger, Strehlow and Love (on Worora, but not for his work in the north-west of South Australia), but this is buried in an endnote (1980, p.477).

<sup>3</sup> Another person with links to Fitzherbert is Daisy Bates, and while Dixon mentions her work on Western Australian languages (1980, p.477), she also produced vocabularies and other linguistic material for South Australian speech varieties during her time at Ooldea.

<sup>4</sup> The full title of this journal includes the words: 'International Review of Ethnology and Linguistics'. This journal, published in Austria, was concerned, among other things, with the documentation of non-European languages through correspondents working in a range of colonial and missionary contexts. Importantly, *Anthropos* provided an advisory function by examining materials produced by missionaries prior to publication (see editorial comments by Schmidt in Meier 1906, pp.210-3).

well-known work in cataloguing Australian languages (Schmidt 1919). Of particular interest is Tindale's additional comment: 'the words are the equivalents in each language so that comparisons could be made between them' (Tindale 1926 MS). It is important to point out at this early stage of the discussion that there is little evidence to suggest that Tindale actually engaged in any formal comparative philological work himself, with either the collection of vocabularies mentioned in this letter or those appearing in his major collection: 'Australian Vocabularies Gathered by Norman B. Tindale 1938-1963' (Tindale 1938-63 MS, see below)<sup>5</sup>.

The most straightforward explanation for this is that while Tindale received some training from a philologist (Fitzherbert was Tindale's teacher in linguistics after 1928, see below), this training did not extend so far as to allow him to pursue comparative philological activities<sup>6</sup>. I have already noted the orthographic work Tindale pursued under Fitzherbert's guidance, and predominantly as a field worker it seems that accurate and ordered collection of data, rather than analysis, was Tindale's lot. According to Philip Jones at the South Australian Museum, Tindale was often heard to use the phrase 'making a useful record' (1995, p.163) when reflecting on the wide-ranging body of ethnological and linguistic work he produced over the years. So while it is easy to point to the limits of Tindale's linguistic activities with respect to comparative philological endeavours, there is not a great deal to be gained by pursuing it. Rather, it is to the question of how far the

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<sup>5</sup> A substantially reduced selection of Tindale's Northern Territory data eventually appeared in his paper 'Natives of Groote Eylandt and of the West Coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, Part III – Languages of Eastern Arnhem Land' (1928b).

<sup>6</sup> A number of valuable insights into the 'pre-Fitzherbert' period of Tindale's linguistic development are provided by Karen Walter (1988 MS). Among Tindale's most significant early anthropological influences Walter cites the fourth edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (Freire-Marreco and Myres 1912) and Malinowski's *Natives of Mailu* (reprinted in Young 1988); importantly, both volumes contain passages relating to linguistic methods in the field. *Notes and Queries* provides the researcher with a wealth of advice on the types of vocabulary a researcher in the field should attempt to record, all the while making sure of efforts to learn the language in question. The guide also stresses, among other things, the importance of recording texts to enable later linguistic analysis. For these purposes, a copy of the Royal Geographical Society orthographic system is provided. As my discussion moves through section 5.2 below, anyone familiar with this edition of *Notes and Queries* could not fail to recognise its influence on Tindale's fieldwork. Malinowski's own fieldwork was also heavily influenced by *Notes and Queries* (see Young 1988, p.25). Of interest to my discussion are a number of preliminary comments made by Malinowski about language in which he stresses the value of learning and using an indigenous language, takes a dim view of pidgin English, and also appears to operate with notions of linguistic purity, a topic discussed below (in Young 1988, pp.108-11). Also notable is the fact that Malinowski (like Tindale) does not draw a phonetic/phonemic distinction. Apart from these textual influences, Walter provides the further insight that Tindale also received training in phonetic transcription from Edward Stirling and J.M. Black (Walter 1988 MS, p.52).

making of a useful record extends to Tindale's linguistic activities that one must pay attention.

In the following section I consider these influences and contexts before turning to a detailed examination of Tindale's Pitjantjatjara work in section 5.2.

## **5.1 Tindale's linguistics: influences and contexts**

The primary aim of this section is to fill in some of the background detail required before it is possible to appraise Tindale's Pitjantjatjara vocabularies in sufficient depth. Without an appreciation of the intellectual concerns circulating in Adelaide's scientific community at the time, any appraisal of Tindale's linguistics would run the real risk of leading to false or shallow conclusions. While it is not suggested that all of the ideas and practices outlined below were at the forefront of Tindale's intentions (this would be too strong a claim), they were nevertheless sufficiently prominent in the circles within which he moved to be worthy of consideration. With this caveat in mind, the following discussion proceeds in two parts: it begins with a discussion of the BAR and the discourse of purity and corruption (5.1.1), before moving on to the Adelaide 'linguistic circle' and notions of purity and order (5.2.2). By treating these issues separately, however, it is not suggested that these areas of concern stood independently from one another – they were in fact interrelated.

### **5.1.1 The BAR, purity and corruption**

For many of the research scientists of the 1920s and 1930s, and indeed for much of society at large, Aborigines were seen as belonging to either one of two types – pure (living in their 'natural' state) or corrupted (through contact with White society)<sup>7</sup>. So when we come to consider the activities of the BAR, which was particularly concerned with blood-group

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<sup>7</sup> The genesis of these notions in Australia can of course be traced back to the nineteenth century (see McGregor 1997).

analysis and the question of Aboriginal ecological adaption<sup>8</sup>, it is not surprising that every effort was made to locate and study so-called ‘full bloods’ or ‘uncontaminated natives’. Indeed, the early results of blood-group analysis were seen to provide strong support for the notion of a pure Australian race, and it was not until the Harvard-Adelaide Universities (H-A) expedition commenced in 1938 that any serious attention was paid to the study of ‘hybrids’ or ‘half-castes’. For our purposes, it is important to point out that, while the activities of the BAR have attracted some scholarly attention in recent years, this has concentrated mainly on its (physical) anthropological activities and little attention has been given to either its linguistic activities or to the effects of the former on the latter. Clearly, the notion of ‘pure blood’ played a major role in determining the direction of linguistic research, and I will return to this point below.

It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of the discourse of purity and corruption and the associated notion of racial decline through contact on the thinking of the day. Their effects can be seen perhaps most palpably in the setting up of the North West Aboriginal Reserve in South Australia in 1921 (Mattingley and Hampton 1998, p.80), but they also appear in other aspects of Aboriginal administration. A salient example is provided by Basedow’s work on behalf of the South Australian and Commonwealth Governments in 1919-20. In response to the devastating influenza epidemic, he undertook a series of medical relief expeditions surveying the physical condition of Aborigines on the fringes of White settlement in South Australia and the lower Northern Territory (he also used the opportunity to make some ethnological observations, essentially on the subject of tribal distribution). Basedow’s observations are couched in terms fairly typical of the doomed race theory (McGregor 1997): he writes of ‘uncontaminated people’ at Ooldea (in the sense of cultural contact rather than epidemically, Basedow 1920 MS, p.40), the ‘fast-sinking aboriginal of Australia’ (Basedow 1921a MS, p.34) and saving ‘these relics of primitive mankind’ (Basedow 1921b MS, p.36). This discourse was still operating at the time BAR members J.B. Cleland and Tindale produced their entry for a volume celebrating 100 years of settlement in the state, in which one finds references to racial purity and racial decline through contact (Cleland and Tindale 1936)<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> More detailed discussions of these foci are found in Jones (1987, pp.77-9) and Anderson (2002, pp.199-204).

<sup>9</sup> The article in question is entitled: ‘The Natives of South Australia’. The important role of Cleland in influencing the direction of BAR research activities is discussed by Jones (1987).

An inspection of Tindale's manuscript materials provides much support for the view that the concept of racial purity played a prominent role in his thinking during the 1920s and 1930s. These include specific references to 'uncontaminated natives' (for example, 1922-9 MS, p. 344) as well as numerous uses of 'half-caste' and related terminology. An illuminating example appears in a report of an encounter with a group from the North West Reserve in 1933. Tindale writes:

We have been very pleased with the help given us by the present group of natives whose home is the Western Mann Range & Tompkinsons & the sandhills to north & south. The naturalness of the womenfolk, their absence of mock modesty & their freedom of behaviour and of speech is very different from that of the natives near Ernabella. The group has had very little contact with Europeans; there are no halfcastes nor have there ever been any, so far as I can learn. (Tindale 1933b MS, pp.467-9)

Clearly these people fit readily into the 'uncontaminated' category, and for Tindale and others of the BAR at this point in time they would have been suitable subjects for study.

The BAR's major interest in researching the question of their subjects' physical adaption to their particular environments also appears to flow through to Tindale's manuscript materials. This is most notable in his vocabularies (see below) and, of course, in his tribal distribution research (as discussed in chapter 2). Apart from this, it is also possible to find an occasional comment in his field journals that appears to reflect the wider 'genetic versus adaption' debate then current in anthropology; consider, for instance, Tindale's musing when a number of 'half-caste' and 'quarter-caste' Afghan children come to his attention that they are 'probably a very suitable strain for our desert conditions' (1932a MS, p.20)<sup>10</sup>.

The question of how these concerns for purity and adaption may have influenced the course of linguistic research in Australia is yet another neglected aspect of the history of linguistics in Australia. As a general observation, it should be noted that in almost all the BAR research conducted during the 1930s, the taking of blood samples and physical measurements went hand in hand with the collection of vocabularies and other linguistic

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<sup>10</sup> This incident occurs at Marree, a town well-known for its mixed population, on Tindale's northward journey from Adelaide to Mt Liebig. While in Tindale's journal this observation appears to be a casual one, this does not diminish its exemplary force.

material, such as oral texts and paper drawings (upon which placenames were often recorded). As noted above, the desire for ‘uncontaminated full-bloods’ directed the course of research to a large extent, influencing choices of location and subjects for study. In this way, certain groups were privileged over others and are thus better represented from a linguistic point of view in the historical record<sup>11</sup>.

In order to pursue these influences beyond this point it is necessary to refocus on the crucial role of the tribal unit as a theoretical tool underpinning much of the BAR’s research. We know from comments made by Tindale that vocabularies were collected for the purpose of tribal identification (1963a, p.358) or validation (1974, p.45)<sup>12</sup>. The BAR’s theoretical preoccupation with environmental adaption clearly required some parameters to be meaningful – most obviously, some way of delimiting the distribution of populations in space. This role was fulfilled by the tribe concept and the notion of a bounded tribal territory<sup>13</sup>. On considering the vocabularies collected by Tindale in the north-west and contiguous areas, the concern for adaption is revealed in a number of ways, such as a relatively high proportion of recordings of indigenous names for plants and other food sources, and a relatively high proportion of placenames, for example. In the former case, the published results of the Warburton Range expedition of 1935 reveal that ‘the ethnologist [Tindale] recorded 595 words of a vocabulary of Ngada (Na:da), and during a survey of the food resources of the people obtained the native names of some 80 species of

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<sup>11</sup> The extent to which this relates to the Pitjantjatjara- Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya issue will become clear in the following chapter. At this point it is sufficient to note that a lack of historical evidence (or gaps in the historical record) has been used against claimants in Native title contexts – the Yorta Yorta Native title case provides a strong example of this. Heather Bowe points out that the expert linguist retained by the NSW Government, Bruce Sommer, in his initial report to the court ‘focussed on the incompleteness of the language record as evidence of language death or morbidity’ (2002, p.105).

<sup>12</sup> The most significant collection of vocabularies for this purpose is the manuscript entitled ‘Australian Vocabularies Gathered by Norman B. Tindale 1938-1963’ (Tindale 1938-63 MS). The first section (about half of this volume) contains parallel vocabularies collected during the H-A expedition of 1938-9, which number 110. Tindale added a further 40 or so vocabularies to this base over the following years, but the majority of these are located elsewhere in his manuscript collection (nos 112-142, for example, are in Tindale 1953b MS). Among the remaining sections of Tindale (1938-63 MS) are: a Ngalia vocabulary recorded in 1951; vocabularies from Haasts Bluff, 1956; a wordlist from the journal *Science of Man* for a Queensland language; vocabularies from Queensland, 1960 and 1963; and vocabularies collected during the BAR Diamantina expedition in 1934. Of particular interest is an ‘Antakarinja’ vocabulary, recorded at Pt Augusta in 1938 during the H-A expedition, and listed in the parallel vocabularies in the first section of the volume (see chapter 6).

<sup>13</sup> As seen in section 2.6 above in relation to Tindale’s tribal mapping project, Tindale makes explicit comments on the importance of establishing *exact* tribal boundaries for the interpretation of data (both physical anthropological and ethnological) collected in the field.

plants' (Tindale 1935-6, p.484)<sup>14</sup>. These words appear as ' Na:dadjara' in Tindale's *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* (1937 MS). As for placenames, we need only refer to the discussion in section 2.5 above to appreciate why this lexical category was considered to be of such importance; in short, Tindale hoped that a sufficiently detailed study of placenames, along with other environmental constraints, would help to determine (and explain) the exact location of tribal boundaries, and thus tribal populations.

### 5.1.2 The Adelaide circle, purity and order

This section considers the activities of a number of scholars and interested amateurs who were actively engaged in linguistic work on Aboriginal languages in the 1930s, and who had links either directly or indirectly to the University of Adelaide. For the sake of convenience, this group is referred to as the 'Adelaide circle' (although in using this term it is not suggested that this group was formalised to the extent that those involved referred to themselves by this or any similar term).

The principal figure in the Adelaide circle was, without doubt, J.A. Fitzherbert, a scholar with a background in classical languages. Fitzherbert arrived at Adelaide in 1928 to take up an appointment to the chair of Classics and Comparative Philology at the university, having completed his MA at Cambridge, and having spent time lecturing in Greek at Edinburgh University (*Advertiser* 16 April 1970, p.10). He soon became actively involved with the BAR, but his contribution and influence was much wider than this, as will be established below. We are fortunate in having available some documentary material that affords a valuable insight into some of the linguistic attitudes and activities of the Adelaide circle. It is to these attitudes and activities that I now turn.

I shall begin with Fitzherbert and his students, Love and Strehlow, both of whom were working in MA programmes in the early 1930s (on, respectively, the Worora and Arrernte languages). From two sources, a letter from Fitzherbert to Love suggesting a course of linguistic research, and a summary of letters from Strehlow to Fitzherbert, reporting on work done and proposing future work, a picture of the type of linguistics

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<sup>14</sup> A similar proportion of plant names was recorded by Tindale at Ooldea in the previous year (see Tindale 1934a MS, pp.248-69). Tindale later published an article on plants collected in the Mann and Musgrave

practised under Fitzherbert's guidance emerges. In the letter to Love, Fitzherbert acknowledges Love's application for his MA on the Worora language and compliments him on preliminary work already conducted. Fitzherbert writes: 'it is very satisfactory that you have made so much progress in *reducing the language to order*' (Fitzherbert n.d. MS, emphasis added). Given Fitzherbert's formalist background, it is not surprising that this effectively meant reducing indigenous speech practices to writing under the guidance of the categories of European and classical languages. By this time, however, some writers had found the ethnocentric aspect of such an approach to be problematic. As Boas, for example, points out: 'grammarians who have studied the languages of Europe and western Asia have developed a system of [grammatical] categories which we are inclined to look for in every language' (1968 [1911], p.186)<sup>15</sup>. Arguably, in work on South Australian languages, we can trace the influence of classical models right back to the grammars of Teichelmann and Schürmann (1840) and Taplin (1878). But apart from the writing of grammars, the use of imposed categories could present problems for other aspects of linguistic research, most significantly the category of proper name (or proper noun) that caused problems for Tindale in his tribal distribution work (as discussed in chapters 2 and 3 above).

So how was Love to proceed in pursuing his task of reducing the Worora language to order? Fitzherbert stresses the importance of a proper study of phonetics, pointing out the problems in the past caused by the lack of a consistent phonetic system, and also points out the need to 'deduce laws' for conjugating verbs (Latin examples are used to illustrate this point). But most revealing is the following passage:

I understand that you are collecting a vocabulary of the language: naturally it is desirable to make this as complete as possible. And it would be very valuable if you could collect also words of neighbouring languages (indicating to which language each word belongs). If you can systematize the grammatical structure and syntax of the sentence, that will be most valuable. It is desirable to have a large collection of texts in the language – sentences, and, if possible, complete stories, and poems or songs. (Fitzherbert n.d. MS)

Here we find evidence of Fitzherbert's interest in comparative philology, displayed in part by his request for the collection of 'words of neighbouring languages', but also more

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Ranges in 1933 (Tindale 1941).

<sup>15</sup> A similar point is made in *Notes and Queries* (Freire-Marreco and Myres 1912, p.186).

generally by the focus on text-based analysis, a staple of philological (and orthodox grammatical) work. The collection of vocabularies and texts was, of course, a recommended ethnological practice and a basic component of the BAR's linguistic activities. While it is likely that the collection of vocabularies and texts was encouraged by Fitzherbert, there is little evidence to suggest that other BAR members (apart from Strehlow) attempted fuller grammatical descriptions as suggested in the above quoted passage<sup>16</sup>.

I come now to the notion of a pure dialect or language, which, although implicit in the work of Love (from what we can tell by Fitzherbert's advice at least), is more explicit in Strehlow's work on Arrernte and neighbouring speech varieties. While Fitzherbert's summaries of Strehlow's work on Arrernte in 1932 also reveal a particular interest in phonetics, Strehlow's work at the time focuses on the language/dialect issue, illustrated by his concern with measuring the proportion of shared Western Desert and Arrernte vocabulary, for instance<sup>17</sup>. It seems that the notion of a pure dialect was an influence on Strehlow's research, as reflected in the following note made by Fitzherbert:

It was his intention ... to spend the summer months near Hermannsburg and Alice Springs; there are a number of old natives near there who have come from distant parts of the Aranda territory and still keep their *original dialect pure*. (Fitzherbert c1932 MS, emphasis added)<sup>18</sup>

When it is considered that Strehlow wrote of his intentions after working for the BAR during the Mt Liebig expedition of 1932, it is tempting to read this comment through the discourse of purity and corruption described above. Indeed, in other contexts Strehlow does appear to think in a linguistic version of this discourse (compare his comments on

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<sup>16</sup> At Ooldea, the Berndts (1942-5, Vol.15, No.1, pp.49-80) pursued a similar strategy. This research, however, was not part of a BAR expedition, and the degree to which earlier BAR associations may have been influential on this work is a question that has not been pursued.

<sup>17</sup> On this issue Fitzherbert writes: 'he [ Strehlow] mentioned the close relation between many Aranda and Kukatja names for native plants and animals: of 300 names of animals 56% were common to both languages; of 220 names of plants over 67% were common' (Fitzherbert c1932 MS).

<sup>18</sup> Although the evidence presented in this passage is slightly ambiguous to the extent that it rests upon a point of interpretation – are these Strehlow's quoted words or Fitzherbert's? – it seems more likely from the context and from other aspects of Strehlow's work reported in the note that the interpretations presented here are reasonably attributed to Strehlow. Further research at the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs could settle this matter, but as it is not a crucial part of the overall argument, this research has not yet been pursued.

pidgin English in chapter 3)<sup>19</sup>. Thus, it seems that Strehlow, like the BAR scientists, is eager to work with ‘uncorrupted’ groups. Of course, the notion of a pure dialect or language has a long history in the Western linguistic and grammatical tradition. It is based upon what Roy Harris calls the ‘classical fallacy’, a view in which classical languages as ‘models of perfection’ are privileged over corrupt and impoverished vernaculars such as French and Italian (1980, pp.128-9). Later, of course, the vernaculars themselves came to be seen as pure (national) languages<sup>20</sup>. On the basis of this evidence at least, the notion of a pure dialect is based upon a myth. As pointed out earlier in this thesis, this myth rests upon the notion that within a particular region there exists linguistic homogeneity, ‘a uniform system to which all speakers within that particular geographical circumscription have equal access’ (Harris 1998, p.92). Apart from the theoretical criticisms offered by Harris (which deserve more attention than I am able to offer here), research in the Western Desert has shown that no such state of affairs can be found<sup>21</sup>.

The notion of racial purity appears in the work of others associated with the Adelaide circle. While working on his grammar of Pitjantjatjara at the recently established mission at Ernabella, Trudinger reports his progress to Charles Duguid in the following terms:

As time goes on I hope to use these children and older natives more for the language, and the half-castes less. I cannot deny, however, the enormous help I’ve had from two half-castes, Tommy Dodd and Milly. At the present time I’m working on a small elementary grammar, as well as the vocabulary which has reached about 1,000 words and phrases now. The grammar is more for my own use and reference just now as a lot of it is still in the melting pot and some of it just theories still waiting for really adequate proof. (Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church of Australia 1940, pp.14-5)

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<sup>19</sup> There are other comments in Strehlow’s work on Arrernte (possibly from observations made during the period in question) on the notion of linguistic purity. In support of his argument against the notion of a common Aranda language as an important cultural bond, he notes: ‘the Northerner ... sneers at the dialect of the Western man; he regards it as an inferior mongrel language, which has been degraded by admixture with Loritja words. Indeed, he looks upon the Westerner himself as a “half-breed Loritja”; and Loritja is to him a term suggestive of everything that is barbarian, crude, savage, and, generally speaking, non-Aranda’ (1947, pp.51-2). Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the extent to which Strehlow is reporting indigenous views in this passage or imposing his own.

<sup>20</sup> On the notion of the purity of the French language, for example, see Seuren (1998, p.64).

<sup>21</sup> I am referring here specifically to the work of Miller (1971) and Hansen (1984) discussed in chapter 2. It might be objected that these researchers worked in post-contact contexts, but even if this is conceded, the force of the argument along theoretical lines is not significantly diminished.

No doubt Duguid, a powerful advocate for Aboriginal rights at the time and a driving force behind the setting up of the mission, was impressed with Trudinger's work (a codified language was required for Bible translation and pedagogic purposes). But in a slightly different sense, Trudinger's quest for linguistic purity may have led him to the rather extreme measures of discouraging the presence of English-speaking *anangu* at the mission<sup>22</sup>.

When tracing Tindale's relationship with Fitzherbert, as well as to the Adelaide circle in general, the best place to start is with Tindale's acknowledgement to Fitzherbert as his teacher in linguistics (1974, p.ix). From the early 1930s, Tindale worked on a number of projects under Fitzherbert's guidance (with the added collaboration of Charles Chewings). These include the development of the Adelaide University Phonetic System (Tindale 1935a) and the compilation of an Arrernte vocabulary<sup>23</sup>. Tindale also enjoyed some correspondence with Trudinger, assisting the latter by providing cataloguing cards for vocabulary collecting purposes, and discussing matters relating to phonetics<sup>24</sup>. Tindale's correspondence with Love was mentioned briefly in the previous chapter.

Despite the range of Tindale's linguistic activities, however, it seems that he was not considered by the BAR to be a linguist as such. When the BAR put forward a proposal for a handbook entitled 'Handbook on Aborigines of Southern and Central Australia' (University of Adelaide Archives, BAR minutes, 30 January 1941), Tindale was pencilled in to contribute to chapters on a range of matters, including: 'origin of Australians (pre-history)'; 'environment'; 'tribal distribution, population and government (social organisation)'; 'material culture'; 'life history'; and a final chapter entitled 'culture, contact, and decay'. With many of these chapters Tindale was to collaborate with others,

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<sup>22</sup> According to Mounted Constable Hanney, stationed at Oodnadatta, 'any native who can speak English reasonably well is not wanted there ...' (Hanney 1951).

<sup>23</sup> In a letter addressed to both Fitzherbert and Tindale, Chewings heralds the importance of this work as being 'the one and only fairly complete vocabulary in existence of the tongue of any native tribe, either in or out of Australia, that is still in the Stone-age' (Chewings 1932 MS). Apart from his contributions to this work, Chewings undertook the monumental task of translating Carl Stehlow's *Die Aranda-und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral Australien* (1907-20) to English (C. Stehlow n.d. MS). Although Tindale offered some assistance in attempts to get this work published, it remains in manuscript form in the Barr Smith Library.

<sup>24</sup> There are two letters in Tindale (1957 MS, pp.308-11) one from Trudinger (24 October 1940), and a response by Tindale (5 November 1940). Interestingly, in the former letter Trudinger reveals that he is corresponding with and receiving advice from T.G.H. Stehlow.

but in some cases he was to be the sole author. Notably, the chapter on language was to be contributed by Fitzherbert (University of Adelaide Archives, BAR minutes, 30 January 1941). In earlier meetings, however, when this work was first proposed, Strehlow and Love were to collaborate with Fitzherbert in providing linguistic contributions (see University of Adelaide Archives, BAR minutes, 28 November 1940).

With all of this contextual background information in mind, we can now turn to Tindale's work on 'the Pitjantjatjara language'. It may be helpful to reiterate the main questions: was Tindale looking for a pure Pitjantjatjara language for tribal identification purposes, or was he involved in language making for some other purpose(s); and how do his vocabulary collecting activities relate to his tribal representations of the north-west?

## 5.2 Tindale's *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*

When we consider Tindale's work as a whole it is clear that Pitjantjatjara held a special interest for him, as indicated by the many published articles and manuscripts produced during a period of over 40 years (beginning in the early 1930s) devoted to cultural aspects of the 'Pitjandjara tribe'. Some indication of what this 'special interest' constitutes is provided by Tindale's comments to Strehlow in 1933 (as quoted in section 3.3.1 above), expressing his desire to come into contact with the *real* (that is, 'uncontaminated') Western Desert people. The relative 'purity' of the Western Desert people, as perceived by Tindale and others of the BAR, was an obvious drawcard. In a letter to F.P. Keppel of the Carnegie Corporation in the United States, to whom Tindale appealed for funds for proposed research in 1936, one finds this spelled out. Tindale writes of the 'nomadic Australian aborigines':

These people are considered to be the most primitive beings living on the earth to-day, and in only one area, the Western Desert, do they still maintain, unaltered, their Old Stone Age type of culture. (Tindale 1936b MS)

Elsewhere in this letter Tindale proposes a thorough research programme to be conducted over a 10 year period, during which time anthropometric, ethnological and linguistic work would proceed *before it was too late*. In light of this, it is hardly surprising that Tindale devoted so much of his time and effort to producing the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*. On the

one hand the vocabulary is a *product* of research, an end in itself (or a useful record for others), but on the other it is also an important tool *for* research. So, if the major focus of Tindale's research at the time was intended to be the Western Desert, as this evidence indicates, then a detailed vocabulary of Western Desert speech varieties would be of invaluable assistance not only for the collection of data but also for their subsequent analysis (for example, the translation of oral texts). This is particularly so if the problems Tindale encountered with his interpreters in 1933 are taken into account (see chapter 3). It is perhaps in connection to this that Tindale began a grammatical analysis of Pitjantjatjara in 1934. This was certainly an ambitious venture for one with limited linguistic training, and while the results do not amount to much (a few short sentences with translations and a number of case endings that appear as headwords in the vocabulary proper), we may be safe in drawing the tentative conclusion that these actions signal Tindale's intention to reduce the language to order<sup>25</sup>. Despite not having much to show for his own efforts, Tindale maintained an interest in grammatical aspects of Pitjantjatjara, as seen in his correspondence with Love and Trudinger (who, as missionaries living at Ernabella, where both better qualified and better positioned to pursue this work) and in the many annotations made by Tindale to a copy of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* held at the SAM<sup>26</sup>. Finally, on the point of Tindale's special interest in 'Pitjandjara', we need look no further than the main title of the 1937 vocabulary itself, *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara, the Language of the Natives of the Great Western Desert*, in which Tindale's interest is illustrated by his foregrounding of the term.

As with the other vocabularies discussed so far, it is necessary to consider the general conditions under which the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* was created, asking the basic questions: where were the words recorded, who were the informants, were interpreters used and if so who were they? Some attention will be given to these questions in the following few sections as we pursue the basic task of tracing the Pitjantjatjara entries

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<sup>25</sup> References to this work are found in the Ooldea journal (1934a MS, pp.193, 201), and examples of basic sentences with English translations are found in associated supplementary papers (SAM AA338/2/31-32). From this latter source, as well as from the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* itself, it seems that Tindale understood something of the pronoun system and morphological aspects of Western Desert speech varieties, but there is little evidence to suggest that his attempts at grammatical analysis had proceeded very far past this point in 1937. The two most likely influences on this aspect of Tindale's linguistic activities are Fitzherbert and *Notes and Queries*, although owing to a lack of direct evidence it is not possible to give a definitive account of the priority of these influences.

<sup>26</sup> The version of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* located in the SAM archives contains many annotations made between the years 1938-66.

in the vocabulary back to earlier sources. At the same time, it is intended that Tindale's linguistic assumptions and practices will be further revealed – a task begun in chapter 3, it will be remembered, when Tindale's use of interpreters and communication practices was reviewed.

As the full title of the manuscript suggests, the vocabulary consists of words from 10 languages<sup>27</sup>. In total, the 138 pages contain approximately 2 950 headwords arranged (rather loosely at times) in alphabetical order. A typical entry includes a headword, a gloss and an abbreviation designating the word to one of the 10 languages (see appendix 9, which reproduces the first page of the vocabulary). Tindale's decision to order the words in this way, that is, without dividing them into separate language sections, suggests that he may have been interested in drawing comparisons between them (perhaps following similar advice to that given by Fitzherbert to Love). However, attempts to make comparisons are often hampered by Tindale's lax approach to the ordering of headwords (Tindale lists the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* in the bibliography of *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* as if it is a finished product, noting that it is 'registered as book, Public Library, Adelaide' (1974, p.383), but upon closer inspection it has the appearance more of a working draft). The most significant causes of disorder are Tindale's non-phonemicised spellings and inconsistent filing.

As seen with the placenames discussed in chapter 2, in his recording practice Tindale did not phonemicise spellings. Thus, allophonic variations in Western Desert speech varieties that are often heard as variations between voiced and unvoiced stops by English speakers, for example, are represented in the spellings. So, if Tindale heard [b], he wrote <b>, if he heard [p], he wrote <p>, without attempting to standardise to a Western Desert phonemic value<sup>28</sup>. Thus, words often appear in the vocabulary in dual form: for

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<sup>27</sup> The use of the term 'language' in the following discussion follows Tindale's usage, although the status of these so-called languages is very much open to dispute.

<sup>28</sup> The word 'phoneme' is not used by Fitzherbert in his letter to Love; neither does it appear in his summary of Strehlow's letters. It is possible that Fitzherbert was not *au fait* with this concept which was at that time only recently formalised. In terms of the variation discussed here, however, Trudinger wrote to Tindale with a number of suggestions for resolving this issue. Trudinger writes: 'of course the native never has any need to distinguish (as we do) between the voiced and the unvoiced plosive, but there is endless confusion and contradiction between white transcribers in attempting to record these. I have carefully listened to hundreds of these and roughly tabulated results, and I am convinced in each case that the sound is an unvoiced unaspirated plosive – c.f. p, k, t (English) which are unvoiced aspirated plosives and b, g, d (English) which are voiced unaspirated plosives. I feel then, that in every case, there is merely the one intermediate plosive sound, and as one symbol is necessary, I have chosen p, k, and t in each case to standardize the spelling. The

instance, ‘kulpi’ and ‘kulbi’ (cave). This practice can cause inconvenience for the contemporary reader. It is worth noting that when Chewings was working on his Arrernte vocabulary, compiled from a wide range of literature sources, he found that, when transcribed onto index cards, he was faced with a file of headwords ‘two feet thick’ (Chewings 1931 MS). Following a suggestion by Tindale to file <b>s together with <p>s, <g>s together with <k>s, and <d>s together with <t>s he found much duplication (owing no doubt to the variety of orthographic practices of the sources), and his task was made easier. The problem with Tindale’s *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* is that instead of consistently filing <b>s as <p>s, <g>s as <k>s, and <d>s as <t>s, as he suggests Chewings should do, there are numerous instances in which they appear filed according to the English alphabetic value of the graph.

This problem also appears with the AUPS <j>, which Tindale files as either <j> in English alphabetical order, or as the English graph <y>. A further problem arises with <: >, which represents a lengthened vowel or consonant, and sometimes the preceding graph is filed as if it were a double vowel or consonant (that is, <aa> or <rr>) but sometimes not. Again, these inconsistencies give the manuscript the appearance of a working document rather than a finished product.

While on the subject of orthographics, it should be noted that nearly all entries appear in the AUPS. This includes words drawn from other sources, such as the ‘Wirongu’ (Wirangu) entries drawn from Bates (1918) and those drawn from Anthony Bolam<sup>29</sup>. The entries drawn from Helms (1896) remain in their original form but their filing varies according to the general pattern stated above: for example, ‘barka Helms’ is filed between ‘parari’ and ‘parna’ (Tindale 1937 MS, p.77).

Before considering the sources of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* in more detail, it is worth reflecting for a moment on the fact that the headwords are not evenly distributed among the 10 languages, as the following breakdown shows:

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trouble with most whites (that I have heard) pronouncing native words here, is that they make no attempt to reproduce the intermediate unaspirated unvoiced sound – they interpret it and pronounce it, mainly according to whim, either as an English “p” (for example) or “b” (in Tindale 1957 MS, p.309, original emphasis).

<sup>29</sup> The exact source of the Bolam entries appearing in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* has not at the time of writing been located. This issue is discussed further below.

| <b>Language</b> | <b>Percentage (approx.)</b> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Pitjandjara     | 47                          |
| Na:dadjara      | 20                          |
| Wirongu         | 11.5                        |
| Pintubi         | 7.5                         |
| Kukatja         | 4.5                         |
| Ngalia          | 1                           |
| NaNatadjara     | less than 1                 |
| Wordaka         | less than 1                 |
| Aranda          | less than 1                 |
| Jankundjadjara  | less than 1                 |
| Other           | less than 1                 |
| Unassigned      | 7.5                         |

Figure 11. Approximate distribution of headwords to language in Tindale (1937 MS).

The most notable result of this breakdown is the contrast between the high percentage of ‘Pitjandjara’ words and the low percentage of ‘Jankundjadjara’ words (one headword). The former percentage supports the ‘special interest’ notion discussed above, while the reason for the latter percentage is a question that will be pursued below. Also notable is the total absence of Antikirinya words. The headwords under ‘other’ are four in total; two words are attributed to the ‘Eucla tribe’, and one each to ‘Pitjini [?]’ and ‘Cuc. W.A.’, although neither of these last two terms appear in Tindale (1974), so their status is ambiguous. The vast majority of the ‘unassigned’ words are those drawn from Helms (1896). This may reflect some degree of uncertainty on Tindale’s part at the time – Helms (1896) is not listed in the 1940 catalogue of tribes under ‘JaNkundjara’ or ‘Pitjandjara’ (but is listed under ‘Antakirinja’, presumably for the vocabulary and tribal distribution data provided by Billy Weaver, see chapter 6) – or it may simply reflect a further incomplete aspect of the manuscript<sup>30</sup>.

As for the headwords themselves, there is a high percentage of placenames, reflecting Tindale’s interest in tribal boundary work, migrations, and *tjukurpa* (stories); a high percentage of terms relating to flora and fauna, body parts and geographical features (all of which were important categories for BAR work and most of which are recommended for collection by *Notes and Queries*, but equally it was no doubt easier to

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<sup>30</sup> Helms (1896) is eventually added to ‘Jankundjara’ in the revised 1974 catalogue (Tindale 1974, p.212).

elicit the names for things rather than for the qualities of things or actions); there are many terms relating to aspects of secret/sacred ceremonial activities that do not, as one would expect for reasons of cultural restrictions, appear in contemporary dictionaries such as Goddard (1996); and finally, there are many *walytja* or ‘kinship’ terms, also reflective of the ethnological focus of Tindale’s investigations. Many of these latter terms were published by Elkin (1938-40, p.334) from information provided by Tindale.

### 5.2.1 Primary Sources

Most of the words compiled in Tindale’s *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* were collected during BAR expeditions to Mt Liebig (1932), the Mann and Musgrave Ranges (1933), and the Warburton Ranges (1935), as well as during a visit made by Tindale to Ooldea in 1934, which was not part of an official BAR anthropological ‘expedition’. Apart from this, Tindale draws on the published material of Bates (1918), Helms (1896), and an unlocated manuscript recorded by Bolam to supplement his own recordings. In this section I will discuss these sources as well as Tindale’s own manuscript sources, such as field journals, notebooks, and prior drafts of the vocabulary. I will begin by discussing three of Tindale’s manuscripts: Tindale (1933c MS), Tindale (1934a MS) and Tindale (1935c MS).

#### (i) Tindale 1933c MS

This manuscript, entitled ‘Pitjandjara Vocabulary’, is an original notebook taken by Tindale to the Mann and Musgrave Ranges in 1933. Besides a total of ‘824+ words’, as indicated by a note after the final entry, the manuscript includes an orthographic chart, which shows slight differences from the final version of the AUPS, and a few notes on sign language. A further note, added by Tindale in 1935, indicates that the vocabulary contained within these pages ceased to be a working copy with the creation of Tindale (1935c MS), to which the entries were transferred. There are some indications that additions were made after 1933 (it is likely that Tindale took this notebook with him to Ooldea in 1934, for example), but these appear to be few, and, moreover, some of them are merely notes supplementing earlier recordings rather than new entries.

I have already discussed the general circumstances in which this material was recorded, including some of the communicational constraints such as the use of Yankunytjatjara-speaking interpreters (see chapter 3). This fact provides the best explanation in a general sense for the type of dialect distinctions appearing in this vocabulary. Tindale began collecting at Ernabella and continued as he journeyed through the Mann Ranges to the west. Thus, the number of ‘E. dial.’-‘W. dial.’ distinctions may be interpreted as a function of his direction of travel, although some of the distinctions are drawn more explicitly between Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara. These distinctions are discussed in more detail in section 5.2.3 below. Finally, another notable aspect of this vocabulary is Tindale’s concern to indicate introduced terms, such as the following, for example:

| <b>Tindale 1933c MS</b> | <b>Tindale’s gloss</b>          | <b>Source</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| kwiai                   | girl; an introd. Aranda term    | Arrente       |
| maketi                  | gun, rifle derived fr. ‘musket’ | English       |
| nantju                  | horse (introd.)                 | Kaurna        |
| patala                  | bottle (introd.)                | English       |
| putjikata               | a name for wild cat (pussycat)  | English       |

Figure 12. Introduced terms indicated by Tindale in Tindale (1933c MS).

While the source of these words is provided (by the present author) in the far right-hand column, these terms were all in use in the pidgin English of the 1930s. One might well take this practice of noting introduced terms as reflecting a concern for recording a pure ‘Pitjandjara’, although one would not want to draw any firm conclusions on this basis alone. Certainly the notion of linguistic purity does not sit well with all of Tindale’s linguistic practices, as I shall demonstrate.

**(ii) Tindale 1934a MS**

This vocabulary, entitled ‘Vocabulary Ooldea 1934’, appears in the journal of the visit to Ooldea (Tindale 1934a MS, pp.248-69). Among Tindale’s ‘Pitjandjara’ sources, this one presents us with the most interpretational difficulties.

In total, using Tindale’s figures as a guideline, there are approximately 400 words listed in this vocabulary (1934a MS, p.269). Many entries are concerned with parts of the human body, but there is also a high proportion of terms relating to plant names, with much additional information including ‘economic’ uses and mythical associations of the plants, and a high proportion of fauna-related terms. This latter category reflects one of the main interests of Bolam, an amateur collector of faunal specimens who on at least one occasion forwarded specimens to the University of Adelaide (Bolam 1927 [1923], p.111). Bolam’s name appears a number of times in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* as a secondary source, and it is with the question of Bolam’s contribution to the 1934 vocabulary that the first difficulty is confronted.

An interesting aspect of the vocabulary is the appearance of a third column (on pp. 256, 258, 260, 264 and 266, see appendix 10) instead of the usual pattern of two columns, with English words on the left margin and Tindale’s recording of Western Desert words to the right. The following figure presents a few examples of the three column arrangement.

| <b>English</b> | <b>Tindale</b> | <b>Bolam (?)</b> |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| shoulder       | jambil         | umbil            |
| knees          | murti          | (mand-de Bolam)  |
| hair           | kata uru       | (culter-er rue)  |
| toes           | tjena          | -                |
| ribs           | -              | kundelia         |

Figure 13. Extracts from Tindale’s Ooldea Vocabulary (Tindale 1934 MS, p.256).

On considering the total number of ‘three column’ entries, one often finds a degree of variation between the corresponding words in the second and third columns. Some of this is owing to slight spelling differences, as can be seen with ‘shoulder’ in figure 13. In a number of cases a word appears in the third column that does not have a corresponding entry in the second column (as in ‘ribs’ above), and vice versa (as in ‘toes’ above).

There are two clues to the origin of the third column words. The first is the word ‘phoneticised’ at the top of the third column (p.256), and the second is the occasional appearance of Bolam’s name (for example, see the equivalent of ‘knees’ in figure 13). After much cross-checking with the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* (1937 MS) entries, it appears that the words in the third column are from an unlocated Bolam wordlist and are in the main transliterated into the AUPS from Bolam’s original spelling. Tindale’s handling of this material poses a number of problems, and is discussed in more detail when I consider secondary sources below. At this stage, however, it is worth pointing out that a further ambiguity in Tindale’s use of other sources is the appearance of the phrase ‘from Miss Brown’s list’ in the second column on page 254. Earlier in his journal Tindale records meeting Miss Brown, who was visiting the mission at Ooldea soak (1934a MS, p.11), but owing to the fact that her ‘list’ has not been located it is not possible to determine her exact contribution to Tindale’s vocabulary.

One point of difference between the 1933 vocabulary and the one under discussion, in terms of the wider contexts in which the collection of words took place, is that in 1934 it seems that Tindale worked without the services of an official interpreter organised in advance. This may be reflective of the status of the fieldtrip as a ‘visit’ rather than an ‘expedition’, but also possibly of an expectation that English speakers could readily be located. Cecil Hackett joined Tindale at Ooldea and obtained blood samples and pursued other medical work (Tindale 1934a MS, p.193), but otherwise the trip was very much on a reduced scale compared to the BAR expeditions of the previous few years. Having said this, Tindale seems to have enjoyed a productive relationship with one of the Yankunytjatjara-speaking men, Milina, who is described at one point as his ‘translator and mentor’ (1934b MS, p.24). While Milina provides details of *inma* ‘ceremony’ and *tjukurpa* ‘stories’, it is not clear to what extent his translating work contributed to the vocabulary collected, although Tindale notes on one occasion spending ‘part of the day on the beginnings of a grammar with Milina’ (1934a MS, p.159). The picture is not made any clearer by the fact that Tindale spoke to a number of Yankunytjatjara-speaking men, some of whom seem to have had some knowledge of pidgin or some other form of non-Standard English<sup>31</sup>. Unfortunately, for present purposes, Tindale does not provide sufficiently clear

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<sup>31</sup> We know from other sources such as Bolam (1927 [1923]) that pidgin English had long been spoken at Ooldea.

details of these communicative exchanges. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Tindale spent time with Yankunytjatjara speakers who provided him with a wealth of information, and words from these communicative exchanges can be traced from the text of his field journal to the pages of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*.

A striking fact about these entries, however, as with all those listed in the ‘Ooldea Vocabulary’, is that they appear as ‘P.’ (Pitjantjatjara) in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*. This is the first piece of evidence to suggest that in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* Tindale conflates ‘Yankunytjatjara’ and ‘Pitjantjatjara’ words.

That Tindale’s work was predominantly with Yankunytjatjara speakers in 1934 is clearly expressed in the following passage, which appears in an article describing aspects of the Ooldea visit, published in the daily press in Adelaide. Tindale writes:

Five main tribal groups visited Ooldea. The principal one studied was the Jankundjara, who first came into contact with white men a decade ago, having come down from the country immediately south of the Everard Range ... Other groups at Ooldea were the uncivilised Mandjindjara of the north-western edge of the Nullarbor plain in Western Australia, the Europeanised natives of the coastal regions, the Kukata of Tarcoola and the surrounding districts, and a mixed group of Western Australian natives from along the East-West line near Karonie. (Tindale 1934a MS, p.206c)

Also noteworthy in this passage is the general picture it presents of the population mix at Ooldea during the time of Tindale’s visit. The population at Ooldea was notoriously fluid, and it seems that there was no guarantee a researcher would meet the same informants on subsequent visits to the area. For instance, during a BAR expedition in 1939, Berndt and Johnston (1942, p.189) found that ‘the local natives were members of the Antakirinja tribe, but representatives of far distant tribes – Pitjandjara, Murunitja, Nangatadjara, Mandjindja and Wirangu – were also present’. Leaving aside the contentious issue of these tribal designations, it appears that there was a process of koineisation occurring at Ooldea. Berndt and Johnston hint at this (1942, p.190), but Tindale makes no reference to it – at least not until 1951, when on a subsequent visit he records a small number of words (about 80) and finds that ‘they cannot all be assigned to a specific dialect since they are very

mixed' (1951 MS, p.24)<sup>32</sup>. While it seems that Tindale may have had more confidence in his recordings from 1934 (although few dialect distinctions appear in these recordings), the fact remains that Ooldea, with its transient population and high levels of intercultural contact, was not the ideal place to attempt to record a pure language or dialect. Indeed, from an orthodox linguistic perspective, there remain questions over many of the words appearing in the 'Ooldea Vocabulary'. In particular there is the difficult question of the degree of influence from Western Desert speech varieties on Wirangu. Many of the words drawn from Bolam that appear in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* as Pitjantjatjara words, also appear in the Wirangu vocabulary attached to Luise Hercus' Wirangu grammar (Hercus 1999). Although this reflects on the very process of language making, it would lead us too far astray to pursue this question here. Moreover, it would be difficult to draw any firm conclusions without having Bolam's wordlist available for scrutiny.

### (iii) Tindale 1935c MS

This manuscript, entitled *Vocabulary of West-Central Australian Languages, Pitjandjara, Pintubi, Ngalia, Kukatja*, is a compilation of Tindale's Western Desert vocabularies up to but not including the vocabulary collected during the 1935 BAR expedition to the Warburton Range. It is likely that Tindale produced this collation to assist him during the 1935 expedition<sup>33</sup>.

The basic structure of this manuscript is the same for the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*, the latter being merely an expanded version of Tindale (1935c MS) with the addition of words gathered during the 1935 expedition, as well as the Bates (1918) material. Accordingly, my remarks here will be brief. The main point of interest is the title, for it is notable that in the construction of the later *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*, there are two significant changes: firstly, the term 'Pitjandjara' gains greater prominence and, secondly, there is a change in geographical focus. On considering these facts more closely, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Tindale is engaged in promoting the construction of the 'Pitjandjara' language as *the* language of the Western Desert. Short of a

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<sup>32</sup> Douglas observed the population flux at Ooldea during linguistic work in 1951-2, noting that 'informants modified their speech according to their temporary associations with members of other dialect areas' (1955, p.216).

<sup>33</sup> Early in his Warburton Range journal Tindale writes: 'prepared Pitjandjara vocabulary to take away & had it typed' (Tindale 1935b MS, p.11).

direct statement by Tindale, the reasons for this are difficult to determine with certitude: they may be many and complex, relating to the demands of gaining future funding or the result of the numerous influences and contexts outlined above; or they may be as straightforward as the desire to promote ‘his’ group above others<sup>34</sup>.

## 5.2.2 Secondary sources

Most of the secondary sources used in the construction of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* have already been mentioned in passing. Bates (1918) provides the Wirangu entries and will not be discussed further. The following require some further comment as they relate directly to the ‘Pitjandjara’ entries: ‘Fry’, ‘A.B. 1935’, ‘Helms’ and ‘Bolam’.

### (i) ‘Fry’

In the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*, there is one reference to ‘Fry’ (1937 MS, p.27), in which Tindale presents an alternative spelling attributed to ‘Fry’. The headword entry in question reads: ‘kotjopa (kutjupa = Fry)’. This is almost certainly a reference to H.K. Fry, a BAR member who was keenly interested in psychological testing, and also took an interest in collecting vocabularies.

### (ii) ‘A.B. 1935’

‘A.B. 1935’ appears first in Tindale (1933c MS) and later in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* (1937 MS, pp.105, 119), but remains somewhat mysterious. Possibly it refers to Alan Brumby, but, because the date remains obscure, this cannot be verified.

### (iii) Helms

As mentioned earlier, the most notable aspect of the Helms entries in Tindale (1937 MS) is that they are not assigned to any particular language. Nevertheless, an examination of entries reveals that they are taken from the Everard Ranges and Blyth Range vocabularies (Helms 1896, pp. 317-20). Given their absence from the *Vocabulary of*

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<sup>34</sup> In this regard one is reminded of Labov’s observation that ‘the anthropological or comparative linguist will intuitively fight for the existence of his [or her] group’ (1972, p.324).

*Pitjandjara*, it is likely that neither Wells' nor Lindsay's wordlists were used by Tindale at this point in time (that is, 1937).

**(iv) Bolam**

Anthony Bolam was the stationmaster at Ooldea for a number of years in the early 1920s, before leaving for Kingoonya, another station along the East-West line, in 1925. He appears to have enjoyed cordial relations with Aboriginal people visiting the soak, and through these contacts gathered a body of ethnological and zoological observations, many of which appear in his popular book *The Trans-Australian Wonderland* (1927 [1923]), which enjoyed a number of reprints in the 1920s.

There is little doubt that Bolam provided a vocabulary to Tindale (either directly or indirectly), but determining the exact nature of this material is difficult owing to a lack of direct written evidence. We know the two enjoyed some correspondence in the 1920s with Bolam providing Tindale with tribal distribution information (see appendix 11); and it would be surprising if Tindale did not request any vocabulary information that Bolam either had in his possession or was in a position to gather on Tindale's behalf. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, this information has not been located in the SAM archives. So, importantly, questions such as the identity or nature of Bolam's sources remain unanswerable, at least for the moment. Nevertheless, some examination of the primary and secondary sources of the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* with regard to Bolam is required, if only for the insight it may afford into the important question of why these forms are assigned to the Pitjantjatjara language.

In total, the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* has 13 direct references to Bolam (listed in appendix 12); this much is signposted by Tindale. There are, however, many other entries in the vocabulary that are *not* referenced. These entries appear in either of the following two categories:

- (i) in parentheses following a Tindale headword; or
- (ii) in parentheses, and without a Tindale headword.

Words in category (i) are listed in appendix 13, while words in category (ii) appear in appendix 14. These category (i) and (ii) words have been identified by tracing the third column entries in the ‘Ooldea Vocabulary’ (Tindale 1934a MS) to the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*. Of course, this analysis rests upon the premise that Tindale’s ‘phoneticised’ comment (1934a MS, p.256) suggests that Bolam’s words have been transliterated by Tindale. Good support for this premise is provided by the following points. The first is the appearance of the 13 unambiguous references to Bolam in Tindale (1937 MS), all of which appear in the third column of Tindale (1934a MS). The first two entries in appendix 12, accompanied by ‘after Bolam’, do not have corresponding second column entries in Tindale (1934a MS), suggesting that Tindale did not record a version of these words himself. The second is the occasional appearance of *bracketed* entries in the third column of Tindale (1934a MS) that are consistent with Bolam’s practice of syllabising (for example, ‘Ool-git’ and ‘Bal-gool-ya’ in Bolam 1927 [1923], pp.22, 23), marking out these words as ‘unphoneticised’ – although the reasons for this are obscure. One should also consider the fact that words appearing in categories (i) and (ii) all appear in parentheses, no doubt illustrating that Tindale was concerned to distinguish these words from those he had recorded himself (although for the casual reader these parentheses are obscure). Apart from this, it is notable that nearly all of the words in appendices 13 and 14 relate to parts of the body or fauna, the latter reflecting a particular area of interest for Bolam.

While the question of the source of the Bolam entries is problematic, we can rule out Bolam’s *The Trans-Australian Wonderland* as the primary one, as revealed by a comparison between the indigenous words in it and the words in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*. Some of the words from Aboriginal languages in Bolam (1927 [1923]) do not appear in Tindale (1937 MS), while the vast majority of the potential Bolam words in the latter do not appear in the former. This is not surprising as it would be a dangerous assumption by Tindale to draw words from *The Trans-Australian Wonderland*, a text in which no explicit indication is given by Bolam of their source.

Again, all of the Bolam words are assigned to the ‘Pitjandjara’ language, and it is worth considering, if only tentatively, how this was done by Tindale. If it is granted that Bolam produced a wordlist, an initial question is how Bolam distinguished between speech varieties at Ooldea. If we consider Bolam’s map from the 1920s (appendix 11), it is clear that in terms of tribes, at least, he often worked with broad compass point categories –

Allen-jurra (that is, northerners), Youl-barraw (that is, southerners), and Will-yarra (that is, westerners) – as, it is likely, did the people themselves in certain contexts<sup>35</sup>. Perhaps Bolam provided Tindale with a vocabulary of the ‘Allen-jurra natives’ (northerners), a broad reference to groups speaking a range of related speech varieties from the areas to the north of Ooldea. Indeed, this term seems to have had some currency in the 1920s at Ooldea. Besides Bolam’s use of the term, it also appears as the name of one of Campbell and Lewis’ (1926) groups of informants recorded during the BAR expedition to Ooldea in 1926 (as ‘Alinjera’). As mentioned earlier, Tindale reassigns Campbell and Lewis’ Alinjera informants to ‘Jankundja(djara)’ after the 1934 visit to Ooldea. If it is the case that Bolam provided words spoken by ‘northerners’, then it is not difficult to see how Tindale assigns them to ‘Pitjandjara’ – throughout the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*, words recorded from Yankunytjatjara speakers are conflated under the Pitjantjatjara banner<sup>36</sup>. Further light will be shed on this practice when we consider the question of dialects and Tindale’s handling of placenames.

### 5.2.3 Language and dialect

As I turn to consider more closely the question of how Tindale makes his dialectal distinctions in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*, it is useful to begin with the general observation that if one were to approach the vocabulary from an orthodox linguistic perspective, and without having recourse to the manuscript materials that led to its construction, one would naturally assume that the many entries identified with particular dialects (for example, ‘E. dial.’ or ‘W. dial.’) and listed as ‘P.’ relate to dialects of the Pitjantjatjara language<sup>37</sup>. Such a reading, however, could well lead one into error. I have noted above that it seems that the eastern and western dialect labels are partly a function of Tindale’s direction of travel, and that there are a number of Pitjantjatjara-Yankunytjatjara

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<sup>35</sup> Bolam’s ‘Kook-arra’ probably relates to *kakarara* (that is, easterners).

<sup>36</sup> It should be pointed out for the sake of clarity that it is not being suggested here that recording a Pitjantjatjara vocabulary from Yankunytjatjara speakers is problematic *per se*: given the level of multilingualism or multilectalism in the north-west this may be acceptable in practical terms. The problem is more with Tindale’s metalinguistic use of recorded materials, as I shall argue below.

<sup>37</sup> In the following discussion I will consider only those entries that are listed as ‘P.’ (Pitjantjatjara) – but note that Tindale also makes dialectal distinctions for a number of Na:dadjara entries.

distinctions drawn as well. But apart from this, the meaning of many of Tindale's dialect distinctions remain obscure.

My first task in this section, therefore, is to attempt to dispel some of the ambiguity surrounding the dialectal designations. To begin with, although ultimately listed as 'P.' (Pitjandjara), there are about 30 entries in the vocabulary that are distinguished as being dialectal variants along quasi-geographical lines: the most common designations being to eastern and western dialects, although other entries are listed as relating to north-east, north-west and south-west dialects. Much of the ambiguity of such terms arises through the relative aspect of these designations. Consider, for instance, the following entries:

- |       |                                   |                             |    |                 |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----|-----------------|
| (iii) | murundu                           | a carpet snake N.E. dialect | P. | (1937 MS, p.56) |
| (iv)  | piti (S.W.) = tjurkur (E. & N.W.) | totem                       | P. | (1937 MS, p.83) |

Leaving to one side the theoretical problems associated with the existence of discrete dialects, in order to make any sense of these directional designations we need to know the point of reference, which unfortunately Tindale does not provide. From which point(s) is the NE, SW, E, or NW dialect located? The problem is compounded by the fact that Tindale failed to employ some means of keeping separate entries recorded in 1933 (at and near the Mann and Musgrave Ranges) and those recorded in 1934 (at Ooldea). In the case of the two examples given here, we can backtrack to Tindale (1933c MS) and discover that they were recorded at or near the Mann and Musgrave Ranges and not at Ooldea in 1934. While this dispels some degree of ambiguity, there is still a long way to go. An interesting and more general finding from the backtracking process, however, is that most of the dialect distinctions for 'P.' entries were recorded in 1933; in fact, only three dialect distinctions were noted at Ooldea in 1934<sup>38</sup>.

In the following discussion I focus on those entries recorded in 1933 for eastern and western dialects of Pitjantjatjara. As noted, they are the most numerous, but they are also directly relevant to the wider argument of this thesis, as will be seen.

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<sup>38</sup> These distinctions are found under the headwords: 'InmuruNar', 'martaki', and 'papa inura', see Tindale (1937 MS, pp.9, 44, 76).

The following figure presents a list of eastern and western dialect entries, but note that Tindale's stress diacritics are not reproduced, and neither is this list comprehensive: some forms have been avoided owing to cultural sensitivities.

|     | Eastern dialect          | Western dialect           | Tindale's gloss                   |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1.  | erewandja                | -                         | pelican (p.5)                     |
| 2.  | katji, kadji             | -                         | spear (p.21)                      |
| 3.  | lamalNa = <i>keinika</i> | -                         | native cat (p.35)                 |
| 4.  | urara = <i>urlba</i>     | -                         | grass tree (p.115)                |
| 5.  | -                        | enondji, enontji          | shrub ... = <i>undunu</i> (p.5)   |
| 6.  | -                        | induda = <i>palja</i>     | good (p.9)                        |
| 7.  | -                        | kularda                   | spear (p.28)                      |
| 8.  | -                        | mima, [=] <i>minma</i>    | wife, woman (p.47)                |
| 9.  | -                        | minunja                   | small boy (p.50)                  |
| 10. | -                        | Nokonpa                   | brain (p.66)                      |
| 11. | -                        | pininu                    | younger ... [sibling] (p.81)      |
| 12. | -                        | puntu, [=] <i>wati</i>    | man (p.88)                        |
| 13. | -                        | tjumu [=] <i>tjukur</i>   | dream time, totem (p.108)         |
| 14. | -                        | wapalpa [=] <i>tjukur</i> | totem (p.122)                     |
| 15. | enondji                  | undunu                    | shrub (p.114)                     |
| 16. | jurarupa, juralpa        | koilpuru                  | tomato-like fruit, (p.137)        |
| 17. | kami                     | kapali                    | M's and F's mothers (p.16)        |
| 18. | kulu                     | njimu                     | head louse (p.29)                 |
| 19. | mama                     | punari                    | father (p.86)                     |
| 20. | miNul                    | puljantu                  | chewing tobacco (p.86)            |
| 21. | Nintaka                  | polalji                   | perentie (p.66)                   |
| 22. | Nondjo                   | Nundju                    | mother (p.68)                     |
| 23. | palkun                   | palkunpa                  | transv[erse] chest keloids (p.75) |
| 24. | tjitji                   | itajara                   | little boy (p.105)                |

Figure 14. Eastern and Western dialect designations in Tindale (1937 MS)<sup>39</sup>.

As an initial observation, note that there is a degree of inconsistency in how dialectal differences are indicated. In the above figure there are three main categories: (i) nos 1-4 are marked as eastern forms, (ii) nos 5-14 are marked as western forms, and (iii) nos 15-24 involve pairings of eastern and western forms. It should be noted, however, that many of the category (i) and (ii) forms are equated with another form (italicised above) whose status is not directly indicated. Taking no.4, for example, while 'urara' is given as an eastern form, the status of 'urlba' is not given – is it a western form, an eastern

<sup>39</sup> Note that with some cross-referenced entries in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* one often finds a degree of variation between the glosses provided by Tindale. For the sake of clarity I have provided the relevant page numbers for the entries listed in this figure. Note also that in this figure some of Tindale's glosses appear in abbreviated form.

synonym, or something else? The case of no.2 (katji, kadji) is more straightforward as an equivalent western form is given at no.7 (kularda).

Following from this, one can see that distinctions are made primarily on the basis of perceived differences of pronunciation or on lexical difference; although in a few cases where no contrasting form is offered, it is not clear on what basis the distinction is made (nos 1, 9, 11)<sup>40</sup>. I will discuss the first two of these categories below.

Examples of distinctions made on the basis of perceived pronunciation difference are relatively few, and include nos 8 and 22. These differences appear to be relatively minor, with no.8 perhaps reflecting a mishearing by Tindale rather than an actual difference recognised by *anangu*. No.22 is a little more interesting because we would expect any east-west regional difference to be reflected in the lamino-palatal stop (represented by Tindale as <dj>) rather than vowel quality. This seems another example of a Tindale-imposed distinction.

In the case of lexical difference, one distinction (no.23) is owing to the *-pa* suffix, a stylistic feature associated with western speech varieties such as Pitjantjatjara (see Goddard 1996, p.viii). It is possible that this reason also explains the distinction in no.4 and the listing of no.10 as a western dialect form. It is doubtful whether Tindale was aware of the grammatical status of this morpheme at the time, however. A comparison of nos 5 and 15 suggests that these two distinctions are more problematic, and in fact cancel each other out, so to speak. That is to say, they are common to both eastern and western dialects (or speech varieties). Backtracking to the original manuscript reveals that these entries were recorded on separate occasions – a possible explanation for this variation. It is also possible, however, that Tindale creates this distinction through problems of communication and his own preconceptions, or indeed that it is a recording error<sup>41</sup>. Having said this, a clear example of an important difference put forward by Tindale is the contrast

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<sup>40</sup> As more recent studies have shown (most notably Hansen 1984), there is a complex relationship between endo- and exolexicon in Western Desert areas, and following from this, it is difficult to determine how Tindale would have attempted to distinguish between active and passive forms in the speech he encountered – if in fact he attempted to do so at all.

<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, it would lead us too far astray to pursue this interesting point. Even leaving aside the problem of the high level of synonymy in Western Desert speech varieties, as described by Hansen (1984), for example, of which Tindale would not have been aware, we still need to be suspicious of some of the distinctions he puts forward. No.9 looks suspiciously like a personal name, for example. Some indication of his preoccupations is given below.

between nos 2 and 7. This is still recognised as an important distinction today – elderly *anangu* will say that *katji* is Yankunytjatjara and *kulata* is Pitjantjatjara.

The last point fits in with a reading of ‘eastern’ as Yankunytjatjara and ‘western’ as Pitjantjatjara. But is there any further evidence to support this proposition? There are a few examples in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* and the primary sources where a direct distinction is made between Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara forms. Consider the following examples:

- (v) mulajaNu (Jan) = kanba (P)      a snake      P.      (1937 MS, p.52)  
 (vi) tjila (Pitj.) = walkal (Jank)      poison bush ... P.      (1937 MS, p.101)

In a number of cases, there are also references to *either* Yankunytjatjara *or* Pitjantjatjara, as in the following:

- (vii) lamalNa (no.3 in figure 14) is given as ‘YaNk’ (1933c MS)  
 (viii) kularda (no.6 in figure 14) is given as ‘W. dialect; PitjinZara’ (1933c MS)  
 (ix) kunba is given as ‘Pitj.’, under ‘wanambi’ (1933c MS)  
 (x) wakalbuka is given as ‘Pitj.’ (1933c MS)

These examples provide a mixed picture – (vii) and (viii) support the eastern = Yankunytjatjara, western = Pitjantjatjara reading, as they can be traced to the figure above; but (ix) and (x) remain slightly ambiguous<sup>42</sup>. More direct evidence to support the eastern = Yankunytjatjara, western = Pitjantjatjara reading as the general pattern appears in the case of no.19, for which we are fortunate in having some further information. At one point during the 1933 Mann Range expedition, Tindale writes:

Mama is the eastern dialect [and] punari is *the correct Pitjandjara term*; our interpreters had to be watched for ‘errors’ like this which only became apparent when we began to speak to the people a little ourselves. (Tindale 1933b MS, p.162, emphasis added)

Notably, ‘punari’ is listed as a western form in figure 14 (see no.19), thus supporting the ‘Pitjandjara’ = western dialect reading, but also notice that the eastern dialect remains

otherwise anonymous. Some light is thrown on the latter mystery by an article published in 1941, in which Tindale presents a list of plants collected during the 1933 Mann Range expedition. Tindale writes: ‘where names are given for plants in eastern and western dialects they refer respectively to the Jangkundjara and Pitjandjara tribes. In other cases the names are common to both groups’ (1941, p.8). Although examples are few, one does find ‘enondji (western dialect) = undunu (eastern dialect) for *Cassia eremophila* (1941, p.10) and ‘koilpuru (western dialect); jurarupa (eastern dialect)’ for *S. ellipticum* (1941, p.12, compare no.16 in figure 14). The former case, as indicated already, is problematic (compare nos 5 and 15 in figure 14), but nevertheless this does not detract from the clarity of Tindale’s stated intentions. On the balance of the evidence presented so far, it seems safe to conclude that Yankuntjatjara is subsumed under the Pitjantjatjara banner (as the eastern dialect of this language) in Tindale’s *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*.

Tindale’s remarks in the above quoted passage concerning the ‘correct Pitjandjara term’ and having to watch for ‘errors’ require further comment, for they offer a great insight into Tindale’s assumptions about language. Obviously the frameworks he brings to these interactions were developed in advance, a result of notions of correct usage as taught by traditional grammar in schools and the associated myth of linguistic purity discussed above. Moreover, one is tempted to see Tindale setting himself up as an authority by placing his own expectations and views above those of *anangu*. Indeed, one is reminded of Bloomfield’s notion of the linguist as expert (whose views are privileged over the intuitions of the lay speaker of a language; see Bloomfield 1944, p.49). When it is remembered that Tindale’s interpreters in these interactions are Yankuntjatjara speakers, we can only draw the conclusion that, for Tindale, ‘errors’ in the elicitation process are eastern forms, with Pitjantjatjara being ‘correct’. In this way, Tindale arguably reveals a concern with recording a pure Pitjantjatjara vocabulary. The obvious barrier to this goal consists of the interpreters, with whom there exists some level of misunderstanding of the task at hand. Perhaps it is the notion of eliciting a vocabulary of a *discrete* language (or speech variety) that is the problem. There are obvious difficulties in communicating this expectation to interpreters and informants who have not had a Western education. Of course, Tindale was not alone in facing this problem. Tindale’s BAR associate Charles Mountford stumbled over a similar situation in the Northern Territory. He writes:

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<sup>42</sup> The form ‘kunba’ in (ix) is cross-referenced under the variant form ‘kanba’ in Tindale (1933c MS). Note, however, that in Tindale (1937 MS, p.15) under ‘kanba’ we do not find ‘Pitj.’, but ‘Eastern form = wanambi’ given as part of the gloss.

There is one trap that an inexperienced person, who is keen on collecting vocabularies, might easily fall into, and that is, getting the wrong tribal word. [F]or instance, these people, Arunda, have found out that I know a certain amount of the Pitjendadjara which is one of the Aluridja group of languages. As each of natives knows his own, and that of the tribe next door, they are able to speak in Aluridja, and now, I notice they are using to me, many of the Pitjendadjara words. [S]hould I ask them the name of anything, I will get the Aluridja word, not the Aranda. (Mountford 1942 MS, pp.129-31)

Although Mountford appears to work without the aid of an interpreter, the problem is nevertheless of a similar order to that confronting Tindale in 1933<sup>43</sup>. From one perspective, the problem would not arise if the researcher was not concerned with standards of ‘correct’ or ‘wrong’ words, notions that are intricately bound up in the construction (or codification) of discrete languages.

The most perplexing question by far is still to be answered: why did Tindale go to so much trouble in making these distinctions just to collapse them later? As noted already, the words recorded from Yankunytjatjara speakers at Ooldea in 1934 appear as ‘Pitjandjara’ words in both Tindale (1935c MS) and (1937 MS). Now it might be suggested that many Yankunytjatjara words are also Pitjantjatjara words (these being closely related speech varieties), and that Tindale simply preferred to deal with the latter category. But if one considers Tindale’s treatment of placenames in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*, one can see that something more is happening. There are approximately 100 placenames listed as ‘P.’ in the vocabulary, and many of them were recorded in 1934 at Ooldea. A significant proportion of these placenames (28) mark out a travelling route between Ooldea and the Everard Ranges (Tindale 1934a MS, pp.13-15). This is one of the *kapi* routes Tindale amended to the Carruthers survey plan<sup>44</sup>. The crucial point here is that,

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<sup>43</sup> While this may have been a case of ‘gratuitous concurrence’ as discussed in chapter 3, where responses to questions are formulated to please the enquirer, Mountford may also have been imposing his own preconceptions, particularly if we consider Strehlow’s observation concerning the high percentage of shared Western Desert and Arrernte vocabulary (noted in section 5.1.2 above). Of course, we know too few details about these interactions to move beyond speculation.

<sup>44</sup> A section of this line of waters between the Everards and Ooldea runs through the left hand side of the table marked by ‘Note: Permanent Waters’ on the survey plan. Unfortunately these are faint in the reproduction accompanying this thesis. For reference purposes, the full list of waters includes: Tjitanja, Pundipina, Warukari, Anburu, AljaraNanji, Kartopitanja, Boni boni, Walba na, Elilja, Aneimi, Manda balana, Wanbukutjara, Konga:na, WiNangara, Kularda, Ununja, Tjundunja, Purukonja, Embulo, Wakeitjinja, Ilalka:ra, Peikeinja, Tjene ni:tja, KalaiNga, Mindilka, Pundja na, PeiliNa and Uldia (Ooldea Soak) (Tindale 1934a MS, pp.13-15).

according to the tribal distribution data gathered at Ooldea in 1934, many of these places would appear within Yankunytjatjara boundaries. Some indication of this is provided by the following sketch map, which shows some of the placenames under discussion on the left-hand side (note that Imbulo = Embulo in the list, see figure 15)<sup>45</sup>. Given what has been seen so far about the importance with which Tindale viewed placenames for his tribal distribution project, this is an entirely unexpected finding. Not only does this practice seem to run counter to the main body of Tindale's work (we cannot, for instance, use the tribal map to clarify this situation), it also runs counter to traditional *anangu* perspectives on the relation of placenames to country, where it is held that placenames are derived from the *tjukurpa* and as such are related to particular countries and speech varieties.

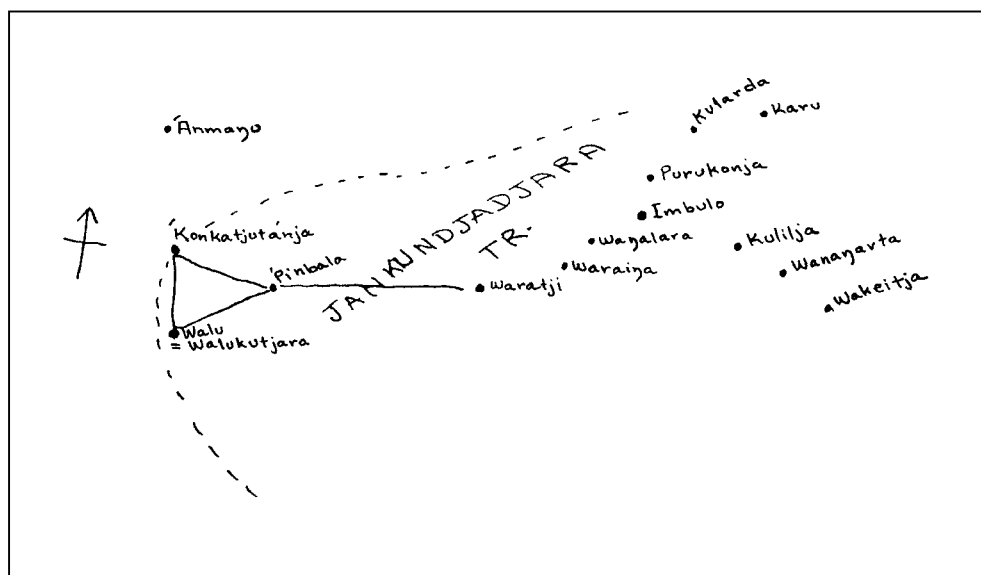


Figure 15. Sketch map of a section of 'Jankundjadjara' territory (Tindale 1934b MS, p.70).

<sup>45</sup> According to Tindale's later definition, as shown on the 1940 map, the *kapi* route passes through Yankunytjatjara territory and then Kukata territory on the way to Ooldea. To be fair to Tindale, he had probably not settled on boundaries in 1934, but nevertheless one would still expect the places to be Yankunytjatjara rather than Pitjantjatjara. It should also be noted that in 1934 Tindale gathered other tribal distribution information with regard to Yankunytjatjara territory (1934a MS, pp.143-9), but for the sake of space I will not discuss it here – it is sufficient to point out that it is consistent with the argument I am putting forward.

### 5.3 Conclusions

In this chapter I have confronted a number of difficulties in my attempt to provide a clear and unqualified account of Tindale's linguistic activities. Much of this is due to the degree of inconsistency and incompleteness found in the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* (despite the fact that Tindale considered the manuscript to be suitable for registration at the 'Public Library, Adelaide'). As I have shown in some detail, Tindale's handling of the linguistic material at his disposal often appears lax, but apart from this, gaps in available source material, most notably the Bolam manuscript, have made interpretation difficult at times. Nevertheless, it is still possible to draw a number of significant conclusions from the above analysis.

In the early sections of this chapter I considered the contextual background to Tindale's linguistic activities provided by a number of intellectual concerns deeply rooted in Adelaide's scientific circles of the day, most notably the scientific preoccupations of the BAR and linguistic activities of the 'Adelaide circle'. Certainly the important questions of *who* and *what* is represented in the historical record is partly a function of these White preoccupations and biases: concerns for 'pure blood' and associated notions of linguistic purity influenced such choices as the types of vocabulary items collected, the locations where research was conducted, and, of course, upon whom research was conducted. Thus some useful insights into the forces that influenced the general shape of this part of the historical linguistic record have been gained.

While tracing the influence of these discourses upon Tindale, I have shown that Tindale demonstrates a concern for reducing 'Pitjandjara' to order (although his progress in this matter remained limited), and at times reveals a concern for linguistic purity, although there is a degree of inconsistency here with his wider concern to promote 'Pitjandjara' as *the* language of the Western Desert. This inconsistency has some bearing on the issue of how Tindale's vocabulary collecting activities in the north-west relate to the tribal mapping project, and in particular to the role that linguistic criteria play in the construction of Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya tribal representations.

As mentioned, there are two main metalinguistic processes involved in Tindale's vocabulary collecting for the north-west:

- (i) the making of dialect distinctions; and
- (ii) the reduction of speech varieties under the banner of the Pitjantjatjara language.

In the above discussion I have dispelled some of the ambiguity surrounding Tindale's use of compass point terms in the making of dialect distinctions, and have shown that Yankunytjatjara items often appear as eastern Pitjantjatjara dialect forms or are simply listed as Pitjantjatjara. Despite this, however, a degree of confusion remains as to why Tindale includes the category Yankunytjatjara as a separate 'language' in the vocabulary.

The most significant finding is that the collection of vocabularies under the Pitjantjatjara banner appears to proceed independently of the tribal mapping project. This is seen most clearly with the listing of Yankunytjatjara placenames as Pitjantjatjara (recall that in the previous chapter it was seen that Tindale often uses locations to determine to which 'language' a wordlist belongs). From this it would appear that the vocabularies were collected for purposes other than tribal identification or validation. Moreover, it would appear, on this evidence at least, that Tindale's distinctions between Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara tribes, in linguistic terms, are superficial. That is, they are determined at the level of nomenclature rather than some deeper level of linguistic analysis (a practice Tindale has been criticised for in the past concerning other regions in Australia; see Sutton 1978, pp.20-1). This practice will be examined further when I consider Tindale's Antikirinya and Yankunytjatjara constructions in the following chapter.

It should be stressed that results of this analysis are valuable if only for the sake of clearing up the ambiguities associated with this aspect of the historical linguistic record. This applies in a practical sense to the use of these Tindale materials in legal and heritage contexts where they may easily be misinterpreted. Indeed, it was noted early in the discussion that there is a commonly-held assumption that Tindale recorded vocabularies primarily for the purposes of tribal identification, and while I have been able to pay only passing regard to his major collection of parallel vocabularies collected during and subsequent to the H-A expedition (Tindale 1938-63 MS), this assumption has a ring of truth to it. A significant result of this discussion reveals, however, that this perception is not entirely correct – with the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara*, at least, Tindale was engaged in

a level of linguistic activity over and above that required merely for the purpose of tribal identification. On the basis of the evidence presented in this chapter, it seems that, far from simply making a useful and objective record, Tindale was engaged in language making (Harris 1980) with his *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* and related linguistic activities. According to the theoretical perspective adopted in this thesis, it appears that there was no such thing as *the* Pitjatjantjara language until people like Tindale (and also notably Love and Trudinger) came along and started to codify or solidify a number of related speech varieties. In the case of Tindale's Pitjantjatjara material, this comes to a certain extent at the expense of Yankunytjatjara and other closely related speech varieties.

Another notable absence from the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* is any mention of 'Antikirinya'. In the following chapter I will offer an explanation for this, as well as provide a detailed examination of Tindale's sources for this term and the associated tribal territory.

## 6 The Antikirinya problem

The evidence on the question whether there is a separate group of Anangu who should properly be referred to as Antikirinya was contradictory and confusing.

O'Loughlin J., *De Rose v SA* [2002], para 144

### 6.0 Introduction

Having gained an appreciation of the wider contexts within which Tindale worked in the 1930s, I am now in a position to examine his Antikirinya representations. Earlier in this thesis I indicated that Tindale's neat arrangement of Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara territories is problematic for a number of reasons relating to Tindale's practice of imposing Western categories onto diverse indigenous practices (see chapter 2). There is an added gravity, however, to the question, for the nature of Tindale's representations in the north-west (particularly as relating to Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya) have played a significant role in the long-running Native title dispute over the De Rose Hill (DRH) pastoral station, currently (May 2003) on appeal to the Full Bench of the Federal Court. In such contexts, Tindale's representations have the power to impact on peoples' lives and are thus in need of serious reappraisal.

According to Tindale's 1940 tribal distribution map, Antikirinya tribal territory lies to the east of Yankunytjatjara territory as a clearly delineated and self-contained space (see figure 16). Another representation is found in the accompanying catalogue of tribes:

[The] head-waters of Hamilton, Alberga, Wintinna and Lora Creeks north to Erldunda, Central Australia; south to Stuart Range; at upper limits of Lilla Creek, but not extending down to the Finke River, which is Aranda country. (Movements since 1917 have taken portion of tribe south to Ooldea. Earlier movement was from west after massacre by them of some previous inhabitants of Mount Chandler district; closely related to Jangkundjara.) (1940, p.178)

As a preliminary point, it should be noted that, while Tindale introduces slight changes to both representations in the revised map and catalogue (1974), in the following discussion I will focus on the 1940 representations (for reasons given below, see section 6.2).

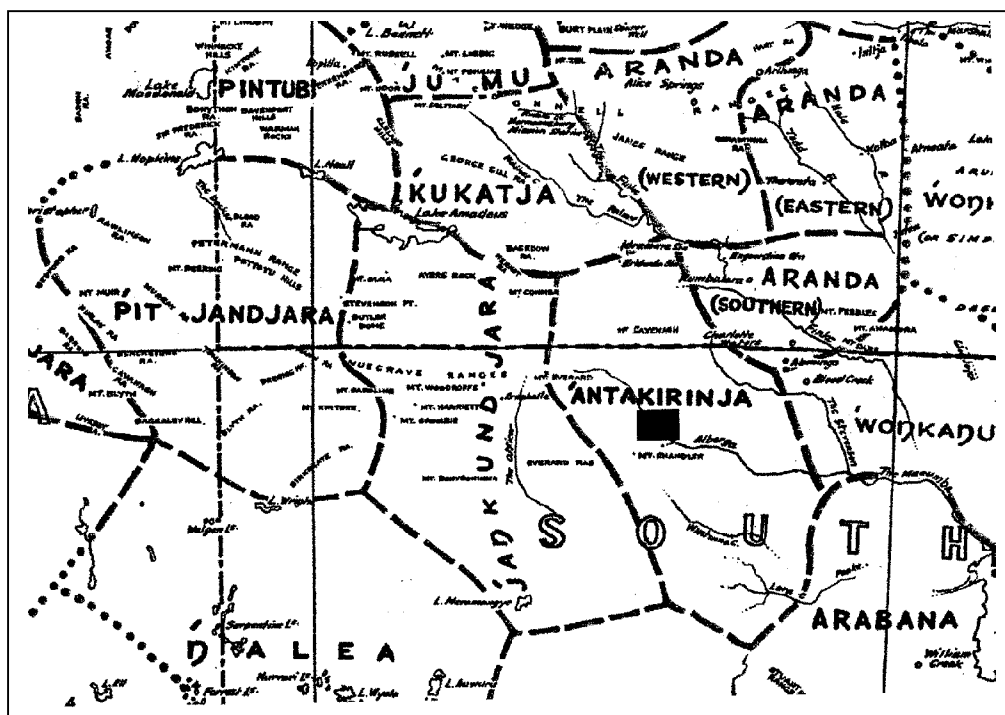


Figure 16. Section of Tindale's 1940 tribal distribution map showing the approximate location of the De Rose Hill pastoral station (shaded).

The discussion in this chapter is driven largely by the degree of contradiction and confusion encountered when these neat representations are placed against the wider historical literature and the claims of contemporary *anangu*. A close reading of the literature reveals a situation of far greater complexity and one imbued with a higher degree of ambiguity and fluidity than the one put forward by Tindale. For a start, the denotative range of the term 'Antikirinya' is often difficult to define, appearing at times to denote Arandic groups and at other times Western Desert groups. Further, contra Tindale, it appears unlikely that the term functioned grammatically as a 'proper tribal name' (Tindale

1974) in traditional settings<sup>1</sup>. When the number of inconsistencies found in Tindale's own handling of historical sources in the 1940 catalogue is added to this last point, the nature of Tindale's Antikirinya representations are seriously problematised.

A major aim of this chapter is to determine, on the basis of available manuscript materials, how Tindale arrived at his representations of the Antikirinya tribe and territory as represented in his 1940 catalogue and tribal distribution map. It is asked: how were they constructed, who were Tindale's main sources, what role did linguistic data play, and how does Antikirinya fit in with the wider context of his work in the 1930s?

In approaching these questions it is necessary to consider the nature of the relationship between Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya. A useful way into this difficult and often confusing matter is to consider the central role of Tindale's Antikirinya representations in the Native title dispute over DRH station. The power and influence of the Tindale position on Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya is particularly evident in the early pleadings of the dispute, in which the issue of upon whose traditional territory the DRH station is situated is vigorously contested. The nature of these pleadings and associated linguistic aspects of the case are discussed in section 6.1. Besides offering a way into the Antikirinya problem, the DRH dispute illustrates how readily Tindale's representations may be accepted and cited without serious examination; I argue that part of their power and influence resides in their ability to emerge intact from a situation where, at the very least, they should have been seriously questioned by all parties concerned. In spite of this neglect, the DRH dispute forms a useful launching point for the deeper probing of Tindale's Antikirinya representations that will be pursued in the body of this chapter, a discussion that will bring together the main themes of this thesis.

It should be stressed, however, that it is not intended for this chapter to provide a definitive answer to the question of the relationship between Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya either historically or as it stands at present, although these topics will arise in the course of discussion. Similarly, by using the phrase 'the Antikirinya problem' in the

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<sup>1</sup> Although there is some evidence to support the proposition that an Antikirinya identity developed or more specifically solidified on the pastoral country to the east of the area under study in the early post-contact period, owing largely to a lack of written evidence, and the ambiguous nature of the written reports that do survive, it is not possible to determine with any certainty when a distinct 'Antikirinya' group may have emerged.

title of this chapter, it is not suggested that ‘Antikirinya’ is a problem for those *anangu* who identify with the term; the problem is more one of the uses White observers and writers have made of it. At the end of the day, it is Tindale’s representations that I am most interested in tackling.

In section 6.2 I consider a range of Antikirinya literature sources represented in the historical record. The first part of this discussion focuses on Tindale’s Antikirinya literature sources as listed in the 1940 catalogue of tribes (section 6.2.1). This serves two main purposes: to highlight the apparent degree of contradiction or inconsistency in Tindale’s catalogue; and to help narrow the focus on the sources of information upon which he may have relied in the drawing of his Antikirinya boundaries. To supplement this discussion of Tindale’s 1940 sources I also consider two recent works that offer their own reviews of the historical literature relating to Antikirinya (section 6.2.2), with one work of particular interest for offering a linguistic argument against O’Grady and Klokeid’s (1969) claim based on lexicostatistical evidence that Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya are separate dialects of the Western Desert language, as well as (indirectly) the Tindale position. I then rejoin the task of focusing on Tindale’s sources for Antikirinya by discussing his manuscript sources (section 6.3), before attempting to view his Antikirinya representations through the frame provided by the wider context of his work in 1930s (section 6.4). A brief summary concludes this chapter (section 6.5).

## **6.1 Tindale’s representations in the De Rose Hill Native title claim**

A basic requirement of the *Native Title Act* 1993 is for claimants to demonstrate a continued *connection* to the claimed land from the time of sovereignty, a heavy burden for many claimant groups who must rely upon or contend with the whims of written records upon which they or their forebears had little influence or control. Apart from this, however, the connection criterion leaves open an obvious strategy to those opposing the claim – to demonstrate that the required connection has never existed or that it has been broken at some point since sovereignty.

In the DRH claim, the claimant group comprising Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara people, many of whom had lived and worked on the station for many years,

maintained that the station is on traditional Yankunytjatjara country. This proposition, however, runs counter to Tindale's account of Antikirinya tribal territory, according to which DRH station is squarely situated upon Antikirinya land (see figure 16 above)<sup>2</sup>. Not surprisingly then, the two groups opposing the claim, the State of South Australia and the DRH pastoralists, aligned themselves with the Tindale position. The State of SA maintained that Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya are distinct and separate groups (and that the Antikirinya had been displaced since sovereignty), while the pastoralists held that Antikirinya was the 'original land holding group' (*De Rose v SA* [2002], para 119), arguing in both cases that the claimants (or their antecedents) arrived at the DRH area at some time after sovereignty and hence did not satisfy the connection criterion.

Thus, from the earliest stages of the Native title dispute, the claimants' assertions were at odds with the orthodox ethnological position represented in the historical record. To counter this potentially fatal challenge, the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (on behalf of the claimants) asserted that Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya are different names for the same people (*De Rose v SA* [2002], para 118), carrying with it the implication that by dividing two territories that were essentially one, Tindale had unwittingly erred. In an attempt to buttress this assertion, ALRM appealed to linguistic evidence, with Cliff Goddard appearing as an expert witness for the claimants. In both written and oral testimony, Goddard explained to the court that Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya are terms denoting the same speech variety: but while Yankunytjatjara is a Western Desert speech label, Antikirinya is an exonym of Arandic origin. This enabled, Goddard argued, the same people to use the former term to distinguish themselves from Pitjantjatjara speakers to the west or to use the latter term to distinguish themselves from non-Western Desert groups to the east. In the final analysis, however, the judge was unswayed by Goddard's evidence<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that Tindale's map attempts to represent tribal distribution at the time of contact rather than at the time of sovereignty. The exact date of sovereignty in South Australia is a moot point: in 1825 the western boundary of NSW was extended to the position of the present boundary of WA, with 'South Australia' later emerging under the Colonisation Act of 1834, before final proclamation in 1836 (James Walkley, p.c.).

<sup>3</sup> Here is not the place to offer a detailed exegesis of Goddard's evidence or the problems O'Loughlin J. appeared to have encountered in grasping it (keeping in mind that the case is under appeal at the time of writing). Nevertheless, a few general comments can be made. While Goddard commented on a range of linguistic matters such as Western Desert placenames and the system of speech variety labels, the core of his evidence was directed towards an analysis of vocabularies in the historical linguistic record. In particular, the lexicostatistical work of O'Grady and Klokeid (1969), which claims that Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya are separate but closely related dialects of the Western Desert language, came under close scrutiny. Goddard attempted to refute O'Grady and Klokeid's position that Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya differ in 10% of their basic vocabulary (see O'Grady and Klokeid 1969, p.309), but his argument foundered under cross-

Without doubt, a significant cause of the contradiction and confusion encountered by the Court when considering the nature of the relationship between Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya was an apparent incongruity between the expert linguistic evidence and statements made by claimants and other *anangu* witnesses. While, as mentioned, Goddard maintained that the terms denote the same speech variety, *anangu* witnesses often denied any knowledge of the term ‘Antikirinya’ or appeared reluctant to speak on the matter – in some cases refusing to answer questions. From a legal point of view, obviously one would expect the expert witness and the claimants to concur on such matters. Part of the confusion may be put down to a temporal disjunction between the evidence of the expert and that of the *anangu* witnesses: while in the main Goddard was referring to strictly traditional *anangu* practices, *anangu* witnesses occasionally appeared to be mindful of contemporary land politics in the wider north-west region and to be unsettled by the claims of the Tindale map<sup>4</sup>. A further complicating factor is the ambiguity of whether the terms Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya were being used by witnesses to refer to a speech variety or a group of people. For example, when asked whether a person X (who self-identified as Antikirinya) was a Yankunytjatjara or an Antikirinya person, a common response of witnesses was that person X spoke Yankunytjatjara. This response does not directly address the question of whether or not person X identified as Antikirinya. In fact, it is fair to say that this type of ambiguity (which may largely be the result of a communication problem) remained throughout the hearing of evidence, and the failure by counsel to properly address the issue contributed in no small part to the contradiction and confusion found by the Court.

As it turned out, O’Loughlin J. made the important ruling that migration in the Western Desert may be considered a traditional activity, thereby ruling out any onus on the part of the claimants to prove genealogical descent from an ancestral group living on the claimed area at the time of sovereignty. A significant result of this decision was to render

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examination. While Goddard’s counter argument against the lexicostatistical evidence was effectively neutralised by the opposing counsel (on the basis that, even if the gap is reduced, shared language does not necessarily entail shared identity), a more fundamental problem with Goddard’s evidence remained for O’Loughlin J. – he simply could not accept that the same person could identify as Yankunytjatjara in one context and Antikirinya in another. More will be said on this point below.

<sup>4</sup> On the spectre of Tindale’s representations of the north-west, see *De Rose v SA* [2002], para 123. In Maggie Ward’s hesitant comments about the discomfort caused by the Antikirinya question for claimants with links well to the west, it is not difficult to trace the negative effects of the early Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya dispute on *anangu* witnesses. Tindale’s map is explicitly mentioned in pars 129-132, and it is important to note that the equivocation and reluctance to speak on the Antikirinya question appears to have detracted from the credibility of a number of witnesses in the Court’s estimation.

the early dispute over the exact nature of Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya territory a non-issue in the determination of Native title rights. By making this decision, however, O’Loughlin J. effectively sidestepped the issue of the claimants’ view about DRH station being on traditional Yankunytjatjara land. The upshot of this is that, ultimately, Tindale’s representations emerge from the dispute intact<sup>5</sup>.

From the perspective of this thesis, however, it is important to pursue the question of the reliability of Tindale’s Antikirinya representations.

## 6.2 Antikirinya literature sources

When it comes to considering the literature sources relating to Antikirinya, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that, when taken together, they exhibit a high degree of vagueness and variation in terms of linguistic, ethnological and spatial data. This is particularly apparent with the list of Tindale’s sources appearing in the 1940 catalogue of tribes. Although listed under ‘Antakerinja’, these sources appear to relate variously to Arandic, Arabanic and Western Desert groups. To say that this does not help in the task of establishing a clear picture of the location and extent of Antikirinya territory is a gross understatement. As this analysis moves through the discussion of Tindale’s sources listed in the 1940 catalogue of tribes (section 6.2.1), this will become readily apparent.

Before moving on to the catalogue entries, however, it is useful to elaborate a couple of methodological points in relation to the full discussion offered in this section. First, the majority of the sources discussed below date from the time of early contact up to the year 1940. This course is pursued in response to the fact that Tindale’s delineation of Antikirinya territory was effectively settled at some point prior to 1940. As noted above, Tindale’s representation of Antikirinya territory does change between the 1940 and 1974 maps, but the changes are relatively slight, owing mainly to the addition of a ‘new’ tribal

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<sup>5</sup> That is to say, the *status quo* with regard to the Tindale position remains intact. In his decision O’Loughlin J. makes a number of brief comments about boundaries, including a recognition based on Berndt (1959) that Tindale’s boundaries are not universally accepted (*De Rose v SA* [2002], para 301). This remains a general comment, however, and nothing of any clarity is offered on the question of the nature and ‘location’ of a Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya boundary. Indeed, O’Loughlin J. finds that there was ‘no consensus among the witnesses that would allow one to obtain a general understanding of the outer perimeters of their country’ (*De Rose v SA* [2002], para 908).

group, the Matuntara. Thus, by 1974 a roughly triangular section of country has been removed from the north-west corner of the 1940 Antikirinya territory. In my attempts to discover the basis upon which the Antikirinya boundaries were drawn, it is obviously more prudent to examine the pre-1940 data rather than the full Antikirinya sources in Tindale's oeuvre (including the expanded 1974 catalogue of tribes and other post-1940 manuscript material). To be sure, when examining post-1940 sources one cannot rule out the possibility that Tindale's 1940 representations may have played a role in their creation.

Having said this, some attempt to address the wider literature relating to Antikirinya between 1940 and the present appears in section 6.2.2. While not contributing to the question of how Tindale arrived at his Antikirinya representations *per se*, they are nevertheless important for highlighting the extent to which Tindale's constructions have been and still are influential, as well as suggesting where he may have been in error.

### **6.2.1 Tindale's 1940 sources**

In Tindale's 1940 catalogue of tribes one finds the following list of Antikirinya sources: Giles (in Taplin 1879), Krichauff (1886), Howitt (1891), Helms (1896), Mathews (1900), Bates (1918), Elkin (1931, 1938-40), Tindale (in Fenner 1936), and 'T.' (1940, p.178, see appendix 15). I will proceed by discussing each of these sources in turn before drawing a number of summary conclusions.

#### **(i) Giles (in Taplin 1879)**

These data were collected by Christopher Giles<sup>6</sup> at Charlotte Waters (in the Northern Territory) in reply to Taplin's survey, and are said to relate to the 'Antakerrinya tribe'. The most remarkable aspect of the data is that the language spoken by the tribe 'is called Arrinda' (in Taplin 1879, p.91)<sup>7</sup>. By considering other linguistic and ethnological information supplied by Giles, it is clear that this is an Arandic group rather than a Western

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<sup>6</sup> As noted by Peake-Jones (1985, p.57), Christopher Giles was 'an experienced bushman who had worked on the overland telegraph and had explored with Ernest Giles, Gosse and Tietkens'.

<sup>7</sup> Giles used only one informant, 'Atchata', but apart from his/her name no other direct biographical details are provided.

Desert group. Tindale eventually became aware of this incongruity, noting: ‘the data ostensibly on this tribe, supplied by Giles in Taplin (1879) and again in Fison and Howitt (1880), relate to the southern Aranda’ (1974, p.210). It would appear that Tindale assigned this source to the catalogue of tribes on the basis of its title rather than its contents, although, it is also possible that Giles’ account of ‘Antakerrinya’ tribal territory influenced his decision. According to Giles (in Taplin 1879, p.89), ‘Antakerrinya’ tribal territory is ‘between parallels 26° 15' and 25° 30', and meridians 134° and 130°’. This is a rather narrow (and unlikely) strip of country extending across the northern part of Tindale’s (1940) Antikirinya territory and continuing well to the west.

**(ii) Krichauff (1886)**

Tindale’s citing of this source is slightly more mysterious. Krichauff provides ethnological details on the ‘Aldolinga or Mbenderinga’ tribe, and the term ‘Antikirinya’ (or slight variation thereof) is not at any point used by the author. From information provided in the article, including terms for class divisions and a short vocabulary (24 words), it is clear that these data relate to an Arandic group (or groups). Indeed, it is difficult to determine the basis upon which this article constitutes a source for Antikirinya.

A comparison between the 1940 and 1974 catalogues does not shed much light on the matter and, in fact, serves only to increase the degree of confusion accompanying Tindale’s treatment of this source. Of the two terms, only Mbenderinga appears under ‘Antakirinja’ in the alternative name section of the 1940 catalogue (1940, p.178). A promising explanation for the omission of Aldolinga is that Tindale took cognisance of Krichauff’s gloss of this term as ‘westerly tribe’<sup>8</sup>, and regarded it as belonging to the category of ‘names derived from compass directions’ that are not proper tribal names (Tindale 1974, p.43). In the 1974 catalogue under ‘Antakirinja’, however, we find Aldolinga (accompanied by the gloss ‘Westerners’) appearing instead of Mbenderinga (1974, p.210). The situation becomes more confusing when it is considered that both Mbenderinga and Aldolinga are discussed under ‘Aranda’ (1974, pp.220-1), suggesting that at some point after 1940 Tindale became aware of his initial cataloguing error. But while Tindale tells us that Mbenderinga is the name of an Arandic horde who live along

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<sup>8</sup> Aldolinga is cognate with the Arrente *alturle* ‘west’; see Breen (1993, p.21).

the Finke River, Aldolinga is accompanied by the gloss ‘means easterners; a Kukatja name’ (1974, p.221). It remains unclear why Tindale (1974) should continue to list Aldolinga under ‘Antakirinja’ as ‘Westerners’ and at the same time list the term under ‘Aranda’ as derived from a Western Desert speech variety with the meaning ‘eastern’. Indeed, in Tindale’s own parallel vocabulary collected in 1956 (Tindale 1938-63 MS, p.245), one finds both Aranda *aldo:la* ‘west’ and Kukatja *kakarara* ‘east’, and it appears as though he did not pay sufficient regard to this linguistic material for the later (1974) representation (of course Kukatja speakers may have used the term to refer to easterners but that is not the provenance of the term). There is certainly a problem with consistency in the treatment of this source.

Leaving this confusion to one side (it is not crucial to my argument to untangle this knot) it is still not known how Tindale assigned this article as an Antikirinya source in the first instance. How did it come about that he cites Arandic sources for Antikirinya? I will return to this question in the summary discussion below.

Finally, it should be noted that Krichauff provides an approximate location of Aldolinga or Mbenderinga tribal country: they ‘inhabit the country between the James and MacDonnell ranges along the river Finke’ (1886, p.33).

### **(iii) Howitt (1891)**

As with the Krichauff article, Tindale’s citing of this source is somewhat mysterious. Howitt’s article is the source of Tindale’s putative alternative Antikirinya name ‘Yandairunga’, but this is clearly an error on Tindale’s part – the ethnological information appearing in this article relates to an Arabanic group(s) and the term ‘Antikirinya’ does not appear in the article.

Howitt’s source for the Yandairunga data was the pastoralist at Anna Creek station, John Hogarth, a correspondent who, with John Warren, also provided data to Curr<sup>9</sup>. The vocabulary provided by Hogarth and Warren to Curr is Arabanic (Hercus 1994, p.23), and so it appears is the ethnological data supplied by Hogarth to Howitt.

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<sup>9</sup> The vocabulary provided by Warren and Hogarth to Curr is entitled ‘West of Lake Eyre’ (Curr 1886-7, Vol.2, pp.16-7); see appendix 8.

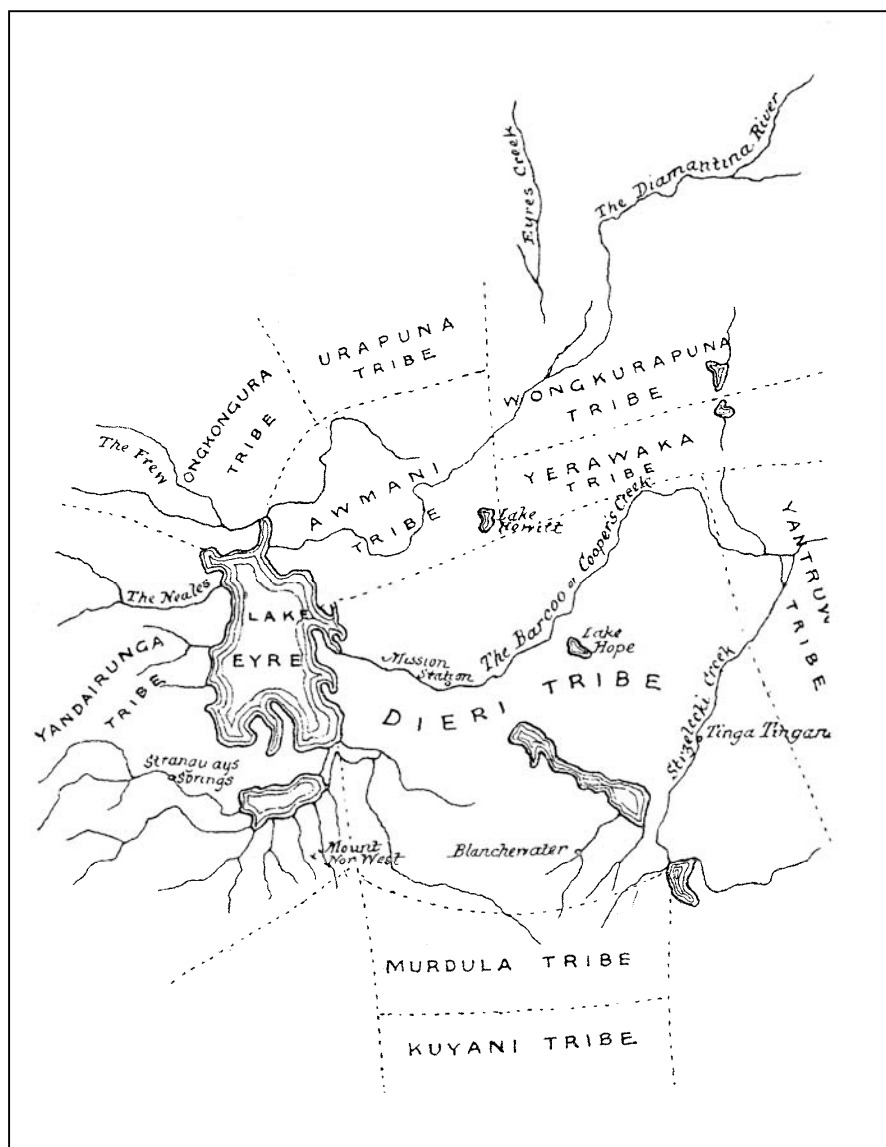


Figure 17. Map accompanying Howitt (1891).

Lastly, Yandairunga territory is given as: ‘the country extending from the western shores of Lake Eyre for about 140 miles, and in a north and south direction for the same distance south of the Peak’ (Howitt 1891, p.33-4, see figure 17)<sup>10</sup>.

**(iv) Helms (1896)**

Helms’ paper is important for providing an account of ‘Andijirigna’ tribal territory and a comparative vocabulary. This information was obtained from an informant he

<sup>10</sup> The Peak was formerly an overland telegraph station to the south of Oodnadatta.

describes as ‘the half-caste, Billy Weaver, living at Warrina’ (1896, pp.313-6). Helms informs us that he is ‘intelligent’, was born at Pt Lincoln (at the southern point of the Eyre Peninsula well to the south), and that he had spent some time living on the Diamantina River in south-west Queensland. He had been living at Warrina, the rail terminus point, for an undisclosed length of time, but evidently long enough to have gathered some knowledge of local language and customs.

According to Weaver:

The territory of the Andijirigna extends from Alberga north to Mount Eba south; to the west past the Musgrave Range, and in the east it joins the territory of the Wungarabunna [Arabana] .... Wungaranda [Arrernte] joins the Wungarabunna and Andijirigna tribes. (Helms 1896, pp.276-7)

The most significant aspect of this account for this analysis is the claim that Antikirinya territory extends in a westerly direction past the western end of the Musgrave Ranges. While this is the first indication in the literature of the term being used with a meaning similar to ‘westerner’ for Western Desert people, the extent of Antikirinya territory appears to be relatively ‘open-ended’ in a westerly direction when compared with later ethnographic accounts. This supports the notion that at the time Antikirinya was used as an umbrella term for a number of Western Desert-speaking groups.

Helms was the first observer to record the term ‘Antikirinya’ in association with Western Desert speech. While at Warrina, Helms recorded a parallel vocabulary of dialects (his term), including Wangarabunna (Arabana), Diyeri (Dieri) and Andijiringna (Antikirinya). The linguistic material appearing under the ‘Andijiringna’ column of the comparative table, however, appears on the whole to be sketchy and ambiguous. Although Weaver provides a relatively large number of Arabana and Dieri words (100+ and 80+ respectively), only 15 Antikirinya terms appear, many of which appear to mirror the words in the Arabana column rather than constitute words from a Western Desert speech variety (compare the forms under ‘come here!’, ‘breasts’, ‘one’, and the four cardinal directions, for example; Helms 1896, pp.313-6). Most of the remaining forms are recognisable as Western Desert words. While there may be a number of possible explanations for this, there may have been a koine developing at the Warrina camp (such as reported for Ooldea, Port Augusta and other major contact centres), or Weaver may have had little knowledge

of western speech varieties, a view supported by the low number of words recorded for Antikirinya overall. Realistically speaking though, it is too difficult to tell from the scant evidence at hand what the speech situation may have been at Warrina in 1891 – how many speakers of ‘Andijirigna’ were present, whether they were multilingual, and what other speech varieties were spoken there.

**(v) Mathews (1900)**

Mathews appears to be another observer who confuses Western Desert groups and Arandic groups, in his case by appealing to a rather dubious ethnological construct called ‘the Andigarina Nation, consisting of the Andigarina, Loorudgee [Luritja] and Arrinda [Arrernte] tribes’ (1900, p.93). It would appear that much of the support for this super-tribal construct derives from Mathews’ belief that the Antikirinya and Arrernte speak similar languages and share aspects of social organisation, a view existing in the literature at the time, as seen in the discussion of Giles (in Taplin 1879) above. Linguistically speaking, however, there is an obvious inconsistency between Mathews’ claim and the evidence provided by the linguistic materials collected in the north-west region prior to 1900 (discussed earlier in this thesis in relation to the Elder expedition). Clearly Mathews is incorrect on this point. Secondly, Elkin’s work in the north-west in 1930 shows that Mathews was in error when ascribing intermarrying sections to Western Desert groups in this area (see Elkin 1931).

Leaving these problems to one side, Antikirinya tribal distribution is given as follows:

Bounding the Arrabunna on the northwest are the Andigarina and friendly tribes, occupying the country up the Alberga river to the Musgrave range, and onward to the Petermann ranges and Lake Amadeus, where they meet the Loorudgee tribe. (Mathews 1900, p.89)

This view is not inconsistent with that provided by Helms (1896), although the phrase ‘and friendly tribes’ is particularly ambiguous – how are we to delineate which part of this broad swathe of territory belongs to Antikirinya and which to the ‘friendly tribes’?

Obviously we cannot from this information alone<sup>11</sup>. A copy of the map accompanying Mathews (1900) is provided in appendix 2.1.

**(vi) Bates (1918)**

Bates's comment regarding Antikirinya is brief and particularly ambiguous in terms of the location of Antikirinya country. The sole comment on Antikirinya appearing in this article is found in a list entitled 'tribal or local group names'. Bates writes: 'andingiri. North of Nalia wçNga'(1918, p.161). Under 'Nalia wçNga' in the same list one finds: '(Nalia, our). North of Boundary Dam, in the (Musgrave (?)) ranges' (1918, p.161). Again, much of the geographical ambiguity remains, a situation not helped by the fact that Antikirinya tribal or local group status is not distinguished and linguistic material is not provided.

**(vii) Elkin (1931)**

This and the following Elkin source would no doubt have carried significant weight in Tindale's calculations, representing the first recordings for the north-west by a professional anthropologist. In the following passage Elkin provides some indication of Antikirinya territory as well as a number of linguistic observations:

The Western Group of South Australian tribes is characterized by a remarkable unity of language, mythology and social organization. A knowledge of one language, the Madu, is sufficient for most of the area, though there are various dialects. One of these, commonly called the Antigerinya, is spoken from Oodnadatta west to the Everard Ranges. *This name, however, denotes the people or the language in the west ...* (1931, pp.60-1, emphasis added)

While Elkin's account of Antikirinya territory is short on specifics, it is possible to conclude that he gives a much narrower account of its extent than that offered by Helms and Mathews. In the map accompanying the article, the name 'Antikirinya' does not appear, remaining subsumed under Elkin's umbrella term 'Madutara' (see appendix 2.5).

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<sup>11</sup>It is apposite at this point to cite Elkin's comment when discussing Mathews' work on western South Australia that 'at the turn of the [twentieth] century, this vast arid region was, anthropologically speaking, a blank' (Elkin 1976, p.220).

Elkin's use of this latter term is of interest for two reasons: firstly, for providing an early appreciation of the similarities between Western Desert speech varieties (or 'dialects'); and secondly, for the implication that Antikirinya is therefore a Western Desert rather than Arandic or Arabanic speech variety. Of particular relevance for our purposes is his gloss of 'Antikirinya' as a way of referring to 'the people or the language in the west'. Thus, even before considering the etymological evidence for the origin of the term (section 6.2.2), one is alerted to the fact that a likely origin will be found in the pastoral country around and to the east of Oodnadatta.

Elkin's observations arise from fieldwork conducted in 1930, when he travelled as far west as Ernabella with the assistance of E.A. Colson, who, as noted already, ran Bloods Creek station to the north of Oodnadatta. Colson continued to correspond with Elkin after the 1930 fieldtrip, and later became an important informant for Tindale. Colson's role in the construction of Antikirinya is discussed in more detail in sections 6.3 and 6.4.

**(viii) Elkin (1938-40)**

This source requires little comment other than that the relevant Antikirinya remarks are slightly more specific in terms of territory than those offered above and that the name 'Andekarinja' appears in the map accompanying the article (see appendix 2.6). Elkin does not appear to have conducted subsequent fieldwork in the north-west for this long article, which draws on his 1930 research, literature sources and correspondence. The following passage is the most direct (albeit still vague) reference to Antikirinya country and language:

At the stations on the Alberga there were some natives who had drifted east from the Everard Ranges. The Aborigines on the Alberga and west to the Everard Ranges are often referred to locally as the Anti-gerinya (Andekarinya), a word which denotes their language. (1938-40, p.204)

**(ix) Tindale (in Fenner 1936)**

Tindale contributed data for the tribal distribution sketch map that appears with this article (see figure 18, where Antikirinya as 'Andekeringa' is found in the top left corner).

The boundaries on this map, drawn at some point between 1934 and 1936, are clearly intended only to provide a rough indication of tribal distribution.

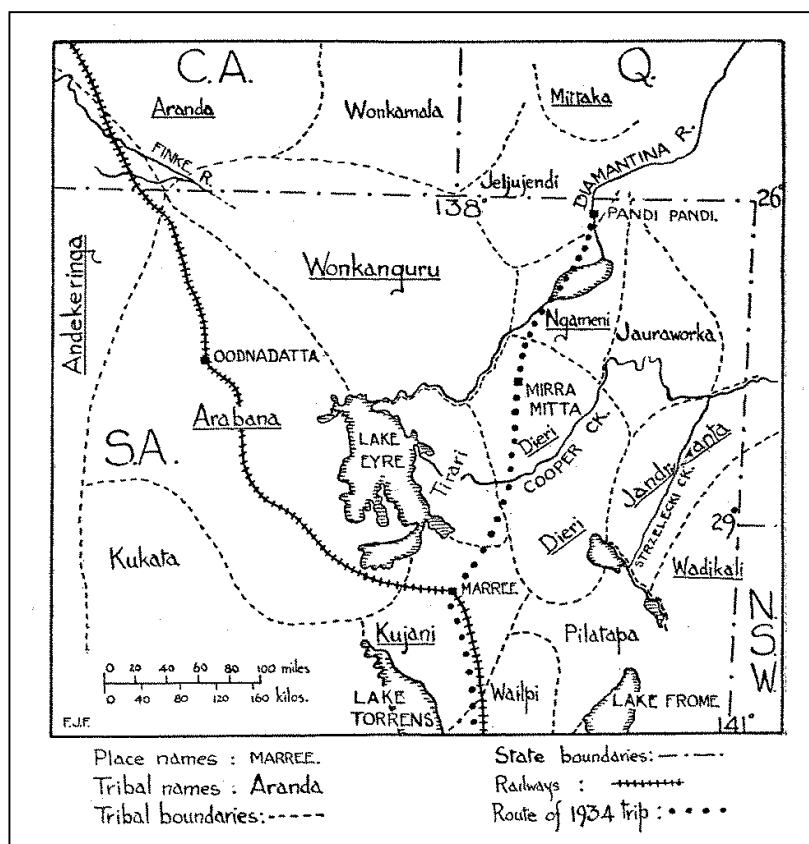


Figure 18. Map accompanying Fenner (1936).

(x) T.

According to Tindale, the capital letter 'T' indicates: 'new data in the present author's possession' (1940, p.147). This is likely to represent data on Antikirinya tribal distribution and a small vocabulary collected during the 1938-9 Harvard-Adelaide expedition. These will be discussed with Tindale's other manuscript materials in section 6.3.

To begin a summary of the above sources, it is necessary to make the general but nevertheless important observation that when the non-Tindale sources are compared, sources (i) – (viii), there is such a high degree of variation and ambiguity in terms of tribal distribution data that it can be concluded safely that Tindale's manuscript material must hold the key to his delineation of Antikirinya territory. That is, the data provided by

sources (i) – (viii) seem simply too varied in temporal terms and too varied and vague in spatial terms to enable one to imagine how they could have allowed Tindale to emerge with the following account of Antikirinya tribal territory:

[The] head-waters of Hamilton, Alberga, Wintinna and Lora Creeks north to Erldunda, Central Australia; south to Stuart Range; at upper limits of Lilla Creek, but not extending down to the Finke River, which is Aranda country. (1940, p.178)

It should be remembered that Tindale's efforts are directed towards giving an account of Antikirinya territory before the disruptions brought by contact, which for the sake of argument we may put at the early 1870s<sup>12</sup>. With this in mind, it can readily be appreciated that sources (i) – (viii) pose a problem: their data range over a 60 year period (using the figures 1879-1939) and do not provide any sort of guarantee for Tindale that their authors observed his important criterion. Elkin's account, for example, comes some 60 years after contact and appears to report on the contemporaneous situation. Apart from this problem, the sheer variation and ambiguity in spatial terms makes it a difficult exercise to attempt to create a composite map of the various accounts of Antikirinya territory provided by sources (i) – (viii) for the purpose of illustrating this discussion. Even leaving to one side the spatial vagueness of these sources, it still seems that there is no common core territory described by them.

Another point to emerge from the above discussion is the degree of contradiction that exists among the early sources which mention the term 'Antikirinya' (or variation thereof), namely, in Giles (in Taplin 1879), Helms (1896), Mathews (1900) and Elkin (1931). The degree of contradiction and variation among these sources exists quite independently of Tindale's treatment of them in his 1940 catalogue of tribes. Much of this reflects back on the issue of whether the term relates to Arandic or Western Desert groups, certainly a cause of some confusion. This issue will be resolved in section 6.2.2 in my discussion of the recent work of Naessan (2000 MS), but having said this, it is still necessary to make a comment on Tindale's treatment of Giles, a point to which I will now turn.

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<sup>12</sup> As noted earlier, this is the time of the construction of the overland telegraph and the setting up of pastoral stations to the east of the area under study. Arguably, this date may range to c1890 for the country further west (within South Australia), but the situation remains unclear because of what may be called the 'vacuum effect', which (again, arguably) led to the movement of western groups into country vacated by those who had moved towards the eastern contact zones.

The most perplexing issue arising from Tindale's 1940 sources is the mis-assigning of sources (i) – (iii), which clearly relate to Arandic and Arabanic groups. This is certainly an issue that demands further comment, for, as I shall reveal when we consider the work of Shaw and Gibson (1988) in the following section, errors such as these are often reproduced by those who uncritically rely upon Tindale's views as the basis of their own work. That is, this analysis serves to illustrate the danger of accepting the 'knowledge' such historical sources purport to represent at face value, an error which anthropologists, linguists and lawyers have fallen into in the past.

In the case of (i) Giles, it can readily be appreciated that this is a simple error on Tindale's part – Giles, after all, does have 'Antakerrinya' in the title – although it also suggests that Tindale did not turn his mind to studying the full contents of Giles' text. On this evidence it seems that Tindale was far more concerned with names and boundaries than with the ethnological and linguistic materials contained in this source<sup>13</sup>.

With regard to sources (ii) Krichauff and (iii) Howitt, interpretation is far more difficult: 'Antikirinya' is not mentioned in these texts, so one must find another basis for how they were assigned to the catalogue. Given the aims of Tindale's work, a possible explanation is that this is done on the basis of the geographical locations provided by Krichauff and Howitt. These authors provide respective accounts of Aldolinga and Yandairunga territory that appear reasonably contiguous to Tindale's 1940 Antikirinya territory. The fact that these remain outside of the 1940 boundaries, however, casts doubt on the efficacy of this explanation, at least to the extent that it may be taken as the sole reason for Tindale's actions. Help in this matter is provided by a noticeable pattern in the sources whereby authors suggest a gloss of the term under discussion as 'western' or 'westerners'. As I have indicated, Krichauff glosses 'Aldolinga' as 'westerly tribe' and for Elkin (1931) Antikirinya refers to the 'people or the language in the west'. Now if one considers information contained in Helms (1896), a case can be made, albeit speculatively (and counterfactually), that has Howitt's Yandairunga fitting the same pattern. In Helms' comparative vocabulary one finds the following entries (1896, p.316):

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<sup>13</sup> This still seems apparent as late as 1974, where, under 'Aranda' (1974, p.221) Tindale claims that Giles was in error in ascribing the social organisation data to Antikirinya and does not mention the vocabulary contained in the survey response. However, Tindale may be incorrect on this point. An observation by Gillen that has only recently come to light suggests that 'the Southern Arunta often speak of themselves as Antikirunya' (in Mulvaney *et al.*, 1997, p.434). The important implication is that in the nineteenth century the term Antikirinya denoted a number of different groups – more will be said on this below.

| English | Wangarabunna | Diyeri                    | Andijiringna |
|---------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| West    | Yandauirra   | Yandauirra,<br>Yandakurra | Yandauirra   |

Figure 19. Extract from Helms (1896, p.316).

On one hand, the entry under ‘Andijiringna’ is inconsistent with the expected Western Desert form: *wilurara* (I have already mentioned that Helms’ informant, Billy Weaver, appears to display a very limited knowledge of ‘Andijiringna’ speech). On the other hand, it is not difficult to see how one could arrive at the conclusion that it is cognate with ‘Yandairunga’ and to take the further step to consider it an alternative form for Antikirinya (if, as Elkin suggests, Antikirinya denotes the people or language to the west). Interestingly, the second entry under the Diyeri column provides a form cognate with Antikirinya – ‘yandakurra’, but this seems to have been missed by Tindale. While this analysis is largely speculative, we do know at least that Tindale took seriously Helms’ vocabularies, at least so far as his own Pitjantjatjara vocabularies are concerned (see chapter 5). The implication here is that Tindale seems to look for terms cognate with ‘west, westerners’ along the eastern fringe of the Western Desert area and include them as alternative terms for Antikirinya. Although this may appear messy and perhaps unconvincing owing to the lack of direct comment on the matter by Tindale himself, and the fact that he appears often to have ignored data in vocabularies elsewhere, there is a logic to it<sup>14</sup>.

Whether or not this is an accurate account of Tindale’s activities, the fact remains that with these sources he does not pay enough regard to the vocabularies and other ethnological information they contain, again highlighting his focus on tribal names and tribal distribution data. It does, however, seem the best explanation for what is otherwise a confusing and contradictory situation.

<sup>14</sup> It should also be remembered that Tindale sought to divest the term ‘Antikirinya’ of its compass point association; see the discussion in chapter 2.

## 6.2.2 Recent literature

In this section we consider two recent works that provide reviews of the ethnological/linguistic literature in which references to Antikirinya appear. The first, Bruce Shaw and Jen Gibson's *Invasion and Succession* (1988), was researched as part of a heritage survey of the Oodnadatta region, and, besides Antikirinya, also comments on the history of groups such as Arabana and Lower Southern Aranda. While aspects of their handling of written historical sources are discussed below, a notable product of their work – a sizable corpus of oral history narratives – is not discussed<sup>15</sup>. The second, Petter Naessan's *Manta Tjamuku, Manta Kamiku – Grandfather Country, Grandmother Country* (2000 MS), was produced as an MA thesis at the University of Adelaide. A linguistic study based largely on published and archival materials, this work also draws on fieldwork conducted at locations near Coober Pedy.

While both works stand in their own right as significant contributions to our understanding of the contemporary Antikirinya situation, a major criticism, from the perspective of this thesis, is that both fail to question Tindale's constructions of the Antikirinya tribe and tribal territory in the 1930s<sup>16</sup>. Shaw and Gibson appear to fall into the trap of accepting the canonical Tindale position without reading the fine print, so to speak. That is, the apparent shallowness of their reading of Tindale (while at the same time according canonical status to Tindale's views on related 'Antikirinya' literature sources) results in a number of interpretive errors. Keeping in mind the degree of confusion and inconsistency surrounding Tindale's Antikirinya constructions, Shaw and Gibson in effect further muddy what are already opaque waters<sup>17</sup>. For his part, Naessan studiously avoids the issue of Antikirinya territory; working in the highly politicised Native title era, this

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<sup>15</sup> From these oral accounts it would be exceedingly difficult to distil a coherent or concise account of Antikirinya territory. It is perhaps for this reason that Shaw and Gibson cite Tindale's representation for this purpose, see below.

<sup>16</sup> Oodnadatta and Coober Pedy are recognised today as the main centres of communities who identify as Antikirinya. It should also be noted that the literature reviews of neither Shaw and Gibson nor Naessan are exhaustive, owing no doubt to methodological constraints such as time and space, as well as the particular foci of their research. For Naessan, this is also partly owing to his ethical stance, which precluded consultation with a body of manuscript and published materials that could potentially contain restricted information (Petter Naessan, p.c.). Finally, it is hardly surprising that Bruce Shaw, a well-regarded oral historian, appears to concentrate on oral rather than written accounts.

<sup>17</sup> To be fair to Shaw and Gibson, Tindale's manuscript materials may not have been available for scrutiny at the time of their research. This does not affect their (mis)handling of Tindale's published material, however.

choice, while perhaps overly cautious, is understandable. In other respects, Naessan's work provides a more thorough examination of the literature than Shaw and Gibson's, most notably with his discussion of the origin and past use of the term 'Antikirinya'. This and other relevant aspects of Naessan's (2000 MS) study will be discussed below.

While Naessan's work certainly sheds light on the Antikirinya question, and serves as a useful launching point for our discussion to follow, Shaw and Gibson's work does not contribute much to our understanding of the historical sources. As mentioned, Shaw and Gibson rely on Tindale for their account of Antikirinya tribal territory, which they provide as follows:

The Antakarinja by the 1970s lived within a territory bounded by the 'headwaters of Hamilton, Alberga, Wintinna, and Lora rivers north to Kulgera in central Australia; south to Mount Willoughby, Arckaringa, and the Stuart Range north of Coober Pedy which is in Kokata country. Their boundary with the Matuntara falls generally at the northern margin of the blue-bush covered plains; they do not venture into the more wooded hilly country further north; at their southern boundary the country drops away to gibber plains'. (Shaw and Gibson 1988, p.20; quoted passage is from Tindale 1974, p.210)

Now this is a clear example of misinterpreting Tindale's catalogue and map; Tindale's boundaries are intended to represent pre-contact arrangements (about 100 years earlier in this case) and are not statements about the living arrangements of Antikirinya (or other people for that matter) in the 1970s<sup>18</sup>. A further misrepresentation of Tindale on Antikirinya is presented in the following passage:

The Antakarinja according to Tindale 'are said to speak Aluritja by the Aranda, with rude implications. Another general term for their language is Aluna ... it is a Pitjandjara or Kukatja-like speech ... The data, ostensibly on this tribe ... relate to the southern Aranda'. (Shaw and Gibson 1988, p.21; the ellipses are Shaw and Gibson's)

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<sup>18</sup> Shaw and Gibson are not alone in making this type of misreading. As pointed out earlier in this thesis, in his important linguistic survey of Australia, Capell refers to Tindale (1940) and the accompanying map in the following terms: 'Mr. Tindale has given the most accurate locations possible for the various languages. These have been used as the basis for the locations given in this work' (1963, p.vi). Again, this neglects the fact that the locations are meant to be at the time of contact.

Some confusion is created here by Shaw and Gibson's use of ellipses: without recourse to the original text (Tindale 1974, p.210), it would appear from this quotation that Tindale considers all Antikirinya data to 'relate to the southern Aranda'. In fact, Tindale only considers Giles' data to relate to the 'southern Aranda', and not all of the sources included in the catalogue of tribes under the 'Antakirinja' heading<sup>19</sup>. While this appears to be simple misquotation, it does not instil in one a sense of confidence that in their review of the historical literature the authors are both comfortable and familiar with the sources under discussion. This concern is further highlighted by their conclusion with regard to the early sources of Giles (in Taplin 1879), Krichauff (1886) and Helms (1896), namely, that they 'seem to agree on the circumstances for the Antakarinja ... at that time' (Shaw and Gibson 1988, p.24)<sup>20</sup>. In light of the discussion in section 6.2.1, in which I argued that there is a good deal of variation and vagueness in these sources, this conclusion must be regarded as false. Part of the problem appears to result from Shaw and Gibson's failure to properly appreciate that Giles' data refer to a non-Western Desert group (despite the fact that Tindale points this out in 1974, which they misquote above) and accepting 'on faith' Tindale's recognition of 'Aldolinga' as an alternative name for Antikirinya (see Shaw and Gibson 1988, p.22).

These criticisms draw attention both to the power of Tindale's constructions and the way in which Tindale's errors can proliferate by an uncritical acceptance of them as correct or authoritative. As a result, a significant ambiguity in the literature remains unresolved: why is it the case that some early sources treat Antikirinya as an Arandic group while others refer to a Western Desert group(s)?

By considering Naessan (2000 MS), some progress is made towards clarifying this situation. The question of the relationship between Antikirinya and Yankunytjatjara is of particular concern to Naessan, whose thesis devotes much space to attempting to reconcile statements made by his informants that Antikirinya and Yankunytjatjara are 'one and the

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<sup>19</sup> Tindale writes: 'the data, ostensibly on this tribe, *supplied by Giles in Taplin (1879) and again in Fison and Howitt (1880)*, relate to the southern Aranda' (Tindale 1974, p.210, emphasis added).

<sup>20</sup> In full, Shaw and Gibson write: 'the reports by Taplin, Krichauff, Helms, Howitt, and Spencer and Gillen seem to agree on the circumstances for the Antakarinja and the Arabana at that time' (1988, p.24). The latter two are evidently listed as Arabana sources, as Shaw and Gibson note that in Spencer and Gillen (1912) 'the Antakarinja are scarcely mentioned' (1988, p.23) and the tribal name does not appear on Howitt's (1904) map.

same speech' (2000 MS, p.78) with the orthodox position represented in the historical record that they are separate but closely related dialects (or speech varieties)<sup>21</sup>. Naessan offers an argument against the orthodox position that for the sake of discussion may be referred to as the lexicostatistical argument. A second argument is also offered, which may be called the etymological argument, in an attempt to clear up some of the ambiguity surrounding the term 'Antikirinya' in the early historical sources. While these arguments are certainly useful in broadening our understanding of the Antikirinya question, they are not entirely convincing, as shall be seen.

### (i) The lexicostatistical argument

Naessan's lexicostatistical argument (2000 MS, pp.25-34) is aimed squarely at O'Grady and Klokeid's (1969, p.309) claim that Antikirinya and Yankunytjatjara are separate dialects of the Western Desert language. O'Grady and Klokeid's claim is made on the basis of the two speech varieties sharing 90% of basic vocabulary, a position Naessan rejects largely on methodological grounds. There are two main thrusts to Naessan's critique. The first casts doubt on the internal consistency of O'Grady and Klokeid's interpretation of their data (Naessan claims they see difference where there may in fact be none, thus the putative 10% gap in shared basic vocabulary is slightly reduced)<sup>22</sup>. The second appeals to the high degree of synonymy in Western Desert speech varieties for which the Swadesh test was neither designed to capture nor to take into account<sup>23</sup>. Naessan explores the possibility that a number of the vocabulary distinctions listed by O'Grady and

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<sup>21</sup> A central concept in Naessan's thesis is that expressed by the term 'Antikirinya-Yankunytjatjara', which is explained as referring to 'Yankunytjatjara language spoken by Antikirinya' (2000 MS, p.1). Now it should be noted that Naessan's conclusions, one of which is that Antikirinya and Yankunytjatjara have not been shown validly to be separate dialects, need to be tempered with an appreciation that Naessan's research was conducted in the Native title era and perhaps reflects contemporary politics rather than the situation in the 1930s when Tindale researched the issue, or for that matter at the time of first contact. A similar construction to that used by Naessan is 'Yankunytjatjara/Antikirinya', which is the name of a current Native title claim in the north-west (registered with the Native Title Tribunal as SC97/009). This issue aside, Naessan ultimately concludes that further research is needed to provide a fuller understanding of the relationship between Antikirinya and Yankunytjatjara.

<sup>22</sup> A difference identified by O'Grady and Klokeid of a doubtful nature is the following example listed under 'hungry': Yankunytjatjara – 'anma' and Antikirinya – 'anymatyara' (or *anymatjara* in contemporary P/Y orthography). This appears to reflect more upon the recording process than upon any lexical difference between the speech varieties. The difference is merely based upon the absence or presence of the '-tjara' suffix, which is not considered to be a significant difference in the north-west (see also Goddard's evidence during the DRH hearings on this point, especially *De Rose v SA*, SG6001/1996, 29 August 2001, pp.1934-49).

<sup>23</sup> O'Grady and Klokeid actually use a slightly modified version of Swadesh's 100 word list.

Klokeid may be investigator-induced rather than reflective of Yankunytjatjara or Antikirinya speech varieties, which may share as synonyms the terms upon which difference is suggested. Thus, as Naessan suggests, ‘if there were no distinctive words operative between “Antikirinya” and “Yankunytjatjara” the most probable option would be that there were in fact not two speech forms [i.e., speech varieties]’ (Naessan 2000 MS, p.33).

While the first part of Naessan’s counter argument appears valid, the second is not without its own methodological problems. This becomes clear when it is considered that much of Naessan’s evidence offered in support of his claims is drawn from research conducted at disparate areas in the wider Western Desert region during the 1970s and 1980s<sup>24</sup>. That is to say, the fact that contemporary *anangu* claim Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya to be ‘one and the same speech’ does not prove that this was the case 30 years earlier. Thus, while Naessan’s argument on this point appears to be intuitively well-directed, it remains suggestive rather than demonstrative<sup>25</sup>.

## (ii) The etymological argument

As mentioned, this argument is an attempt to clarify the denotative range of the term ‘Antikirinya’ in the early historical sources: why does it appear to refer both to Arandic and Western Desert groups? By considering the early historical sources as well as more recent etymological evidence, Naessan concludes that the term ‘Antikirinya’ had a dual existence at the turn of the twentieth century: on the one hand as a Western Desert

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<sup>24</sup> Naessan draws on the work of Hansen (1984), Hansen and Hansen (1992) and Goddard (1996) for this aspect of his argument.

<sup>25</sup> In his DRH testimony dealing with the same O’Grady and Klokeid paper, Goddard falls into similar spatial and temporal problems. In essence, Goddard attempted to show that Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya may be the same speech variety by locating most of O’Grady and Klokeid’s Antikirinya words in his Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara dictionary (Goddard 1996). Any force this line of argument may have had was eventually nullified by the basic fact, conceded by Goddard, that even if the two speech varieties are the same, this does not preclude the existence of a separate Antikirinya identity. Unfortunately, Goddard had not had the opportunity to conduct research on the issue of Antikirinya identity. It is worth noting that a further avenue for enquiry not mentioned by either Naessan or Goddard is the role Tindale’s representations may have played in O’Grady and Klokeid’s work. In the preliminary discussion to their work, as quoted earlier in this thesis, O’Grady and Klokeid state: ‘the primary source for names of speech communities was Tindale’s 1940 map’ (1969, p.301), perhaps not suggesting that they may have assumed in advance that Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya are separate dialects, but at least directing the course of their research. They could have chosen a number of different speech varieties for their research, such as, to list but a few, Mulatjara, Matutjara or Walarinkunytjatjara. This serves to reiterate the concern with the influence of Tindale’s representations and the need to examine them with care.

proper noun; and on the other as an Arandic spatial adverb referring to ‘southerners’ (see Naessan 2000 MS, pp.61-5).

Naessan begins by considering both ‘westerner’ and ‘southern’ as possible etymological derivations of the term ‘Antikirinya’ (2000 MS, pp.61-2). Notably, Henderson and Dobson’s (1994, p.154) gloss of ‘antekeerrenye’ as ‘southern’ is preferred over Wilkins and Petch’s suggestion that ‘Antikerinia’ denotes westerners (they write: ‘from *Antekerre* west (according to Tindale) and *-arenye* denizen of; originating from’, in Mulvaney *et al.*, 1997, p.492). Naessan makes this choice after weighing up the sources available to him. It is important to point out, however, that this does not need to be viewed as an either/or situation. A consideration of the work of Breen (1993) suggests that it is perfectly consistent to accept both etymologies of the term<sup>26</sup>.

Naessan’s finding that the term had multiple denotative applications is a significant one<sup>27</sup>, although in the context of this thesis it is important to criticise the distinction made between the grammatical functions of the term. The claim that it functioned (at the turn of the twentieth century) as a Western Desert proper noun is made on the basis of slim evidence, provided by Helms (1896). It is more than likely that Helms imposed this function himself, with his informant, Billy Weaver, using the term as a spatial adverb to refer (rather ambiguously) to westerners. Of course, this is difficult to prove, and can only be maintained on the balance of probabilities after considering a wide range of sources (more support for this reading is offered below). As we have seen in earlier chapters (especially chapters 2 and 3), the notion of a proper noun is exceedingly problematic in that, in certain indigenous contexts, it often appears as an introduced post-contact concept. Importantly, if this point is conceded, the door is left open to the implication that, as a

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<sup>26</sup> In taking up the question identified by Tindale (1974) of the variations in compass point terms across Australia, Breen (1993) offers an explanation in terms of the rotation of compass point terms through a 90° arc. Significantly, as shown at table 3 (Breen 1993, p.21) there is a rotation between Arandic areas in the Northern Territory and Arandic areas in South Australia. This makes it possible to use the term to refer to southerners in the first case and westerners in the latter. I would like to thank Petter Naessan for discussions on this point. Before moving on it is also worth noting that Tindale seems to have suffered some confusion himself over this issue. We have seen him attempting to divest the term of its western association, but he also recorded the term with the gloss ‘southern people’ from Tommy Dodd (Tindale 1963b MS, p.71), who was originally from Henbury, and turned out to be one of his main sources on Antikirinya in the 1950s and 1960s. Tindale does not appear to have published this information from Dodd.

<sup>27</sup> For one thing, it shows that the situation is more complex than that suggested by Patrick McConvell, an adherent of the ‘southern’ view, who holds that there has been a language shift for this originally Arandic speaking group caused by the easterly migration of Western Desert speakers (McConvell 2002, p.267).

compass point term, a number of Western Desert groups may have fallen under the umbrella of its denotative function. This view gains some support by considering the more ‘open-ended’ accounts of Antikirinya territory in the historical record (as seen in section 6.2.1, but more on this below).

It is upon the use of the term to denote westerners that I will now focus, for it promises to shed light on the Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya relationship that has been the cause of so much confusion. A good example of the ambiguity surrounding this issue in the wider literature is illustrated by considering the following accounts of the relationship of two closely related Western Desert speech varieties, Maṭutjara and Mulatjara, to both Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya. Firstly, from Tindale:

- (i) ‘Madodjara’ is given as a Yankunytjatjara hordal name (Tindale 1974, p.212)
- (ii) ‘Mulatjara = JaNkunZatjara’ (SAM 1933 MS, sociological data card I.187).

Secondly, from the author(s) of the ‘Andagarinja/English’ wordlist (Anon. 1969, p.43)<sup>28</sup>:

- |                                      |                         |                            |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| (iii) wangka <sup>29</sup> matutjara | dialect of And. (North) | mata [ <i>sic</i> ] = true |
| (iv) wangka mulatjara                | dialect of And. (South) | mula = true.               |

Thirdly, from Goddard (1996) and Naessan (2000 MS):

- (v) Maṭutjara – ‘northern varieties of Yankunytjatjara’ (Goddard 1996, p.73)
- (vi) Mulatjara – a term describing speech at Coober Pedy (Naessan 2000 MS, p.73)

Notably, the information provided in these examples appears to support the widely accepted view that Maṭutjara is a northern speech variety that contrasts with Mulatjara, a southern speech variety, by virtue of a distinctive word for ‘true’ in each speech variety (this is an example of lexical discrimination discussed in chapter 2). Despite the fact that examples (i) and (ii) require further elaboration, one can say, geographically speaking, that

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<sup>28</sup> This wordlist remains something of a mystery. Although provided to AIATSIS by Susan Woenne-Green, she is unaware of the precise identity of its author(s) (Susan Woenne-Green, p.c.). For a discussion of the contents of the wordlist and a possible source, see Naessan (2000 MS, pp.21-3).

<sup>29</sup> *Wangka* in this context refers to speech: Pitjantjatjara, for example, may also be referred to as *wangka pitja*.

there is a high level of consistency among these sources along a north-south axis<sup>30</sup>. The major difference is along the east-west axis. That is, in the first and third pairs of examples we find both Maṭutjara and Mulatjara described as Yankunytjatjara, but in the second pair of examples they are described as Antikirinya. How does one interpret this seeming contradiction?

As a first step, temporal change (such as a language shift) as the most likely explanation can be ruled out. These examples, from research conducted over a 60 year period – Tindale (1930s), Anon. (1960s), Goddard (1980s) and Naessan (1990s) – do not suggest a linear change. What the above examples do illustrate is the degree to which ‘Yankunytjatjara’ and ‘Antikirinya’ as labels may overlap, depending on one’s perspective. In the case of the ‘Andagarinja/English’ wordlist (Anon. 1969), the informant(s), although largely anonymous, appear to demonstrate links to the pastoral country to the east of Tindale’s Yankunytjatjara territory (see Naessan 2000 MS, p.21-3). In contrast, Tindale and Goddard conducted their research further west. Another way of putting this is that Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya demonstrate a degree of fluidity such that in the east Antikirinya is the more important label, while to the west (around the Everard Ranges, say) Yankunytjatjara is the more important label. A large part of the problem caused by this situation for observers versed in the strictly delineated territories of Tindale’s map, for example, is that it appears to transgress Tindale’s basic tribal (and linguistic) categories. One may, however, from a slightly different perspective, readily imagine how a Maṭutjara speaker could also describe him/herself as a Yankunytjatjara speaker (on the basis that a Maṭutjara speaker uses *yananyi* for ‘coming/going’) or self-identify as an Antikirinya person depending on contextual factors – a step too far, remember, for O’Loughlin J. in the DRH Native title case<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> With regard to (i): at an earlier date Tindale notes that from ‘Indulkana & Tieyon [station] right back to Lilla creek = Madutara’ (SAM AA 338/2/25), which is consistent with Madodjara (Maṭutjara) being considered a northern Yankunytjatjara speech variety. Example (ii) remains a general observation, but the place of birth of this informant is given as Mt John to the south of Indulkana (SAM 1933 MS, sociological data card I.187), perhaps reflecting the southern aspect of this speech variety.

<sup>31</sup> Against this, however, it should be noted that some solidification of speech labels has occurred during the last century. As Goddard reports (1985, p.13), some of the more subtle nuances between speech varieties had been lost by the time of his research in the 1980s. As mentioned in the last chapter, the codification of Pitjantjatjara was begun by Tindale and others in the 1930s and 1940s. The codification of Yankunytjatjara effectively began with Goddard’s work, and since the 1980s there has been a marked rise in its political profile. As for Antikirinya, although it has no dictionary of the status of the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara dictionary, or a written grammar, its profile is being raised through school programmes at Oodnadatta and (arguably) the Native title process itself.

If we look at Tindale's work more closely, it appears that the fluidity of Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya was encountered by him at Ernabella in 1933. The day after arriving at Ernabella, Tindale's field journal records him entering a camp of 100 'AndakeriNga' people (Tindale 1933b MS, p.7). A note on the facing page, however, reveals that these people were 'later found to be mainly Jankundjadjara'. So at the beginning of his work at Ernabella Tindale appears to have laboured under a misconception over the identity of his informants. This is illustrated a number of pages into his journal where he records: 'spent morning with Hackett measuring six women 5 of the ~~AndakeriNga~~ Jankundjadjara tribe and one Aranda who are at the station [that is, Ernabella]' (1933b MS, p.33, original crossing out). Further examples of this confusion are found in the sociological data cards collected at the time, in which there are a number of alterations under the category of tribal affiliation. Consider the following examples<sup>32</sup>:

| <b>Card number</b> | <b>Tindale's notation</b>                |
|--------------------|--|
| I.1:               | (AndakeriNga) YaNkunZa <sup>33</sup>     |
| I.2:               | ( <del>AndakeriNga</del> ) YaNkunZaZara  |
| I.3:               | Yankunjajara = AndakeriNga <sup>34</sup> |
| I.13:              | <del>AndakeriNga</del> JaNk              |
| I.65:              | YaNkunjara (AndakeriNga) <sup>35</sup>   |

Figure 20. Extracts from the BAR's 1933 sociological data cards<sup>36</sup>.

Taken together, these examples suggest a number of interesting possibilities. The first is that Tindale arrived at Ernabella with the preconceived notion that he would encounter Antikirinya people there; a second is that at Ernabella someone, perhaps his interpreter

<sup>32</sup> I am grateful to Lyn Coad at ALRM for bringing these cards and Tindale's equivocation to my attention. The analysis and discussion to follow, however, are my own.

<sup>33</sup> A duplicate card, apparently written at a later date, reverses this to read: JaNkunZaZara (AndakeriNga) (see appendix 16).

<sup>34</sup> This relates to I.3's husband or wife.

<sup>35</sup> This relates to I.65's wife.

<sup>36</sup> Note that this figure preserves Tindale's original punctuation and crossing out.

Tommy, told him that the people in camp were Antikirinya; a third is that the people could identify as either Antikirinya or Yankunytjatjara depending on contextual factors (as I have been arguing); and a final possibility is that a combination of the above factors was in play, which seems likely. Of course, it is difficult to determine with any certainty what actually took place during the recording of this information, but if informants were asked about their speech, it makes perfect sense that they would reply Yankunytjatjara, particularly with a significant number of Pitjantjatjara speakers also present (as seen in the sociological data card recordings<sup>37</sup>).

It is also worth noting that a number of cards record '(Aluritja) JaNkunZaZara' variations, suggesting that some sort of normalisation to the basic Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara categories is occurring in Tindale's work. By contrast, consider that when Yankunytjatjara/Pitjantjatjara variations occur, they seldom involve parentheses; one of the terms is usually crossed out, further indicating this was perhaps the most significant broad-scale sociolinguistic distinction operating in the Ernabella region at the time. Despite this interpretation, which suggests a degree of fluidity between the Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya categories, judging by Tindale's journal comments cited above, the terms 'Yankunytjatjara' and 'Antikirinya' were taken by him to denote separate tribal groups. Apart from this, the process of normalisation to Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara categories may be taken to represent a further example of the process of reduction in Tindale's work that has been pointed out so often in this thesis.

Finally, from the reverse perspective, in some sources we find Antikirinya subsuming Yankunytjatjara. In ethnological and linguistic data supplied by Colson to both Tindale and Elkin<sup>38</sup>, for example, Colson refers to Antikirinya and Pitjantjatjara as the main tribal groups in the north-west, and there is little mention of Yankunytjatjara. Arguably, this reflects back on Colson's own sources in the pastoral country to the east

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<sup>37</sup> When writing up the results of his sociological recordings, Tindale breaks down the 190 subjects into the following tribal categories: JaNkunZaZara 47, PitjanZara 139, and Other 4 (SAM AA338/2/26). On the reverse side of this page is the comment: 'these figures give an indication of the constitution of the population of the country under discussion'. Of course, Tindale met with a larger number of *anangu* in total, but many of them did not have their sociological details recorded. What is perhaps most interesting with these figures is the low proportion of subjects found in the 'Other' category. A close examination of the cards suggests a far more diverse mix than represented in these figures, particularly when the numerous crossings out are considered.

<sup>38</sup> Colson's letters to Elkin are located at the Fisher Library in Sydney.

(although we know he travelled on a number of occasions further west than Ernabella). This provides further evidence for the westward umbrella function of the term ‘Antikirinya’ in the past.

### 6.3 Tindale’s manuscript sources

I return now to the question of how Tindale delineated Antikirinya territory – how did he arrive at the 1940 representations? It has been seen already that the answer must lie in his manuscript sources, and a search of those materials reveals the following pre-1940 sources: Bolam c1926, Colson 1931, Milina 1934, and Dick Allen 1939. I will discuss each in turn.

#### (i) Bolam, c1926

Bolam provided Tindale with a sketch map of tribal distribution from his base at Ooldea in the 1920s. The ‘Ande-gerrie’ are represented by a circle drawn around Tarcoola, a railway siding to the east of Ooldea (appendix 11). Bolam writes:

Ande-gerrie, Allen-jurra [i.e., ‘northern’], and Youl-barrow [i.e. ‘southern’] are the three tribes that I know most of, as they are still in the land of the living and visit here periodically ... This map represents almost a copy of a map drawn upon the ground with the finger by natives here at the moment of writing. (Tindale 1924-36 MS, p.5)

While Bolam’s map represents an Antikirinya group in the vicinity of Tarcoola at that time, we are not told how long they had been at that location. Tarcoola is outside of Tindale’s 1940 boundaries, so it is likely that Tindale took this information to reflect a ‘tribal movement’ rather than traditional territory of the Antikirinya<sup>39</sup>.

It was noted in the previous chapter that it is most likely that Bolam also supplied Tindale with vocabulary material, much of which was subsumed under the Pitjantjatjara banner by Tindale. If Bolam’s original document were ever to come to light, it would be most interesting to discover to which group(s) Bolam attributes the vocabulary it contains.

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<sup>39</sup> Tindale notes in the 1940 catalogue that ‘movements since 1917 have taken portion of tribe south to Ooldea’ (1940, p.178).

(ii) **Colson, 1931**

From discussions in 1931 (or possibly from correspondence that has not survived in its original form), Tindale gleaned the following tribal distribution information from Colson:

Mount Ilabi W. of Hermannsburg is Pitjintara country. Kukatja is the name for the natives west of the Finke, often known by the Arunta word meaning 'stranger', i.e., Luritja. The headwaters of the Lilla Creek belong to the Antakurina, who are out of their country when they venture down to the Finke. All the tableland country of the Hamilton and Lilla Creek areas is theirs. In the south-east the Antakurina are said to extend to *Nilpena and Arkaringa where get sudden change to the Oodnadatta language*. (SAM AA 338/2/25, emphasis added<sup>40</sup>)

This information is contained in a number of typed pages entitled 'Antakurina Tribe Everard Range to Musgraves and Pitjintara Tribe Mann and Petermann Ranges'. From further information contained in the notes, however, it appears that Colson considered the Antikirinya tribe to extend westwards to the Musgrave Ranges. For instance, there is a further passage claiming that 'Alpara, eight or nine miles north by east from Opparina [Aparanya], is the north-western most camp of the Antakurina' (SAM AA 338/2/25). This is a curious claim as Aparanya is near the 'border' of Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara territory on Tindale's map (which runs between the Musgrave and Mann Ranges), and many other sources in the historical record assert that this was a significant transition zone. This evidence, as well as the fact that 'Yankunytjatjara' does not appear in the title, suggests that 'Antikirinya' is being used as a cover term to subsume 'Yankunytjatjara'. Another passage suggesting Antikirinya territory extends to the Musgraves reads: 'the natives of the Musgraves, both the Antakurina and Pitjintara, have a legend or belief in a pygmy people, supposed to stand about four feet high' (SAM AA 338/2/25). Apart from this point, Colson's account of Antikirinya territory does resonate in Tindale's 1940 representation (see section 6.0 above), suggesting that Tindale took Colson's information seriously.

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<sup>40</sup> It should be pointed out that there is a crossover between the emphasised passage here and information Tindale recorded from Brumby, quoted earlier in this thesis (chapter 2, p.85). According to Tindale's dates, this information seems to have been carried over from Brumby's notes to Colson's.

The importance of Colson's opinion is illustrated by the fact that Tindale notes under an account of his meeting three 'Andekeringa' people at Finke Crossing, while returning from the 1930 BAR expedition to MacDonald Downs, that Colson 'independently made a statement which confirmed tribal name in 1931' (Tindale 1930 MS, p.76). Further, when the two met again in 1932, Tindale showed Colson his 'map of the Musgrave country to have annotations made' (Tindale 1932 MS, p.20). The exact nature of these annotations is not known, but they are likely to be the source of 'Antakurinya' on the early draft map of tribal distribution in South Australia discussed in chapter 2<sup>41</sup>.

From a purely linguistic point of view, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from the information provided by Colson. Although he provides a dozen or so vocabulary items, only one appears to contrast distinctively with Pitjantjatjara speech to the west (by contemporary standards). That is, the term 'gatji' (*katji*, 'spear') contrasts with term *kuḷaṭa* 'spear' as used by Pitjantjatjara speakers. In other words, the few lexical items provided could well be described as either Antikirinya or Yankunytjatjara in contemporary terms.

**(iii) Milina, 1934<sup>42</sup>**

The following information was recorded by Tindale at Ooldea in 1934, where, it will be remembered, he worked mainly with Yankunytjatjara informants:

Antakari:nja: North east of Ilili (Mt. Illillina) lives a people whom the Jankandjara people call Njuntundjara, They have not seen these people, only heard of them. (1934b MS, p.80)

'Njuntundjara' is listed as an alternative name for Antikirinya in the 1974 catalogue of tribes (1974, p.210), but otherwise it will be noted that this reference is particularly vague

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<sup>41</sup> On at least two occasions Colson wrote to Tindale requesting maps to be sent to assist him in locating places appearing in 'wobas' (*wapar*, that is, a Western Desert synonym for *tjukurpa*) that he was collecting from his base at Bloods Creek and in his travels further west (see Colson 1931a MS; 1932 MS). Colson writes: 'I have gathered a good deal more information regarding tribal boundaries and if you could send me suitable maps I would fill them in for you' (Colson 1931a MS, p.4). Tindale replied with the suggestion that Colson keep 'systematic records of the vocabularies and of all native localities and to mark them on maps of as large a scale as possible' (Tindale 1931 MS), but could not supply Colson with the maps as requested (Tindale 1932b MS). An overview of the Colson-Tindale relationship is offered below.

<sup>42</sup> While the source of this information is unidentified in Tindale (1934a MS), Tindale identifies Milina as the source elsewhere (SAM AA 338/2/31-32). Milina, it will be remembered, was introduced in the previous chapter as Tindale's 'translator and mentor' at Ooldea.

in terms of Antikirinya country. At a later point in the Ooldea field journal Tindale notes: ‘Antakurina = Antakerinja: NE of the Everard Range men’s country’ (1934a MS, pp.228-9), which adds little to the above passage.

**(iv) Dick Allen, 1939**

The following account of Antikirinya territory was recorded by Tindale at Port Augusta in 1939 during the H-A expedition:

The boundaries of the Antakerinja tribe were from Mt Chandler to Wintinna ... thence taking in the Evelyn Creek country as far as Cootanoorina. Stuarts Range was just beyond their boundary. The eastern boundary ran northwards from the Peake to the Bagot Range – the Macumba country was that of the Aranda who were complete strangers in the olden days. Their country also extended to Lilla Creek but only in the Ranges, the Finke River was Aranda country. West of their country were the WaNkapitjar – a name applied to all the people W. of their country – all of them spoke similar languages (‘nearly the same’). (Tindale 1938-9a MS, p.1029)

When it comes to his informant’s biographical details, unfortunately Tindale is not so forthcoming. He does note that Dick was ‘one of the last men to be initiated before the tribe broke up’ (1938-9a MS, p.1027) and that he had left his country for employment in the south and had not returned (1938-9a MS, p.1029). It would appear that the tribal ‘break up’ relates to the movement south of part of the tribe in 1917 reported elsewhere by Tindale, given Dick’s age in 1939 is recorded as 45 years old (1938-9b MS, p.166, probably an approximation), which would place him around initiatory age in the years prior to 1917. It is difficult to determine whether the picture of cultural decline represented in the above comments derive from Dick or are based on Tindale’s perceptions; either way, this picture is at least partly contradicted by the Berndts’ later observations at Macumba (see 1942-5, Vol.15, No.3, pp.239-66). Apart from this point, it is notable that, as with Colson’s account, Yankunyjtajjara is not mentioned in this account of Antikirinya territory.

Dick Allen also provided Tindale with a small amount of linguistic material, including a short vocabulary of 18 words, a number of kinship terms, and what appears to be a song fragment (Tindale 1938-9b MS, p.166). While this linguistic material is

generally consistent with Yankunytjatjara<sup>43</sup>, the recording of ‘padu’ for ‘man’ could have provided Tindale with a linguistic point of difference between Antikirinya and speech varieties to the west (or indeed to the south-west) – if he was looking for one<sup>44</sup>.

Indeed, there is very little evidence to suggest that Tindale used linguistic criteria when distinguishing between Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya. As has been seen, the linguistic material in these accounts is brief, but one must also consider that Tindale seems often to have operated in the opposite direction – particularly when subsuming diverse speech varieties under the Pitjantjatjara banner. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that the linguistic material presented in the sources listed in the 1940 catalogue often appears to have been ignored.

When we consider the above accounts, it seems reasonable to conclude that Tindale relied upon very few sources for his representations of Antikirinya territory. Of these sources, it is the information provided by Colson and Allen that appears to have been most influential in Tindale’s calculations. While these two accounts concur on some aspects, a degree of vagueness remains. It may be useful at this point to recall Kim Doohan’s criticism that there is ‘little chance that the position of the boundaries between tribes, the lines drawn on the maps, kilometre by kilometre, are backed by evidence’ (1992, p.37). In terms of the Antikirinya representations discussed in this chapter, and in particular from the manuscript material presently under discussion, the apparent degree of vagueness seems to provide some support to Doohan’s intuitions. Perhaps this problem was recognised by Tindale to a certain extent; not only was he forced to make changes to Antikirinya country between 1940 and 1974 (as noted above), but also his final 1974 representation of Antikirinya territory is notable for its appeal to ecological criteria. He writes: ‘their boundary with the Matuntara falls generally at the northern margin of the blue-bush covered plains; they do not venture into the more wooded hilly country farther north; at their southern boundary the country drops away to gibber plains’ (1974, p.210).

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<sup>43</sup> This was pointed out by Goddard during the DRH hearing (see *De Rose v SA*, SG6001/1996, 28 August 2001, p.1824).

<sup>44</sup> In other recordings of Antikirinya vocabulary in the historical record, however, the form *wati* is more commonly given for ‘man’, which is consistent with Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara. ‘Padu’ (*patu*) is a Western Desert synonym appearing in a number of speech varieties. It appears, for example, in Tindale’s ‘Kokata’ (Kukata) vocabulary also recorded during the H-A expedition (see 1938-63 MS, p.195). Platt (1972, p.10) also records this as a Kukata form (as ‘badu’).

I turn now to consider Tindale's Antikirinya representations against the general background of his work in the 1920s and 1930s.

#### 6.4 Tindale and Antikirinya

In contrast to people he records as Pitjantjatjara or Yankunytjatjara, Tindale seems to have had little direct contact with people identifying as Antikirinya before the publication of his 1940 tribal distribution map. He does not appear to have engaged seriously in the collection of vocabularies, songs and *tjukurpa*, nor attempted a grammatical analysis as he did with Pitjantjatjara. Indeed, with the insights presented in chapter 5 in mind, one is tempted to see Antikirinya as a 'contaminated' group in his estimation. To be sure, according to his own representations of Antikirinya territory, they would have been in the forefront of early contact in the far north of South Australia and Central Australia during the building of the overland telegraph and the setting up of pastoral stations in the 1870s (the disruption brought by such activities to neighbouring easterly groups is attested by ethnographers such as Spencer and Gillen 1912). It is curious, however, that in a draft paper on contact for groups in Central Australia, Tindale considers the Antikirinya to have been affected by only one generation of contact by 1930<sup>45</sup>.

Tindale's first encounter with people he describes as Antikirinya seems to have occurred at the Finke railway siding in 1930, and was most likely brief as only a few details of the encounter were recorded. Tindale writes:

At Finke Crossing saw three old men of a two class tribe to the far west who had come in to get food on the line; they sold members of the party a typical stone churinga from W of Hermannsburg which they had obtained. In their own tribe of which the local group name appeared to be Andekeringa ('Lily' Creek) a ... wooden churinga ... was used ... (Tindale 1930 MS, pp.75-6, ellipses relate to descriptions of ceremonial objects)

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<sup>45</sup>In writing up his impressions gained during the 1930 BAR expedition to MacDonald Downs, Tindale notes: 'the degree of contact with European settlements is difficult to define. There is a vast difference between the station native whose life has become reoriented towards the semi indolent pastoral life & whose skill as a hunter has strongly altered by one generation of contacts ...' (Tindale 1929-34 MS, original emphasis). He goes on to note the effects of contact on the Aranda at Hermannsburg mission, and suggests groups such as the Anmatjera and 'AntakeriNa' had been altered by one generation of contact. Notably, the 'PitjanZara' are considered by Tindale to have had 'no station contacts' (Tindale 1929-34 MS).

There is a further note added by Tindale reading: 'Lilla Creek runs into Finke west of Crown Point', accompanied by the comment cited above relating Colson's confirmation of the tribal name in 1931. From these comments it may be the case that this was the first time Tindale had heard the term Antikirinya (or a variation of it)<sup>46</sup>. Certainly it seems that he wasn't familiar with the place Lilla Creek, which reappears in later accounts of Antikirinya country provided by Colson and Allen.

Although there is an element of confusion and uncertainty involved, Tindale appears to have come into contact with Antikirinya people at Ernabella in 1933 and to have treated most of them as Yankunytjatjara people in the documentation associated with the expedition. Leaving aside the issue of the early confusion over the identity of the people at Ernabella, Tindale learns that:

The main Andekeringa camp is at Running Waters 8 miles from here. We have not yet seen them. They are more civilised than the locally camping ones who are all with two exceptions quite uncivilised. (1933b MS, p.25)

Considering the relatively 'civilised' state of these people, as well as the tenor of the BAR's research activities, it is hardly surprising that it appears as though Tindale made little effort to interview these people. As we have seen, the BAR was selective in their preferred choice of subjects, at least to the extent that they were 'full-bloods' and 'uncontaminated' through contact with White society and its influences.

On the basis of this analysis, it seems that Tindale was not particularly interested in Antikirinya, a view further supported by comments from Gordon Gross, the chief source of Tindale's Antikirinya vocabulary material, who maintains that Tindale never asked him for the names of his informants at Anna Creek station in 1953 (Gordon Gross, p.c.). It should be pointed out, however, that a possible objection to this view could be mounted by considering the correspondence between Tindale and Colson in the years 1931 and 1932, in which a partnership along the lines of Spencer and Gillen or Horne and Aiston is mooted (see Tindale 1931 MS, p.2). In 1931 Colson approached Tindale for help with the publication of Antikirinya myths – a manuscript version of one, the legend of Innja, is

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<sup>46</sup> Although as we have seen, the term appears in Bates (1918), a paper publication (Tindale 1986, p.240).

Tindale assisted in preparing for publication

located in the SAM archives. Colson claims to have recorded twenty ‘wobas’ (stories) in total running between Oodnadatta and the Western Australian border (Colson n.d. MS). Colson believed himself to be in the ‘unique position of being able to get these stories in there [*sic*] original setting’ (Colson 1931b MS) and Tindale seems to have responded positively, offering advice on orthographics and other methodological points, and setting out a division of labour between himself and Colson.

While Tindale and Colson met in 1932, the relationship in a working sense appears not to have amounted to much in terms of published or ‘finished’ manuscript material. Max Lamshed was present at their meeting and provides the following observation:

Mr. N.B. Tindale, of the Museum staff, who has a valued collaborator in Mr. E.A. Colson, of Blood’s Creek, had a long talk with him about native customs and totems. Mr. Colson understands the natives, and knows as much about them as anyone in the State, for he has been on many expeditions. (in Tindale 1932a MS, p.307)<sup>47</sup>

One can only speculate as to why the proposed partnership between the two appears to have dissolved without producing tangible results. A common theme in Colson’s letters to Tindale is the financial limitations he faced in attempting to record scientifically the *tjukurpa* – that is, in travelling to places named in the *tjukurpa* and locating them on maps. Perhaps Colson’s circumstances changed after 1932, making this work even more difficult. Another possibility is that Tindale failed to contribute to the partnership, either through a shortage of time in the face of his other weighty work commitments, or a reduced interest in Antikirinya following the 1933 expedition to the Mann and Musgrave Ranges. While actual details remain shrouded, we can say with some confidence that Colson nonetheless played an important role in alerting Tindale to the presence of *anangu* in the north-west engaged in traditional activities<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Another opinion of a rather different tone is offered by H.H. Finlayson who, after conversing with Colson on a train in 1932, recorded the following impressions: he is ‘an amateur anthropologist, getting information re the western blacks, says Luritja is simply the Arunta name for “stranger”, and that the people who range west and south-west of the Arunta reach far out into Western Australia, and call themselves Pigintalas. Rather a ludicrous person, corresponding as he says with many “scientists”’ (in Tonkin 2001, pp.45-6).

<sup>48</sup> In 1931 Colson wrote to Tindale informing him that he had just returned from a trip out west and had encountered *anangu* in the Everard and Musgrave Ranges who ‘spend nearly all their time corroborating’, adding that it is a ‘wonderful field for scientist [*sic*] to work there’ (Colson 1931a MS).

When Tindale's Antikirinya representations are placed against his work in the 1930s, it seems that his interest in the former was limited. 'Antikirinya' played an important role in the tribal mapping project, where it appears as a valid tribal name with an associated bounded territory, but the people themselves appear to have been overlooked for other anthropological, ethnological and linguistic work. Thus, groups of more interest, Pitjantjatjara being the prime case, but also to a lesser extent Yankunytjatjara, are better represented in Tindale's writings.

## 6.5 Conclusions

The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that a significant amount of the contradiction and confusion accompanying the category 'Antikirinya' in the historical record was created by White observers and may be reduced if one steps back from the concept of a unitary Antikirinya tribe living within a fixed territory in pre-contact or early post-contact times. This type of ethnological reduction lies behind the first appearance of the term in the historical record with Giles (in Taplin 1879) and continues through Tindale's work to the pleadings of the DRH Native title dispute. Evidence against this view is found in the etymological origin of the term, which suggests that in the early post-contact period Antikirinya appears to have functioned variously as a cover term for 'southerners' and 'westerners' (that is, denoting different people) depending upon a number of contextual factors. With this fluidity in mind, doubt is cast upon the accuracy of the representations contained in many of the historical sources relating to Antikirinya, the majority of which are extremely vague in any case. An implication of particular importance arising from this alternative view is that the relationship between Antikirinya and Yankunytjatjara demands to be reconsidered, particularly as it appears in Tindale's work. Indeed, in the historical record Antikirinya often appears to subsume Yankunytjatjara and other speech varieties based upon more fine-grained distinctions of speech when the information is gathered at or near the eastern fringe of the Western Desert area. Under these circumstances, ample room for confusion or error is left for the White observer.

In pursuing this issue, this chapter has afforded the opportunity to examine Tindale's Antikirinya representations in some detail. I have argued that, in contrast to

Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara, Tindale appears to have had little direct contact with people identifying as Antikirinya in the 1930s. One can well imagine that this would have formed no small impediment to his efforts in constructing representations of a distinct Antikirinya tribe and tribal territory for his tribal distribution project. I have shown that his handling of Antikirinya literature sources in his catalogue of tribes (1940) involves a number of inconsistencies and errors, although it does not appear that he relied upon these sources for his Antikirinya constructions as much as his manuscript sources (with the possible exception of Elkin 1931; 1938-40). Of the manuscript sources, information provided by Colson and Allen appears to have been utilised – although in both accounts Yankunytjatjara is noticeable by its absence. That is, in describing tribal territory in the north-west, both men mention Antikirinya and Pitjantjatjara as neighbouring groups (or *wangka pitja* in Allen's case), which suggests that Yankunytjatjara-speaking groups are subsumed under the Antikirinya label. By the 1930s, it should be remembered, it is likely that the codification or solidification of these labels was only just beginning.

It certainly strikes one as odd that Tindale did not attempt to resolve the contradictions in the early literature sources, and it may well be the case that he was largely unaware of them. As I have argued, he appears to pay little heed to the linguistic material contained in a number of the 1940 sources, material that may have led him to different conclusions. While on the point of linguistics, there is little evidence in Tindale's published or manuscript material to suggest that his delineation of Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya tribes and territories was made upon the basis of linguistic evidence. Tindale's linguistic work at the time was primarily directed towards amassing a vocabulary of Pitjantjatjara and some of the other Western Desert speech varieties he encountered during his BAR activities. The fact that these BAR activities did not bring him into sustained contact with Antikirinya people (leaving to one side the issue of the confusion over the Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya tribal categories while at Ernabella in 1933) may explain why there are so few Antikirinya vocabulary materials to be found in his manuscript collection. But there are other explanations for this, of course. When placed against the wider context of Tindale's work in the 1930s, it appears that Antikirinya may have been viewed by him as a 'contaminated' group, with other groups, most notably Pitjantjatjara, being preferred for research purposes.

Apart from this, we have also noted Tindale's encounter with *anangu* in 1933 in which there appears to have been some confusion in determining their tribal affiliation. Although it is difficult to reconstruct events, it appears likely that Tindale confronted fluidity and chose to normalise the equivocation (that is, fluidity) he encountered to the 'Yankunytjatjara' category. Tindale's propensity to reduce diverse phenomena to fixed and ordered categories has been noted at numerous points throughout this thesis, and this appears to be yet another example of this practice.

Finally, any reconsideration of the Yankunytjatjara-Antikirinya relationship is limited by a lack of written records and is clouded by contemporary land politics – two reasons behind O'Loughlin J's finding in the DRH dispute of so much contradiction and confusion surrounding this relationship. It appears that the fluidity of ethnonyms or speech variety labels is declining in the north-west, and so far as Antikirinya is concerned, it was suggested (but not conclusively demonstrated) that the term underwent some solidification in the pastoral country to the east of the area under study owing to an easterly movement of Western Desert people. Arguably, further solidification is currently occurring through the Native title process, which tends to further codify or fix tribal names and territorial arrangements.

## **7 Conclusion**

### **7.0 Overview**

As I have provided conclusions for the various chapters of this thesis as the analysis progressed, this chapter will be brief. In section 7.1 I provide a recapitulation and discussion of the main findings of this thesis; section 7.2 considers the implications of these findings for practice and research; and section 7.3 suggests a direction for future research.

### **7.1 Recapitulation and discussion**

This thesis set out with the principal aim of examining and providing a critical analysis of the processes by which Tindale's Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya representations, both map and catalogue, were made. It describes the circumstances and contexts within which Tindale worked, as well as the nature and limitations of his linguistic activities. It provides a general account of the recording of first order linguistic materials by other travellers to the north-west and considers how Tindale used them for his own purposes. The need for this analysis is driven by the often ambiguous and contradictory information found in the catalogue of tribes, the long-running debate in the literature over the nature of tribes and boundaries within the Western Desert and, more urgently, by the way Tindale's representations have been used by others without serious examination, particularly in contemporary legal contexts. The main findings arising from the analysis above are discussed under the following headings: (i) placenames; (ii) proper tribal names; (iii) tribal boundaries; (iv) treatment of sources; and (v) vocabularies. Finally, I draw a number of general conclusions about the shape of the historical linguistic record (vi).

#### **(i) Placenames**

I have shown that Tindale was primarily concerned with the referential function of placenames. He needed fixity of reference to locate tribal boundaries and to map

population movements. Apart from the many difficulties he faced in attempting to translate indigenous placenames onto Western maps, this focus on reference was reductive in that it ignored the rich indexical functions of Western Desert placenames noted by later researchers. Although working in a different context, Carruthers' recordings were also reductive and guided by cartographic requirements and the geographic categories and spelling conventions of the English language. It can be concluded that the placenames recorded in the north-west by both men represent only a partial and distorted version of indigenous practices.

## **(ii) Proper tribal names**

This thesis has demonstrated that Tindale's set of categories for determining proper tribal names was reductive. Not only did he fail to grasp the indigenous system of lexical discrimination that operates in the north-west, a set of diverse and fluid practices, but he also operated with the preconceived and comparatively rigid notion of 'tribe', as well as the European grammatical category of proper name (despite the fact that in 1938 J.R.B. Love alerted Tindale to his own reservations about this). It has also argued that the term 'proper' was a potentially ambiguous one in contexts within which pidgin English was the principal medium of intercultural communication. Aside from this point, the tribal distribution project appears to have been nomenclature-driven: in the setting up of tribal distinctions in the north-west there is little indication in Tindale's manuscript materials that other linguistic evidence was considered. Like placenames, it seems that Tindale's approach to indigenous nomenclature was directed by an overriding concern for fixity of reference. One result of Tindale's activities, then, is that he imposed a hierarchical structure on a diversity of overlapping and contingent terms. Thus, a number of indigenous terms were reduced to designate hordes of people under the tribal terms 'Pitjantjatjara' and 'Yankunytjatjara', while others were simply relegated to alternative name status. In addition, Tindale erroneously drew terms from the literature into this categorisation process and otherwise ignored, or at least failed to appreciate, the overlapping quality of the terms 'Yankunytjatjara' and 'Antikirinya' in particular. I have demonstrated that this poses serious problems for Tindale's delineation of distinct Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya tribal territories. An important conclusion, therefore, is that Tindale's conception of the relationship between Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya does not stand up to close scrutiny as an accurate reflection of indigenous views and practices.

### (iii) Tribal boundaries

I explained in chapter 1 that Tindale's views on the existence of relatively fixed tribal boundaries in the Western Desert runs counter to the weight of scholarly opinion, and I argued that, with particular regard to the north-west region, they do not reflect indigenous views. Even one of Tindale's main informants, Tommy Dodd, (albeit after the publication of the 1940 map) refuted the idea that fixed tribal boundaries existed. As demonstrated in this thesis, tribal boundaries were considered axiomatic for the type of scientific research in which Tindale and his associates were engaged. Faced by significant communicational challenges (related directly to the ontological problems), it seems that Tindale resorted to the use of post-contact concepts. I demonstrated this by considering a number of field audiotapes (although, admittedly, these tapes are not directly related to the north-west or the pre-1940 period). While the fact that indigenous terms for 'boundary' did not exist might suggest that Tindale may have used a similar strategy in his earlier fieldwork, it turns out that Tindale's Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya boundaries appear to have relied in large part upon information provided by only a few informants, the most important of them in the pre-1940 period being colonists (Alan Brumby and E.A. Colson). Significantly, in the case of Antikirinya, the earliest and perhaps most influential informant appears to have been a White pastoralist from the country to the east of the area under study, Colson, who does not appear to have recognised the term 'Yankunytjatjara' at all. Certainly the degree of spatial variation and vagueness in literature sources was of no great help to Tindale in this matter.

The main conclusion to be drawn from this is that, on the basis of available manuscript sources, the placement of boundaries by Tindale was to a large degree arbitrary. At one point Tindale despaired at the limitations posed for his project by unrecoverable data, and it is likely that reliance upon ecological and geographical criteria saved the project as far as Tindale was concerned. Tindale's use of these criteria for his Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya delineations, however, remains unclear, owing to a lack of clear references to such calculations in his manuscript materials (although he does make the principles clear in his general writings on the subject). One can conclude, nevertheless, that the neatness of these tribal arrangements is not backed up by evidence provided by *anangu*. Thus, one can only conclude that, like other aspects of his

work, these arrangements are more reflective of Tindale's concerns than indigenous practices.

**(iv) Treatment of sources**

I have pointed out that Tindale's treatment of literature sources in his catalogue of tribes is at times contradictory and confusing. This was demonstrated in chapter 6, which examined Tindale's treatment of Antikirinya sources. This analysis also provides further support for the notion that Tindale was focused upon nomenclature, because it appears that he failed to consider the linguistic information contained in some of the sources he attributes to Antikirinya. However, Tindale did not always ignore the linguistic contents of his sources. As I have shown by tracing the relationship between the catalogue of tribes and the map, there is at times a level of productivity involved in Tindale's assigning of 'unnamed' vocabularies to particular languages on the basis of their place of recording and the location of particular tribes on the map. As I have argued, this process plays a role in bringing languages into being. It is of some concern that this process appears to have proceeded on a number of faulty premises and linguistic assumptions, and it is also at times circular. Of particular concern is that Tindale's flawed catalogue representations have been reproduced uncritically in the literature and remain influential.

**(v) Vocabularies**

I have shown that Tindale was actively engaged in making advances in Australian linguistics through his involvement in developing an orthographic system for the more accurate recording of indigenous linguistic material, a system (among others) that he used to amass a large body of texts, songs, placenames, ethnonyms and vocabularies in the field. In this thesis I have shown that Tindale operated with a number of orthodox assumptions about language that led him, most noticeably, to reduce the materials he collected according to Western grammatical categories. With Pitjantjatjara, evidently a special interest, Tindale attempted to pursue a grammatical analysis – arguably to reduce the language to suit the order he wanted to impose. In other respects his work suffers at times from a lack of internal consistency (he did not phonemicise spellings, for example) and from the making of spurious etymologies to explain away apparent inconsistencies in his data (particularly within his categories of proper tribal names). In addition, as the case of

the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* indicates, Tindale's practices pose a number of interpretational difficulties. While the types of vocabulary collected by Tindale from Western Desert areas appear to have been guided by the research interests of the Board for Anthropological Research and of Tindale himself, including the collection of parallel vocabularies for tribal identification purposes, an important finding of my analysis is that Tindale's Pitjantjatjara language project appears to have proceeded independently of the tribal mapping project. Indeed, Tindale demonstrates a concern for language making in his work on Pitjantjatjara, whereby the metalinguistic category 'Pitjantjatjara' is privileged and diverse materials are reduced to fit it. Of course, this has important implications for the way this material is interpreted (see 7.2 below). In terms of the wider argument of this thesis, the imposition of Western metalinguistic terminology proceeded at the same time as the indigenous system of salient lexical differences was ignored. It further supports the view (albeit indirectly) that the tribal mapping project was nomenclature-driven; one suspects that if linguistic criteria were to be used in delineating Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara, for example, the research conducted between 1933-4 in particular would have offered a good opportunity to pursue this matter. Although, as I have shown, Tindale began by making dialect distinctions in 1933, this practice in relation to Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara was later abandoned. Finally, Antikirinya vocabulary material is entirely absent from the *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* and is poorly represented in the rest of Tindale's manuscript materials.

#### **(vi) The shape of the historical linguistic record**

I come now to a number of general conclusions about the shape of the historical linguistic record for the north-west. As I have shown, the type of linguistic materials in the historical record has been determined in part by the different, but sometimes overlapping, contexts of exploring, surveying, missionary activity and scientific research. The different contexts demanded different requirements, and so the travellers' linguistic products vary. Carruthers and the officers of the Elder expedition received explicit instructions about the type of linguistic materials they should record, missionaries required a grammar for Bible translation purposes and Tindale collected a wide range of materials to satisfy his various scientific pursuits. Despite this variation, the majority of vocabularies collected in the early post-contact period arose within the context of scientific enquiry. Thus, in significant ways, the collection of linguistic materials was informed by the discourse of racial origins;

and there is a direct and clear link between Taplin's project, the recordings produced during the Elder expedition and Tindale's eventual use of these sources.

In terms of Tindale's vocabulary collecting during the early to mid 1930s, the period of major interest to this thesis, the question of who or what is represented in the historical linguistic record is partly a function of the interests of the BAR and the Adelaide circle. As mentioned above, it is possible to trace the effects of the BAR's influence in some of the vocabulary materials recorded, but if one considers the then current discourse of racial purity and corruption, one may explain why some groups are better represented in the historical linguistic record than others. I have indicated that notions of linguistic purity were operating in the correspondence of the Adelaide circle. However, the question of whether Tindale subscribed to and operated with a version of this view is not entirely clear. While at times, particularly in his work on the Pitjantjatjara vocabulary, he seems to display such notions, he also appears to work against this by subsuming Yankunytjatjara placenames, for example, under the Pitjantjatjara banner.

Against all of this it must be remembered that, apart from explicit instructions in some cases, travellers carried with them a body of cultural assumptions and practices, including notions of language and communication derived ultimately from the Western grammatical tradition. This led in many cases to the imposition of often reductive Western linguistic prejudices and preferences upon indigenous speech with the result that, in some respects, one could well argue that the historical linguistic record for the north-west is more a set of colonial cultural artefacts than indigenous ones.

## **7.2 Implications for practice and research**

The main findings of this thesis present a clear warning to those who would uncritically consult and reproduce Tindale's representations. This thesis clearly demonstrates a number of dangers associated with this practice. Tindale's representations, like other historical materials, offer only a limited and Eurocentric view of indigenous linguistic phenomena. Of course, this statement relates particularly to the north-west, but the findings presented here call for attention to be paid to Tindale's representations for neighbouring regions. Indeed, any use of historical materials must take into account the significant

communication problems often encountered by travellers (explorers, surveyors, scientists and missionaries) in the field. The findings of this thesis demand that pains be taken to recontextualise such materials wherever possible to avoid drawing potentially false conclusions based on a superficial reading of them.

This analysis reveals that the historical materials used by Tindale often undergo a process of metalinguistic transformation when assigned to a tribe in the catalogue. In some cases, as demonstrated above, this process is problematic and also leads to dangers for contemporary interpretation. Again, Tindale's representations should not be accepted at face value. The situation is complicated further, however, owing to the fact that Tindale's work has influenced post-1940 research in Australia, and as a result, some of his errors have been reproduced.

Finally, this thesis has implications for the weight apportioned to indigenous views when measured against the materials in the historical linguistic record. The historical linguistic record is, of course, both incomplete and at times misleading. A source of tension within legal contexts is the onus placed on indigenous people to provide a full account of their laws and customs, which may then be weighed against the linguistic material in the historical record. This thesis exposes some of the shortcomings of historical materials and some of the pitfalls in their contemporary interpretation.

### **7.3 Directions for future research**

Two areas for future research flow from the issues addressed in this thesis. Firstly, owing to the current political climate, a thorough survey of Tindale's linguistic materials in the South Australian Museum archives relating to other areas of Australia is sorely needed. In addition, an examination of the relationship of these materials to Tindale's catalogue of tribes and map is needed. Apart from the potential Native title implications of such research, the heritage value of these materials may be of great significance to indigenous groups. This research would also examine Tindale's major collection of parallel vocabularies collected during and subsequent to the Harvard-Adelaide expedition (Tindale 1938-63 MS), to which I have been able to pay only passing attention in this thesis. The second area of research is not archival, but would seek to document more fully the

indigenous place naming practices in the north-west, possibly testing the veracity of Tindale's placenames, and a closer study and documentation of indigenous metalinguistic practices in the north-west.

Finally, in identifying and addressing the problems presented here – by tackling ambiguities and inconsistencies in the literature, by taking a new approach to the long-running debate on tribes and boundaries in the Western Desert, by scrutinising previously unexamined material, and by analysing the processes by which historical linguistic materials have been constructed and used – it is hoped this thesis makes a significant and original contribution to Australian linguistics.

## Appendix 1

### Tindale's (1974) catalogue entries for Antikirinya, Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara

#### Antakirinja 'Anta'kirinja

Loc.: Headwaters of Hamilton, Alberga, Wintinna, and Lora rivers north to Kulgera in central Australia; south to Mount Willoughby, Arckaringa, and the Stuart Range north of Coober Pedy which is in Kokata country. Their boundary with the Matuntara falls generally at the northern margin of the blue-bush covered plains; they do not venture into the more wooded hilly country farther north; at their southern boundary the country drops away to gibber plains. They are said to speak [*Aluritja*] by the Aranda, with rude implications. Another general term for their language is Aluna a term that they share with the Jangkundjara and Matuntara; it is a Pitjandjara or Kukatja-like speech. The data, ostensibly on this tribe, supplied by Giles in Taplin (1879) and again in Fison and Howitt (1880), relate to the southern Aranda. Movements since 1917 took a portion of the tribe southwest to Ooldea. Earlier movement was from west after massacre by them of some previous inhabitants of Mount Chandler district; they are closely related to the Jangkundjara. The tribal name has the general meaning of "westerners" where [*andakara*] = west. An alternative that may be more valid is Ngonde, but this term has been said by some aborigines to embrace also the Jangkundjara, being applied to two hordes in the Everard Range area. East of Mount Chandler the country is known as Ngondejana. Western people call them Punjuru. See further discussion in main text.

Coord.: 134°0'E x 27°10'S.

Area: 24,500 sq. m. (63,700 sq. km.).

Alt.: Antakarinja, Antakerinya, Antakerrinya, Andagirinja, Andagarinja, Andekerinja (Aranda pronunciation), Andekarinja, Antekarinja, Andigarinya, Andigirinji, Antingari, Andigari, Andgari, Andegilliga, Andigarina, Antigari, Andigiri, Anjirigna, Anterrikanya, Antegarinya, Antakerinya, Antigerinya, Andjirigna, Unterrgerrie (MS), Unterrgerrie, Aldoliga (i.e., Westerners), Ngonde, Tangara, Yandairunga, Njuntundjara (name applied by Jangkundjara), Walarangunja (horde name in eastern part of Everard Ranges), Walarenunga, Kadjilaranda (horde name north of eastern Everard Ranges), Aluna (language name of the southern hordes who speak like the Kokata).

Ref.: Giles in Taplin, 1879; Giles in Fison and Howitt, 1880; Howitt, 1885, 1891, 1904; Krichauff, 1886; Helms, 1896; Mathews, 1900 (Gr. 6506 and 6448), 1901 (Gr. 6453); Kirkham in Howitt, 1904; Bates, 1918; Elkin, 1931, 1940; Tindale in C. Fenner, 1936; Tindale, 1937, 1940, 1957 MS, 1966; Berndt and Berndt, 1942, 1965; Berndt and Johnston, 1942; G. Gross, 1954 MS; Tindale in Condon, 1955; Condon, 1955; Berndt, 1959; Wurm, 1963; C. Berndt, 1965; T. Strehlow, 1965; A.I.A.S. report, 1966.

## Appendix 1

## Jangkundjara 'Jankundjara

Loc.: Musgrave Ranges east of Oparinna, on Officer Creek; north to near Mount Robert, east to Everard Ranges, south to latitude 28°30'. In 1917 (dated by the annular eclipse of 30 July 1916), a portion of the tribe moved south to Ooldea in company with a few Antakirinja at the end of a major drought, under threat of the attacks of Pitjandjara; their western and northern areas are now usurped by Pitjandjara. Their immediately pre-1917 boundary is that shown on the map; at still earlier date, according to statements, their western boundary was at Butler Dome 45 miles (100 km.) farther to the northwest. This is the Everard Range tribe of Helms and of White. Hordal names that may cause confusion include the Madodjara of the Tjundi area who shifted south toward Ooldea and the Ngonde Jangkundja of the Everard Range, living in the Mount Chandler area. The latter are also called the Walaringonda. The Ngonde Ngolajanu were in the north, formerly extending to Ayers Rock (Uluuru) but were driven south by the Pitjandjara in 1917. The Katjilaranda (Kartjilaranda) went west to Mount Lindsay and also claimed Kalaiapiti, the ceremonial place of the westernmost horde of the Pitjandjara.

Coord.: 131°55'E x 27°15'S.

Area: 22,000 sq. m. (57,200 sq. km.).

Alt.: Jangkundjadjara (extended form), Jangundjara, Jankundjadjara, Jankunzazara (z = an editorial substitution in *Oceania*, for *dj* symbol), Jankuntjatjara, Jankuntjatara, Jankundjindjara, Yankunjara, Yangundjadjara, Janggundjara, Jangwundjara (typographical error in first edition), Nankundjara (presumed typographical error in Rept. Aust. Inst. of Ab. Studies, 1965:19), Ankundjara, "Everard Range Tribe," Alinjara (means north), Kaltjilandjara (a Pitjandjara term for Jangkundjara, actually the name of their southwesternmost horde). Wirtjapakandja (see discussion in chap. 4).

Ref.: Wells, 1890, 1893; Helms, 1896; White, 1915, 1916; Black, 1915, 1920; Campbell and Lewis, 1926; Tindale and Hackett, 1933; Fry, 1934; Tindale, 1937, 1940, 1957 MS, 1963 MS, 1966 MS, 1972; Love, 1938 MS; Elkin, 1940; Berndt, 1959; T. G. H. Strehlow, 1965.

## Appendix 1.2. Tindale's Yankunytjatjara entry (1974, p.212)

## Pitjandjara 'Pitjandjara

Loc.: Mann and Tomkinson Ranges northwest to the eastern end of the Rawlinson Range, W. Aust.; west to the east side of Mount Hinckley and Wingelina; southwest to Mount Blyth, Birksgate Range, and near the north side of Lake Wright; east to Mounts Kintore and Caroline, Butler Dome, and Stevenson Peak; north to Lakes Amadeus, Neale, and Hopkins; in the western Musgrave Ranges east only to Oparinna. Kalaiapiti in the Mount Sir Thomas Range was their ultimate refuge prior to the 1914-1916 period of major drought during which they were driven to usurp the eastern

(Continued overleaf)

## Appendix 1

Musgrave Ranges from the Jangkundjara, who were in turn by 1917 forced to shift southward, making the Everard Ranges their principal home; some then shifted south toward Ooldea and are now (1971) living at Yalata. The map shows their pre-1917 eastern boundary. In the 1940 map, because of an incorrect identification of the location of a native place name, I showed the western boundary too far to the west; this is now corrected. The presence of Pitjandjara at Areyonga and Tempe Downs in the Northern Territory is a late postcontact event. Five hordes are recognized—the Mulatara, Kurujulta, Maiulatara, Pibiri, and Wirtjapakandja; it was the last-named group that first usurped Jangkundjara territory. Sixteen mm films of two University of Adelaide Anthropological Expeditions in 1933 show activities of these people. Color plates 23, 28, and 40 are relevant. In a description of social organization (Tindale, 1972: 254), a typographical error on line 30 should be corrected to read “. . . six separate terms belonging to differing four-class systems are known to them.”

Coord.: 129°55'E x 26°0'S.

Area: 23,000 sq. m. (59,800 sq. km.).

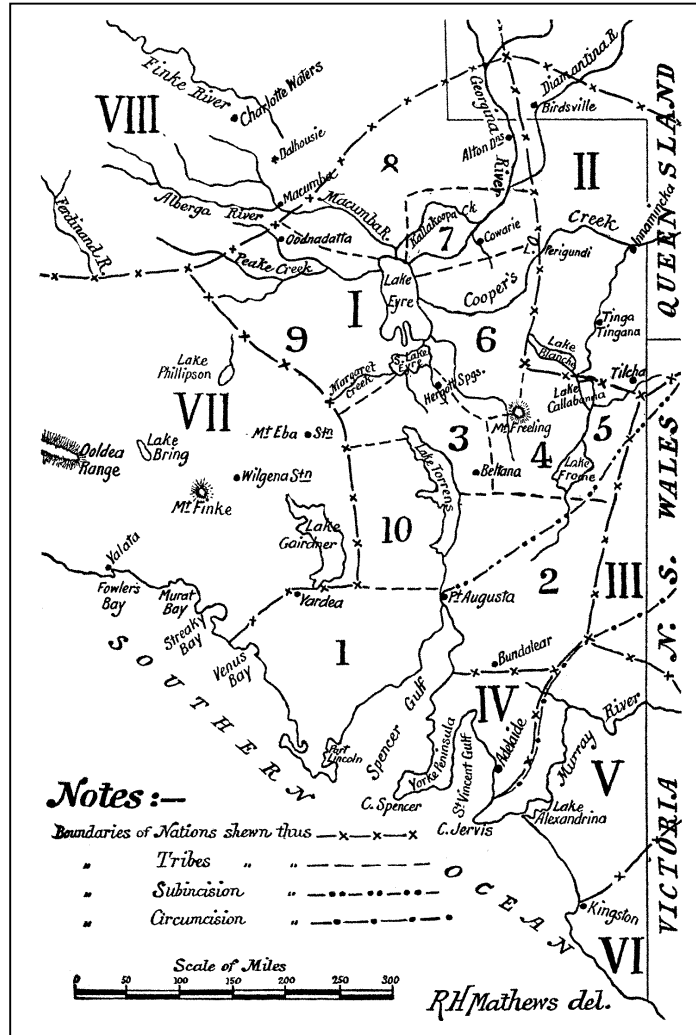
Alt.: Pitjandjadjara (extended form), Pitjantjatjara, Pitjandjara, Pitjindjatjara, Pitjinjara, Pitjentara, Pitjintara, Pitjendadjara, Pidjandja, Pitjanjarra, Pijandarra, Bidjandja, Bidjandjara, Bidjandjadjara, Bidjuwongga, Pitjinjiara, Pitjanzazara (z = arbitrary and unauthorized editorial substitution in *Oceania* for dj symbol), Wongapitjira, Wongapitja (Pitja speakers), Wongapitcha, Pitjantjara (simplified form adopted by Ernabella Mission in 1941), Pitdjadjara [*sic*], Peechintarra (daily press rendering in 1958), Pitjintjitjira (? typographical error), Wanudjara (name applied to Jangkundjara also, by Ngadadjara), Mulatara (Tomkinson and Blyth Ranges horde), Tjitiadjara (name applied by Ngadadjara), Wirtjapakandja (an eastern horde; name based on verb [*wirtjapakandji*], to run, hence has the implication of “refugees,” i.e., those who shifted their living area under pressure. The same term has been applied to some Jangkundjara people now living in the south), Partutu (name applied by the Pintubi), Nangatadjara (of the Warara Ngadadjara of the Rawlinson Range area), Mamu (“evil beings,” a name sometimes applied to them by the Jangkundjara), Mamoo, Pituari (a rarely used form), Ituarre (probably a faulty hearing of Pituari).

Ref.: Wells, 1893; Basedow, 1908, 1925; C. Strehlow, 1910; Bates, 1918; Tindale, 1933, 1935, 1937, 1940, 1941, 1972, also, 1933, 1935, 1957, 1959, 1963, 1966 MSS; Fry, 1934; Finlayson, 1935 (2 references), 1958; Hackett, 1937; H. L. Taylor, 1939 MS; Wakerly in Berndt, 1941; Trudinger, 1943; Love, 1945; Mountford, 1948; Worms, 1951; Rose, 1956; Berndt, 1959; Meggitt, 1961; Tindale and Lindsay, 1963; Kirk et al., 1963; Capell, 1965; T. G. H. Strehlow, 1965; R. Berndt, 1965; C. Berndt, 1965; Jones, 1965; Munn, [1967]; Gale, 1966; Hilliard, 1968; Macfarlane, 1969; Tindale and George, 1971.

## Appendix 2

### Selection of ethnological maps drawn prior to Tindale (1940)

The maps presented in this appendix include those accompanying Mathews (1900), Howitt (1904), Strehlow (1907-20), Basedow (1925) and Elkin (1931; 1938-40).

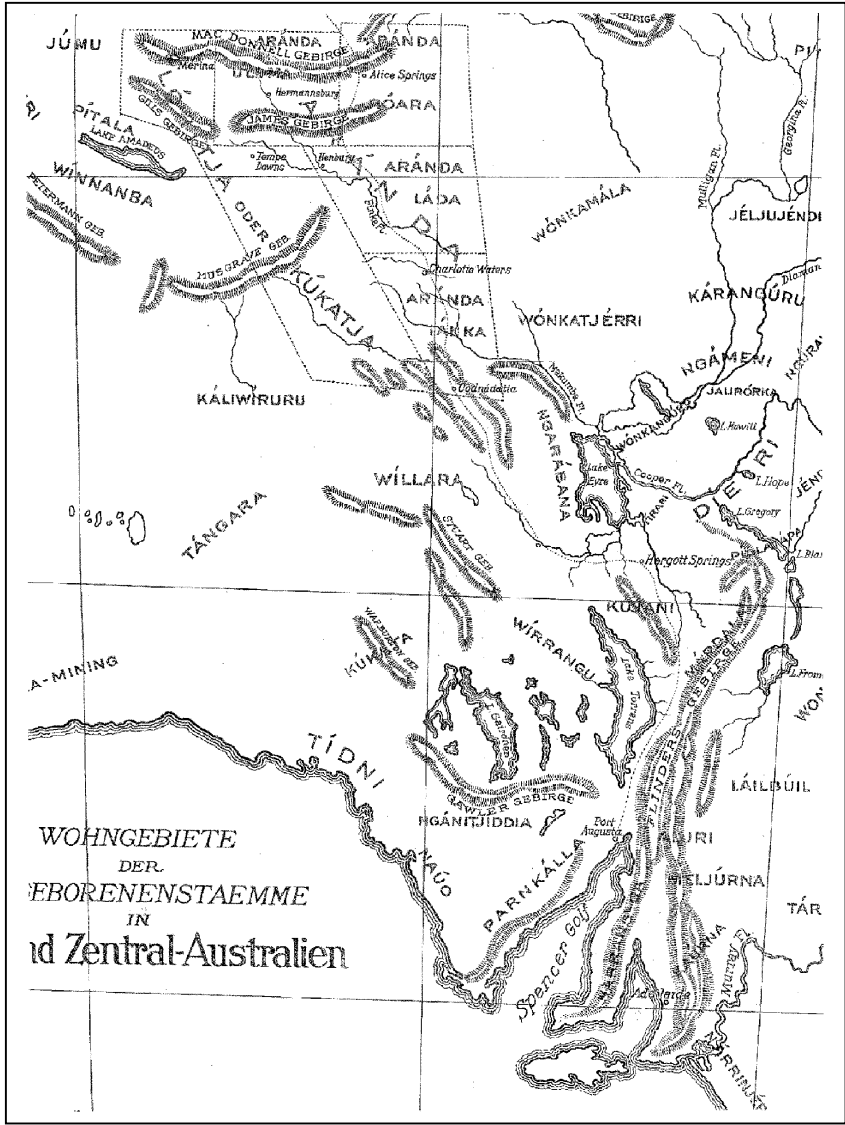


Appendix 2.1. Map accompanying Mathews (1900)

In this map the Roman and Arabic numerals represent Mathews' 'Nations' and clusters of tribes within a Nation respectively. Note also that this map is discussed in chapter 6, p.x

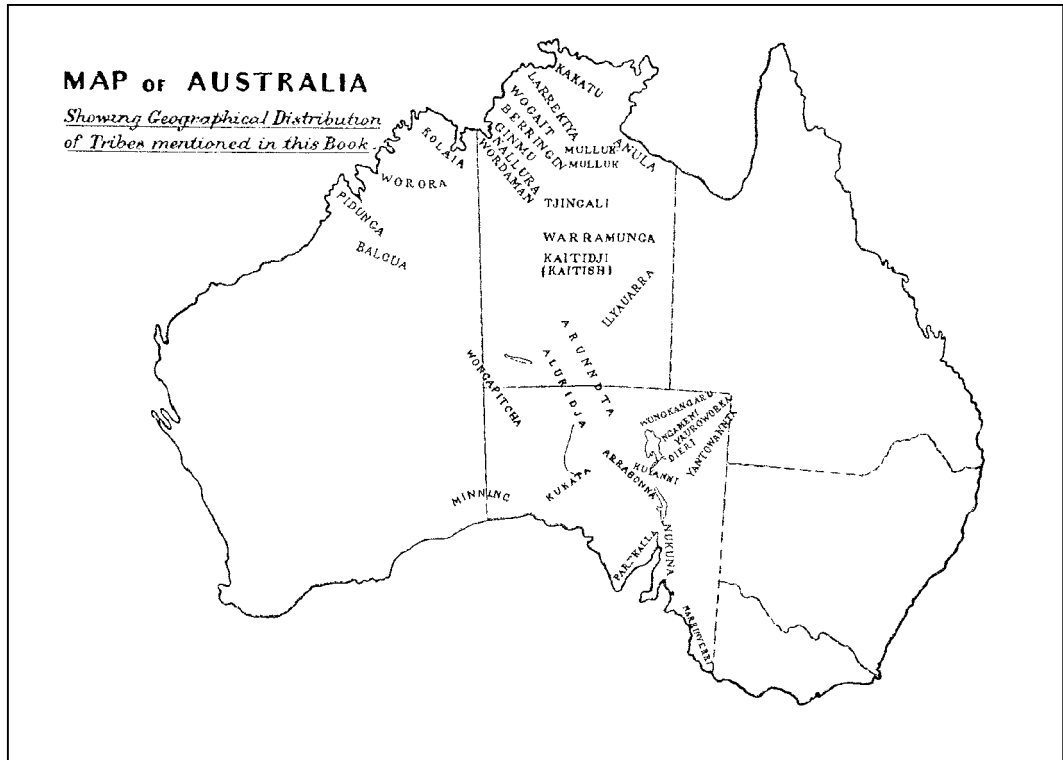


Appendix 2



Appendix 2.3. Section of map accompanying Strehlow (1907-20)

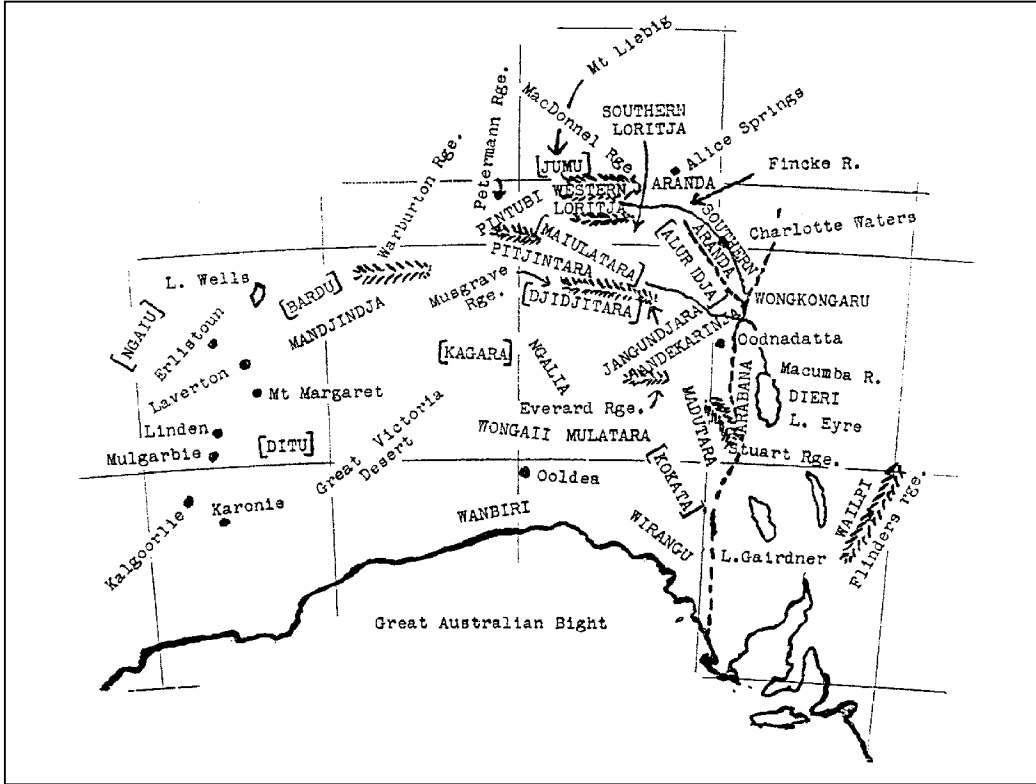
Appendix 2



Appendix 2.4. Map accompanying Basedow (1925)



Appendix 2



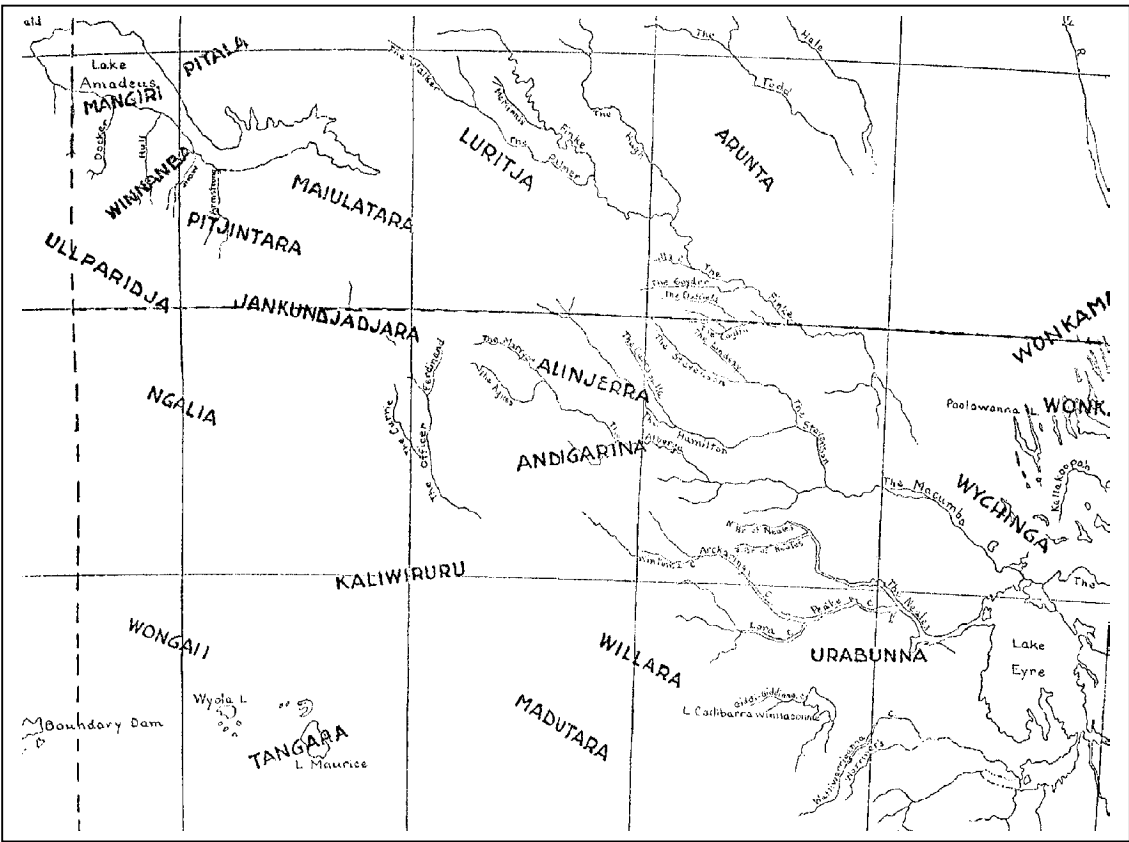
Appendix 2.6. Map accompanying Elkin (1938-40)

Note that ‘Antikirinya’, ‘Pitjantjatjara’ and ‘Yankunytjatjara’ appear as ‘Pitjintara’, ‘Jangundjara’ and ‘Anderkarinja’ in the central region of the map. This map is discussed in chapter 6, p.x

### Appendix 3

#### Section of the map accompanying Davidson (1938)

This section of Davidson’s map indicates tribal distribution for Central Australian tribes. Note that Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Antikirinya appear as ‘Pitjintara’, ‘Jankundjadjara’ and ‘Andigarina’ in the top left quarter of the map.





## Appendix 5

### Taplin's questionnaire (1879, pp.5-7)

#### QUESTIONS ON ABORIGINAL FOLKLORE, ETC.

[Answers to which appear in the subsequent pages.]

1. Name of the person who answers the questions, and locality where he resides.
  2. What is the name of the tribe of aborigines to which his answers will relate? By "tribe," is meant all those aborigines who speak one language. The subdivisions of the tribe should be called clans.
  3. What tract of country is inhabited by the tribe?
  4. Is the tribe divided into clans? If so, how many are there, and what are their names?
  5. Has each clan a totem? [That is some beast, bird, or other living or inanimate thing which is the symbol of the tribe?]
  6. Are there class-names, or a kind of castes in the tribe?
  7. Do the different clans only intermarry with each other, and do marriages never take place between members of the same clan? Or are the marriages regulated by the class names? Do natives of different class-names only intermarry? If so, give names, and state what class-names the children of such intermarriages bear?
  8. What are the marriage customs and ceremonies? Who gives away the female to her husband? Are marriages arranged by the clans?
  9. Are the children of the father's tribe or the mother's?
  10. Is polygamy practised?
  11. What is the system of kinship in the tribe? Give names for following relationships:—
 

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| My father                             | My younger sister                         |
| My father's brother                   | My father's brother's child               |
| My mother's sister's husband          | My mother's sister's child                |
| My mother                             | My father's father                        |
| My mother's sister                    | My father's father's brothers and sisters |
| My father's second wife               | My father's mother                        |
| My stepmother                         | Her brothers and sisters                  |
| My father's sister                    | My mother's mother                        |
| My mother's brother's wife            | Her brothers and sisters                  |
| My mother's brother                   | My mother's father                        |
| My father's sister's husband          | His brothers and sisters                  |
| My son or daughter                    | My father's sister's child                |
| My brother's child ("I" being male)   | My mother's brother's child               |
| My brother's child ("I" being female) | A father and child                        |
| My sister's child ("I" being male)    | A mother and child                        |
| My sister's child ("I" being female)  | A widow                                   |
| My brother                            | A widower                                 |
| My sister                             | A fatherless child                        |
| My elder brother                      | A motherless child                        |
| My elder sister                       | A person bereaved of a brother.           |
| My younger brother                    |   |
- [NOTE.—Give the name of the relationship in each case, no matter whether it be the same word as one before mentioned or not.]
12. Are blood relations allowed to intermarry?
  13. What is the form of government?
  14. How is justice administered? Is there any form of trial for suspected offenders? If so, who are the judges?

(Continued overleaf)

## Appendix 5

15. What punishments are put in force against offenders?
16. What kinds of sorcery are practised? Describe them.
17. What funeral customs are there?
18. How does property descend?
19. Have the aborigines any ideas of a future state? If so, what are they?
20. Have they any belief in gods, demons, or supernatural beings? If so, what are they?
21. Are there any legends or traditions amongst them? If so, please relate some of them? If possible, give one in the native language with a literal translation.
22. Whence do traditions lead you to suppose they came? Where were the original seats of the race?
23. Are there any proofs of their having been more civilised in past ages than they are now, and if so, what are they?
24. Are they cannibals? What is their custom in cannibalism?
25. What are their weapons?
26. Do they make nets, twine, fishing lines, mats, or baskets?
27. What tools or implements do they possess—or did they possess, before Europeans came here?
28. Can you describe any ceremonies or peculiar customs practised by this people?
29. What do they call their language?
30. Has their language any articles? If so, what are they? Are forms of the pronoun used as articles?
31. What is the form of the declension of nouns? In the case of the word for "man," how do they say "of a man," "to a man," "by a man" [as an agent], "by a man" [situated near a man], "from a man," or "a man" objectively?
32. Is there a dual form of the noun—i.e., is there not only a word for *man* and *men*, but a word for *two men*?
33. What is the form of declension of pronouns? Give the full declension of the personal pronouns.
34. Is there an abbreviated form of the pronoun, for the sake of euphony, used in composition?
35. Is there any gender to pronouns?
36. Has the verb any indicative mood? or has the verb only a participial construction? Is the form in which the verb is used in the indicative the form in which the same word is used adjectively? Give a specimen.
37. What tenses has the verb? Is there not only a past tense, but a remote past tense? Is there a reciprocal tense—as, for instance, "I cut myself," "We two cut each other?" Is there a repetitive tense—as, for instance, not only "I strike," but "I strike again?"
38. How is the passive form of the verb constructed?
39. Is there any verb "to be" or "to have" in the language?
40. Is the letter *s* used in the language, or *f*, *v*, *z*?
41. What are the numerals? How high can natives count in their own language?
42. Give a few specimen sentences of the language with a literal translation.
43. What are the native words for the following English words?—
 

|         |           |        |         |             |         |
|---------|-----------|--------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Sun     | Sea       | Day    | Husband | Blood       | We      |
| Moon    | Tree      | Night  | Wife    | Live        | Ye      |
| Star    | Canoe     | Great  | Head    | Die         | They    |
| Cloud   | Fish      | Small  | Mouth   | Hear        | This    |
| Heavens | Dog       | Good   | Hand    | See         | Who     |
| Rain    | Kangaroo  | Bad    | Eye     | Sit         | One     |
| Heat    | Fire      | Man    | Tongue  | Make        | Two     |
| Cold    | House     | Woman  | Teeth   | Give        | Three   |
| Hill    | Spear     | Boy    | Ear     | I           | Four    |
| Land    | Club      | Girl   | Foot    | Thou        | Dual    |
| Stone   | Wommera   | Father | Nose    | He, She, It | Plural. |
| Water   | Boomerang | Mother | Hair    |             |         |

(Continued overleaf)

## Appendix 5

44. What diseases are most prevalent amongst the aborigines of the tribe where you reside?

45. Have they any methods of treating or curing disease or injury among themselves, and what are they?

46. What rites and ceremonies are used in the initiation of youths to the state of manhood?

47. Do the natives knock out any of the front teeth?

48. Is circumcision practised amongst them?

NOTE 1.—Native words should be spelt according to the following rules:—

i. The consonants to be sounded as in English, only the *g* is always to be hard.

ii. The vowels are to be sounded thus:—

|                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A as <i>a</i> in father; ah          | E as in they                          |
| Ai has the sound of long <i>i</i>    | I as <i>i</i> in fatigue              |
| O as in old                          | U as in rude, or as <i>oo</i> in mood |
| Au is sounded like <i>ow</i> in cow. |                                       |

NOTE 2.—*Precise* answers to question No. 11 are important. A correct reply will determine the system of kinship prevailing. The word for each relationship should be carefully ascertained. It is also desirable to discover whether there is not a slight variation of the word according as it is borne or attributed to the speaker; for instance, a variation for *my* father, *your* father, *his* father, &c.

## Appendix 6

### Linguistic guidelines presented to the officers of the Elder expedition

This appendix includes the orthographic guidelines presented to the officers of the Elder expedition (appendix 6.1) and a list of words to collect (appendix 6.2).

The following "SYSTEM OF ORTHOGRAPHY FOR NATIVE NAMES OF PLACES" has been adopted by the COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, OF LONDON, and should be strictly followed:—

1. The true sound of the word as locally pronounced will be taken as the basis of the spelling.

2. An approximation, however, to the sound is alone aimed at. A system which would attempt to represent the more delicate inflections of sound and accent would be so complicated as only to defeat itself. Those who desire a more accurate pronunciation of the written name must learn it on the spot by a study of local accent and peculiarities.

3. The broad features of the system are that vowels are pronounced as in Italian, and consonants as in English.

4. One accent only is used—the acute—to denote the syllable on which stress is laid. This is very important, as the sounds of many names are entirely altered by the misplacement of this "stress."

5. Every letter is pronounced. When two vowels come together, each one is sounded, though the result, when spoken quickly, is sometimes scarcely to be distinguished from a single sound, as in *ai, au, ei*.

6. Doubling of a vowel is only necessary where there is a distinct repetition of the single sound: thus, *Nuulúa, Oosima*.

7. All vowels are shortened in sound by doubling the following consonant, as in *Yarra, Tanna, Mecca, Jidda, Bonny*.

(Continued overleaf)

Appendix 6

The amplification of the rules is given below—

| Letters. | Pronunciation and Remarks.   | Examples.  |
|----------|--|--|
| a        | ah, a as in <i>father</i> .. .. .  | Java, Banána, Somáli, Bari, Suákin.                        |
| e        | eh, e as in <i>benefit</i> .. .. .   | Tel-el-Kebír, O'éléh, Yezo, Medína, Levúka, Peru.          |
|          | English c; i as in <i>ravine</i> ; the sound of ee in <i>beet</i> .<br>Thus, not <i>Feejee</i> , but   | Fiji, Hindi.   |
| o        | o as in <i>mots</i> .. .. .  | Tokio.   |
| u        | long u as in <i>acute</i> ; the sound of oo in <i>boot</i> .<br>Thus, not <i>Zooloo</i> , but  | Zulu, Sumatra.   |
| ai       | English i, as in <i>ice</i> .. .. .  | Shanghai.  |
| au       | ow as in <i>how</i> .. .. .  | Fuchau.  |
| ao       | is slightly different from above .. .. .   | Macao.   |
| ei       | is the sound of the two Italian vowels, but is frequently slurred over, when it is scarcely to be distinguished from <i>ey</i> in the English <i>they</i> .  | Beirút, Beilul   |
| b        | English b.   |  |
| c        | is always soft, but is so nearly the sound of s that it should be seldom used<br>If <i>Celebes</i> were not already recognized it would be written <i>Selebes</i> .  | Celebes.   |
| ch       | is always sounded as in <i>church</i> .. .. .  | Chingchin.   |
| d        | English d.   |  |
| f        | English f. ph should not be used for the sound of f.<br>Thus, not <i>Haiphong</i> , but  | Haifong, Nafa.   |
| g        | is always hard. (Soft g is given by j) .. .. .   | Galápagos.   |
| h        | is always pronounced when inserted.  |  |
| j        | English j. Dj should never be put for this sound .. .. .   | Japan, Jinchuen.   |
| k        | English k. It should always be put for the hard c.<br>Thus, not <i>Corea</i> , but   | Korea.   |
| kh       | The Oriental guttural .. .. .  | Khan.  |
| gh       | is another guttural, as in the Turkish .. .. .   | Dagh, Ghazi.   |
| m        | } As in English.   |  |
| n        |  |  |
| ng       | has two separate sounds, the one hard as in the English word <i>finger</i> , the other as in <i>singer</i> . As these two sounds are rarely employed in the same locality, no attempt is made to distinguish between them. |  |
| p        | As in English.   |  |
| q        | should never be employed; qu is given as kw .. .. .  | Kwangtung  |
| r        | } As in English.   |  |
| s        |  |  |
| t        |  |  |
| v        |  |  |
| w        |  |  |
| x        | } is always a consonant, as in <i>yard</i> , and therefore should never be used as a terminal, i or e being substituted  | Kikúyu.  |
| y        |  | Thus, not <i>Mikindány</i> , but<br>not <i>Kwaly</i> , but |
| z        | English z. .. .. .<br>Accents should not generally be used, but where there is a very decided emphatic syllable or stress, which affects the sound of the word, it should be marked by an acute accent.                    | Zulu.<br>Tongatábu, Galápagos,<br>Paláwan, Saráwak.        |

Appendix 6.1. Orthographic guidelines (RGS 1891, pp.35-6)

## Appendix 6

LIST OF WORDS, THE RESPECTIVE NATIVE NAME  
OF WHICH IS TO BE ASCERTAINED WHEREVER  
POSSIBLE.

---

|         |           |              |         |             |
|---------|-----------|--------------|---------|-------------|
| Sun     | Fish      | Good         | Tongue  | I           |
| Moon    | Dog       | Bad          | Teeth   | Thou        |
| Star    | Kangaroo  | Man          | Ear     | He, she, it |
| Cloud   | Fire      | Woman        | Foot    | We          |
| Heavens | House     | Boy          | Nose    | Ye          |
| Rain    | Spear     | Girl         | Hair    | They        |
| Heat    | Club      | Father       | Blood   | This        |
| Cold    | Wommera   | Mother       | Living  | Who         |
| Hill    | Boomerang | Husband      | Dying   | One         |
| Land    | Day       | Wife         | Hearing | Two         |
| Sand    | Night     | Head         | Seeing  | Three       |
| Stone   | Great     | Mouth        | Sitting | Four        |
| Water   | Small     | Hand         | Making  | Five        |
| Sea     | His       | Eye          | Giving  | Ten         |
| Tree    | My        | Thumb        | Dual    | Twenty      |
| Canoe   | Thy       | Hair of head | Plural  | My foot     |
|         |           | Bone         |         |             |

Appendix 6.2. List of words to collect (RGS 1891, p.37)

## Appendix 7

### Vocabularies recorded at the Everard Ranges by the officers of the Elder expedition

This appendix contains the vocabularies of Helms (1896), Lindsay (1893) and Wells (1893) recorded at (or near) the Everard Ranges in 1891.

| VOCABULARY OBTAINED FROM NATIVES OF THE EVERARD RANGE TRIBE.  |   |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">PARTS OF THE HUMAN BODY.</p> <p>Gnulla, head<br/>Munga, hair (of head)<br/>Kunya, beard<br/>Pinna, ear<br/>Mulla, nose<br/>Dā, lips<br/>Karsetti, Karditti, teeth<br/>Kallū, eye<br/>Kallū yinbi, eyebrow<br/>Yurri, arm<br/>Malla, hand, finger, thumb<br/>Tunda, leg, thigh (?)<br/>Yinna, foot<br/>Pirri, finger or toe nails<br/>Ibi, breast<br/>Willa, belly<br/>Manna, seat of body<br/>Dulgu, blood<br/>Kumbu, urine<br/>Pika, wound<br/>Pika pilia, circumcision and the slitting of the penis<br/>Chipallē, tattoo scars found on back and chest</p> <p style="text-align: center;">VARIOUS OBJECTS AND TERMS.</p> <p>Chindu, sun<br/>Piya, moon<br/>Kellipi, star<br/>Chitungu, rainbow<br/>Kapi, water<br/>Muggatti, fire<br/>Muggatti puyu, smoke<br/>Muggatti ella, charcoal<br/>Warru, hot<br/>Biani, cold<br/>Ningna, frost<br/>Papa, the barking of a dog</p> <p>There was a dog in our camp, and as the native dogs do not bark, but only whine, the word may most likely not mean barking in the sense we understand it, and probably is applicable to the natural sound made by every animal. At first I thought it an exclamation of surprise, because the sound of a dog's bark must have been unknown to the natives; but I am convinced that it is intended for the barking of the dog.</p> <p>Yinna yanu, to walk<br/>Nurtpa, I don't know<br/>Kaitiu, rock<br/>Kulbi, painting<br/>Katui-kulbi, rock-painting</p> | <p>Puringu-hindu, dog's hair, or fur<br/>The distinction between fur and human hair is to be noted.<br/>Wauna, digging-stick (yam-stick)<br/>Wera, Mika, wooden water-bowl; also used for carrying food and other substances in<br/>Winda (Oinda), spear<br/>Iduru, a strong stick made of heavy wood, about three feet long, and a sharp stone stuck on one end<br/>Used for making weapons and implements, and is also sometimes used for the purpose of knocking down game.<br/>Mira nakata, the wooden spear-thrower<br/>This implement has also a sharp piece of flint fastened at the end near the handle, and is used, like the Iduru, for the purpose of chipping out implements and weapons.<br/>Dula, the cement with which the edged stones are fastened to the above implements<br/>It is the exudation of some Xanthorrhæa species mixed with sand.<br/>Hindi, a burning bunch of grass; faggot<br/>Ō, yes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ZOOLOGICAL OBJECTS.</p> <p>Malla, spinifex wallaby (<i>Largo-chesles</i> sp.)<br/>Wainta, opossum<br/>Puringa, dog<br/>Walliputti (<i>Myrmecobius fasciatus</i>)<br/>Kaleya, emu<br/>Waintti, turkey (<i>Otis australis</i>)<br/>Wilda, eagle (<i>Aquila audax</i>)<br/>Wilu, curlew (<i>Gedienemus grallarius</i>)<br/>Milka, <i>Cinelosoma castaneonotum</i><br/>Chitta, nest<br/>Nokum, egg<br/>Chitta minna, nest of (sp. ?)<br/>Milka nokum, egg of <i>Cin. castaneonotum</i><br/>Mineri, <i>Moloch horridus</i><br/>Milbelli, <i>Varanus Gouldii</i><br/>Murlinga, <i>Himulia Lesueurii</i><br/>Waura, <i>Diplodaetylus</i> sp.<br/>Pigonti, <i>Lygosoma ciliaris</i><br/>Piur, <i>Rhynchoedura ornata</i><br/>Jammi, <i>Lialis Burtoni</i><br/>Binda binda, moth<br/>Wanga, caterpillar</p> |

(Continued overleaf)

## Appendix 7

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Mako, larva of a large wood-boring beetle or a cossid moth.<br>Much sought after for food.  | BOTANICAL OBJECTS.   |
| Parana, ant   | Wiyindi, corkbark - tree ( <i>Hakea lorea</i> )  |
| Ebilka, pupa of ant   | Undulla, native poplar ( <i>Codonocarpus cotinifolius</i> )  |
| Wanna ilka, Mamma kalka, the pregnant female of a wood-eating ant.<br>The abdomen of this insect expands to the size of a small hazel nut, and is quite spherical. It becomes semitranslucent light yellow, and tastes sweet. The blacks are very fond of them. | Kirni, <i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>   |
| Murta murta, beetle   | Kirkin, <i>Myoporum</i> sp. (?)<br>The flowers of this shrub have a rich scent resembling the perfume of verbenas. |
| Merrui, <i>Curculio</i> sp.   | Iguarra, mulga ( <i>Acacia</i> sp.)  |
| Muldän, Longicorn sp.   | Bunbun, peach-quondong ( <i>Santalum acuminatum</i> )  |
| Kumbumburi, the dark - brown <i>Blattæ</i> living under bark (? <i>Panesthia brevicollis</i> )  | Bunbun kalka, peach fruit  |
| Kauwan, <i>Phasma</i> sp.   | Mongata, peach stone   |
| Yindilka, grasshopper   | Bundi, broom ( <i>Cassia desolata</i> )  |
| Billarbi, <i>Paragryllacris deserta</i><br>One of the Gryllide, living in damp dark places.   | Pila, Chanbi, spinifex ( <i>Triodia</i> sp.)   |
| Kampu, centipede  | Gilgalla, Iria, rolypoly ( <i>Salsola kali</i> )   |
| Koji, earthworm   | Putu, grass  |
| Opilpi, <i>Apus australiensis</i><br>A species of Crustacea living in stagnant pools of water.  | Okiri, native tobacco ( <i>Nicotiana suaveolens</i> )  |
| Pie, Nakaiya, snail shell   | Mindinga, Parka parka, fructification ; also galls   |
|   | Tindulla, <i>Eucalyptus tessellaris</i>  |
|   | Tadulla <i>Eucalyptus pyriformis</i>   |
|   | Mulba, bovista, and probably also other species of fungi   |
|   | Dalli, wood fungus ( <i>Polyporus</i> sp.), red  |
|   | Gurgu tadulla, Gurgu muldul, Kurpi dalli, wood fungus found on casuarina and mulga, brown                          |
|   | Perka, <i>Thryptomae flaviflora</i> , desert desert ti-tree  |

Appendix 7.1. Words recorded by Helms at the Everard Ranges (Helms 1896, pp.317-8).

## Appendix 7

[NOTE.—Where *w* is to be pronounced as the *w* in sun I have doubled the following consonant.]

| English.             | Native.      | English.          | Native.      | English.              | Native.     |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Teeth .....          | Karteiti     | Man's track ..... | China wila   | To tickle .....       | Kigiginuuni |
| Ear .....            | Pina         | Emu .....         | Kalaya       | Finger nail .....     | Piri        |
| Hair of head .....   | Munnga       | Turkey .....      | Wilo         | Woman .....           | Wollaberra  |
| Neck .....           | Uandi        | Crow .....        | Kairangra    | Creek water .....     | Kapi kairu  |
| Abdomen .....        | Kummbu       | Broom .....       | Pundi        | Rockhole .....        | Kapi euro   |
| Hands .....          | Murra        | Gum tree .....    | Arperra      | Camp .....            | Kupa        |
| Thigh .....          | Junnda       | Grass .....       | Butcha       | Blood .....           | Fika        |
| Foreleg .....        | Kihara       | Water .....       | Kapi         | Mouth .....           | Dah         |
| Elbow .....          | Nigo         | Cold .....        | Worri        | Yam stick .....       | Wunna       |
| Toes .....           | Piri         | Tongue .....      | Tali         | Hills .....           | Wollu       |
| Penis .....          | Turo         | Boy .....         | Itichiru     | Sit down .....        | Naien rammi |
| Kangaroo .....       | Whirru       | Sun .....         | Ginatu       | Smoke .....           | Mukati puyu |
| Dog .....            | Pa-pa        | Sleep .....       | Angu         | Corrobboree .....     | Kaiendudni  |
| Mulga .....          | Igarra       | Bone .....        | Turrka       | Tobacco .....         | Okeri       |
| Cork tree .....      | Wiginnti     | Breasts (F) ..... | Hippi        | To run .....          | Wollaringa  |
| Rock .....           | Kulbi        | Thumb .....       | Gina billka  | Smail .....           | Ankai-ita   |
| Kangaroo grass ..... | Ilinnga      | Come here .....   | Ahwai-i      | Moon .....            | Biya        |
| Fire .....           | Mukkati      | Wurley .....      | Bundi        | Eat, drink .....      | Nalguni     |
| Sand .....           | Munnda       | Spinifex .....    | Chanpi       | Sleep .....           | Angu        |
| Sit down .....       | Unnaringaini | To jump .....     | Polkardingho | Long way .....        | Wortmunga   |
| Forehead .....       | Ulla         | To walk .....     | Yann         | Iguano .....          | Milballi    |
| Nose .....           | Mula         | Yes .....         | Owh          | Urine .....           | Kumbu       |
| Whiskers .....       | Kundga       | Cloud .....       | Kapi uringna | Rock drawings .....   | Kulpi       |
| Eye .....            | Karu         | Stars .....       | Kalilpi      | Distant .....         | Wertmunnga  |
| Chest .....          | Nurrka       | Grass .....       | Putha        | Rainbow .....         | Chutiungu   |
| Arm .....            | Yari         | Stone .....       | Kaitchu      | Plenty of water ..... | Bulga kapi  |
| Buttock .....        | Murna        | Saltbush .....    | Iriya        | Well .....            | Kapi ila    |
| Knee .....           | Murri        | Opossum .....     | Waiguta      | I have had .....      | Chiggen     |
| Ankle .....          | Tari         | No .....          | Wiya         |                       |             |
| Foot .....           | China        | Claypan .....     | Gingey       |                       |             |

Appendix 7.2. Words recorded by Lindsay at the Everard Ranges (Lindsay 1893, p.9).

## Appendix 7

| COLLECTED FROM THE EVERARD RANGES (MOUNT ILLBILLEE). |       |                             |                   |       |                         |
|--|-------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| Native Words.  |       | Translations.               | Native Words.     |       | Translations.           |
| Jinntu   | ..... | Sun                         | Da                | ..... | Mouth                   |
| Biya   | ..... | Moon                        | Kuru              | ..... | Eye                     |
| Munddila, or kalillpi                                | ..    | Stars                       | Mummunnatura      | ..... | Thumb                   |
| Kapi-yuringna  | ..... | Clouds                      | Munnka            | ..... | Hair                    |
| Tchutunngeell  | ..... | Rainbow                     | Talinn            | ..... | Tongue                  |
| Kapi   | ..... | Water                       | Kadidi            | ..... | Teeth                   |
| Mukkati  | ..... | Fire                        | Pina              | ..... | Ear                     |
| Munnda   | ..... | Sand                        | Mula              | ..... | Nose                    |
| Wallu  | ..... | Range, or hill              | Kunnja            | ..... | Beard                   |
| Kaitu  | ..... | Stone                       | Wundi             | ..... | Back of neck            |
| Turrka   | ..... | Bone                        | Tarri             | ..... | Arm                     |
| Pika   | ..... | Blood                       | Tuenmta           | ..... | Leg                     |
| Putha  | ..... | Grass                       | Wila              | ..... | Stomach                 |
| Illkura  | ..... | Mulga (acacia)              | Morti             | ..... | Knee                    |
| Aperra   | ..... | Gumtree                     | Jina-billka       | ..... | Walk                    |
| Wichinnti  | ..... | Corktree                    | Awaii             | ..... | Come                    |
| Okira  | ..... | Native tobacco              | Naiennunni        | ..... | Sit                     |
| Pika pillya  | ..... | Circumcision                | Nurtpa            | ..... | Don't know              |
| Tchanpi, or pila                                     | ..... | Spinifex ( <i>triodea</i> ) | Polkadinnjo       | ..... | Jump                    |
| Mukkati-puyu   | ..... | Smoke                       | Wallarinnng       | ..... | Run                     |
| Bunnbunn   | ..... | Native peachtree            | Oh!               | ..... | Yes!                    |
| Wunna, or wyana                                      | ..... | Yamstick                    | Nallguni          | ..... | Eat, or drink           |
| Maerrú   | ..... | Womera                      | Anngu             | ..... | Sleep                   |
| Maka   | ..... | Native dish                 | Merrlu            | ..... | Kangaroo                |
| Kandi  | ..... | Flint                       | Purinnia, or papa | ..... | Dog, or dingo           |
| Jiburri  | ..... | Tattoo marks                | Murlinga          | ..... | Lizard                  |
| Winnda   | ..... | Spear                       | Kanka             | ..... | Crow                    |
| Ngura  | ..... | Bed                         | Kammpu            | ..... | Centipede               |
| Nyingá   | ..... | Ice                         | Kaleya            | ..... | Emu                     |
| Bundi  | ..... | Dwelling                    | Marraruka         | ..... | Rock pigeon             |
| Wolka  | ..... | Waistband                   | Purrara           | ..... | Ant                     |
| Kaiennudni   | ..... | Corrobboree                 | Wommi             | ..... | Snake                   |
| Murra  | ..... | Hand                        | Mulla             | ..... | Kangaroo rat            |
| Jina   | ..... | Foot                        | Warri             | ..... | Cold                    |
| Piri   | ..... | Toes                        | Annkita           | ..... | Child                   |
| Kada   | ..... | Head                        | Kapi-wiya         | ..... | No water, or dead water |

Appendix 7.3. Words recorded by Wells at the Everard Ranges (in Lindsay 1893, p.77).

## Appendix 8

### Extract from Curr (1886-7)

This appendix contains Curr's vocabulary 'No.45 – West of Lake Eyre' (Curr 1886-7, Vol.2, pp.16-7), from which an indication of the types of vocabulary items requested by Curr in his survey can be gained.

| No. 45.—WEST OF LAKE EYRE.                   |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| By JOHN WARREN, Esq., and JOHN HOGARTH, Esq. |                              |
| Kangaroo - - koongaroo.                      | Hand - - - murra.            |
| Opossum - - wombla.                          | 2 Blacks - - nulla parakula. |
| Tame dog - - mudlu.                          | 3 Blacks - - nulla kulparte. |
| Wild dog - - wilki.                          | One - - - oyoo.              |
| Emu - - - warrewotti.                        | Two - - - parakula.          |
| Black duck - mulchawaroo.                    | Three - - - kulparte.        |
| Wood duck -                                  | Four - - - parakula-para-    |
| Pelican - - worandoo.                        | kula.                        |
| Laughing jackass                             | Father - - - neia.           |
| Native companion wooroo.                     | Mother - - - looka.          |
| White cockatoo - kadamooonga.                | Sister-Elder - kakoo.        |
| Crow - - - wakilla.                          | ,, Younger - koobakoo.       |
| Swan - - - kooti.                            | Brother-Elder - nooto.       |
| Egg - - - bapoo.                             | ,, Younger koobakoo.         |
| Track of a foot - darri.                     | A young man - kulpi.         |
| Fish - - - paroo.                            | An old man - warroo.         |
| Lobster - - -                                | An old woman - willula.      |
| Crayfish - - koongideri.                     | A baby - - - koopa-koopa.    |
| Mosquito - - ueni.                           | A White man -                |
| Fly - - - yoorgoori.                         | Children - - -               |
| Snake - - - wabina.                          | Head - - - kardiapoo.        |
| The Blacks - - nulla.                        | Eye - - - miltekurte.        |
| A Blackfellow - nulla.                       | Ear - - - yerri.             |
| A Black woman - bookoo.                      |                              |
| Nose - - - mectla.                           |                              |

(Continued overleaf)

## Appendix 8

## WEST OF LAKE EYRE.

No. 45.—WEST OF LAKE EYRE—*continued.*

|                              |                     |                          |                      |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Mouth                        | - - murna.          | Boomerang                | - -                  |
| Teeth                        | - - yakkara.        | Hill                     | - - -                |
| Hair of the head             | - yarree.           | Wood                     | - - - mukka.         |
| Beard                        | - - - minga.        | Stone                    | - - - kadna.         |
| Thunder                      | - - - pulpa.        | Camp                     | - - - oo-oo-oor-roo. |
| Grass                        | - - - kongara.      | Yes                      | - - - pee, yarra.    |
| Tongue                       | - - - tarli.        | No                       | - - - padne.         |
| Stomach                      | - - - koodnakurte.  | I                        | - - - outa.          |
| Breasts                      | - - - ngumma.       | You                      | - - - anpa.          |
| Thigh                        | - - -               | Bark                     | - - -                |
| Foot                         | - - - tidna.        | Good                     | - - - oo-oo-koo.     |
| Bone                         | - - - walpoo.       | Bad                      | - - - mudlante.      |
| Blood                        | - - - kooabmarri.   | Sweet                    | - - -                |
| Skin                         | - - - pelta-nooree. | Food                     | - - - chalpa.        |
| Fat                          | - - - murni.        | Hungry                   | - - -                |
| Bowels                       | - - - kunakurri.    | Thirsty                  | - - -                |
| Excrement                    | - - - koodna.       | Eat                      | - - -                |
| War-spear                    | - - - peremboora.   | Sleep                    | - - - koodnullana.   |
| Reed-spear                   | - - - katchi.       | Drink                    | - - - poontarda.     |
| Wommera or<br>throwing-stick | - - -               | Walk                     | - - - ukunda.        |
| Shield                       | - - - moodlawarroo. | See                      | - - - nangenda.      |
| Tomahawk                     | - - - kandi.        | Sit                      | - - - tonkunna.      |
| Canoe                        | - - -               | Yesterday                | - - - kulkara.       |
| Sun                          | - - - mooyoo.       | To-day                   | - - - woldarapoota.  |
| Moon                         | - - - burilla.      | To-morrow                | - - - wongara.       |
| Star                         | - - - kardikilla.   | Where are the<br>Blacks? | - wetiara nulla?     |
| Light                        | - - - arka.         | I don't know             | - wijero.            |
| Dark                         | - - - milooroo.     | Plenty                   | - - - nooka.         |
| Cold                         | - - - mudli.        | Big                      | - - - burra-burra.   |
| Heat                         | - - - warantcha.    | Little                   | - - - kooa-kooa.     |
| Day                          | - - - wudla.        | Dead                     | - - - boorunda.      |
| Night                        | - - - albeonoo.     | By-and-by                | - - - yadnai.        |
| Fire                         | - - - mukka.        | Come on                  | - - - kowana.        |
| Water                        | - - - koota.        | Milk                     | - - -                |
| Smoke                        | - - - toopo.        | Eaglehawk                | - - -                |
| Ground                       | - - - wodla.        | Wild turkey              | - - -                |
| Wind                         | - - - wobnera.      | Wife                     | - - -                |
| Rain                         | - - - chaili.       |                          |                      |
| God                          | - - -               |                          |                      |
| Ghosts                       | - - -               |                          |                      |

## Appendix 9

Extract from Tindale's *Vocabulary of Pitjandjara* (Tindale 1937 MS, p.1)

| <u>VOCABULARY OF PITJANDJARA.</u> |  |         |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------|
| akeringa                          | on the plain   | Kuk.    |
| (a)lakora                         | woman's camp   | Kuk.    |
| Alanjipa                          | a place name   | P.      |
| 'alibi                            | shoulder   | Nad. P. |
| 'alida, 'alidi                    | ( <u>Pittosporum phillyreoides</u> ),<br>shrub or small tree   | P.      |
| Alilpa Kora, Alalpila kura.       | a place name <sup>(alilpa)</sup> / to,<br>kura = towards = to. | Kuk.    |
| 'alindjara                        | North  | P.      |
| alininjil                         | from north blowing (wind)                                      | P.      |
| (alindjira, Bates)                | North  | Wir.    |
| alinjakatanka                     | north wind   | Kuk.    |
| alinjalko                         | on north   | Kuk.    |
| alintara                          | northward  | Kuk.    |
| 'alindjara                        | North or N.E., c.f. kaieli                                     | Nad.    |
| Aljarapanji                       | a place name   | P.      |
| Alkarinja (inma tipari)           |  | P.      |
| 'al'karuka                        | large red meat ant   | P.      |
| (algu, gurra, Helms)              | Blood  |         |
| 'alkulju                          | blood  | P.      |
| (alla, altarpa, Helms)            | <u>Eucalyptus pyriformis</u> .                                 |         |
| (alpa kara, Helms)                | <u>Euphorbia Drummondii</u> .                                  |         |
| Alpuralpuln                       | Ancestral being of the ili<br>or large native fig totem.       | P.      |

Note that 'P., Kuk., Nad. and Wir.' are Tindale's 'Pitjandjara', 'Kukatja'; 'Na:dadjara' and 'Wirongu' respectively.

## Appendix 10

## Extracts from Tindale's 'Ooldea Vocabulary' (1934 MS)

|                 |           |                       |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| ankle           | tari      | phalange              |
| throat          | undji     |                       |
| shoulder        | jambil    | umbil                 |
| mouth           | ta        | da                    |
| nose            | mulja     | mulja                 |
| chin            | kandar    | gundur                |
| neck            | gondi     | ungu                  |
| head            | kat:a     | katia                 |
| eye             | kuru      | kuru                  |
| knees           | murti     | [mand-de]<br>[kain]   |
| head gear       | mun:a     | munja                 |
| ear             | pin:a     | pin:a                 |
| hair            | kata uru  | [cuter-er me]         |
| elbows          | njik:u    | [nee-gos]             |
| nails, finger - | per:i     | [keri]                |
| shin            | talba     | talba                 |
| thigh           | tjunda    | tjunda                |
| toes            | tjena     |                       |
| claw            | tjini     |                       |
| ankle           | tari      | tari                  |
| stomach         | naraba    | naraba                |
| intestines      |           | tjini<br>kudu<br>kudu |
| heart           | kudrudru  | <del>kudu</del>       |
| liver           | kamandi   | kamadi                |
| teeth           | kadidi    | karadi                |
| eye brows       | njinbin   | nubin                 |
| eye lashes      | kuru indu | indo                  |
| lips            | njimi     | nimi                  |
| ribs            |           | kundelia              |

## Appendix 10

|                    |                           |  |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--|
| thumb              | marajali                  | [marles]   |
| forehead           | yal:a                     | nalja  |
| cartilage in nose  | } mulja wiggamulja wingas | mulja  |
| bone in nose       |                           | mulja  |
| cheek              | yok:o                     | muka   |
| cheek bone         | —                         | dawagu   |
| wrist              | mara muljil               | muringur   |
| penis              | <del>mulja</del> kala     | nanji  |
| vulva              | njira                     | mumangi  |
| hair on pubes      | nanju                     |  |
| hair under arms    | indu                      | [nav...]   |
| wombat             | wartu, wardu              | [wurato]   |
| mole, molehill     | ari:adjaradja             | aradjaradja  |
| fox                | ti:mbu                    | tu:ka  |
| Kangaroo           | mal:u                     | mal:u  |
| wallaby, hare      | mal:a                     | mal:a  |
| cat                | mulku                     | [mule-goo]   |
| dog                | papa, ilka                | papa   |
| phosgenale         | maritja                   | malgarditi   |
| koala              | walija                    | walitja  |
| house hilding rat  | walija                    | balgalja   |
| mouse, hush        |                           | minkeri  |
| rabbit             | 'rabiti                   | 'rabiti <small>can of eggs E<br/>p. 100, Jesus bring him</small> |
| Kangaroo mouse     |                           | mumbin   |
| rabbit eared koala | tjalku                    | talku  |
| opossum            | wajuta                    | justa  |

Tindale (1934 MS, p. 258)

## Appendix 10

|                       |                |               |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| handed antechinus     | walputi        | walbudu       |
| echidna               |                | (tjilkamala)! |
| bat                   |                | (tjilkamala)! |
| mako                  | 'kanba         | kanba         |
| black mako            |                | maliang       |
| tiger mako            | 'teivo         | ti:ru         |
| gecko                 |                | me:gi:a       |
| shingle back lizard   |                | kulta         |
| blue tongue "         |                | mita          |
| frog lizard           |                | kurabin       |
| frilled lizard        |                | marbila       |
| woman devil           | mijari, mijari | mijari        |
| goana                 | mitpali        | mitbili       |
| trigle lizard         | 'akal,         | djagal        |
| frog                  |                | nanju         |
| fish                  |                | muradi        |
| slow worm             |                | molinga       |
| centipede             |                | bangi-bangi   |
| scorpion              |                | kodilka       |
| emu                   | kataia         | kataia        |
| cave owl              |                | wiaratja      |
| eagle, wedge tailed - | waltja         | waltja        |
| turkey                | 'gibara        | 'gibara       |
| cakaroo               |                | biabia        |
| ring necked parrot    |                | parlparl      |
| swallow               |                | kundjilga     |

Tindale (1934 MS, p.260)

## Appendix 10

|                 |   |                         |                               |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| wild blackfella | } N. name: the<br>Cp. name: people<br>most cultivated | kudadji                 | <del>kadadji</del>            |
| grass parrot    |   |                         | djuladjili                    |
| butterfly       |   |                         | kinta kinta                   |
| fly             |   |                         | kardilka, anbra               |
| blow fly        |   | pupuleti                | bubulili                      |
| ant             |   | minga                   | minga                         |
| spider          |   | imbu                    | impu                          |
| quab            |   | mako                    | maku, pardi                   |
| spear           |   | katji, kadji            | kadji                         |
| shield          |   | kudidji                 | <del>gudadji</del>            |
| feather         |   | meru                    | meru                          |
| scoop, wooden   |   | wira                    | wira                          |
| throwing stick  |   | tjurtigi                | djuding                       |
| digging stick   |   | wan:a                   | wan:a                         |
| boomerang       |   | kabi                    | kali                          |
| tomahawk        |   | (not known<br>in store) | [ <del>tanjer</del><br>tunja] |
| fire            |   | waru                    | waru                          |
| meat            |   | koka                    | seoka                         |
| food            |   | mai                     | mai                           |
| sick, sore      |   | pika                    | pika                          |
| bad, no good    |   |                         | kwia-kwia                     |
| good            |   | palia, palja            | palja                         |
| big             |   | bulka                   | bulka                         |
| short, small    |   |                         | mutamuta                      |
| little          |   | tjukutjuku              | tjukatjuka                    |
| man             |   |                         | hanga                         |
| woman           |   |                         |                               |

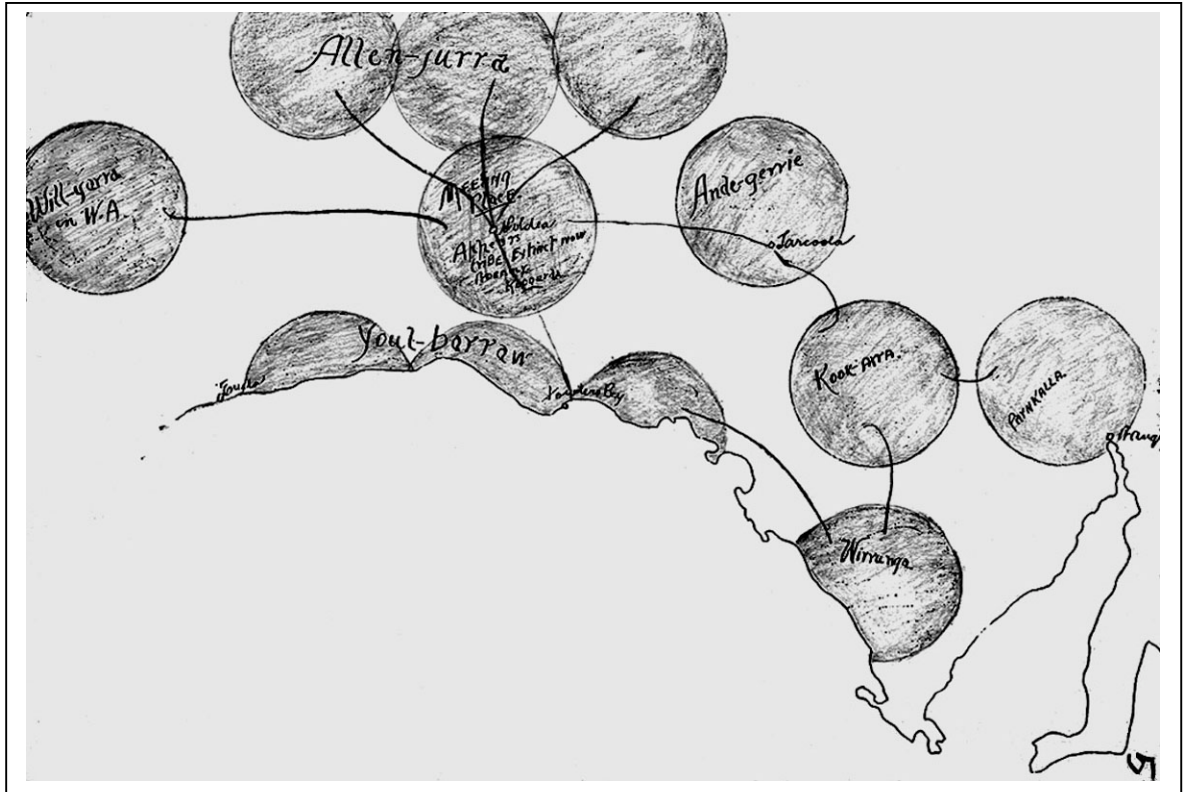
## Appendix 10

|                              |                             |                  |           |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| smoke                        |                             | puju             | puju      |
| fire                         |                             | waru             | waru      |
| egg                          |                             | gokun            | [mookun]  |
| stone                        |                             | abu              | abu       |
| edge stone in quartz         |                             | meru'katinji     | [kidi]    |
| north                        |                             | alindjara        | alindjara |
| south                        |                             | ulbarara         | ulbara    |
| east                         |                             | karkarava        | karkakara |
| west                         |                             | wilurara         | wilurara  |
| low hole                     |                             | munuwara         | munuwara  |
| water                        |                             | kapi             | kabi      |
| ground earthy                |                             | manta            | wanda     |
| sandhill                     | & sandground<br>mulga flats | tali             | tali      |
| puidi<br>high                |                             | 'inkanji         | inkanji   |
| soyas                        |                             | 'ulanji          | ulanji    |
| cone                         |                             | 'galijara        | galijara  |
| go                           |                             | 'jananji         | jananji   |
| clever "law maker"           |                             |                  | ungari    |
| javelin                      |                             | winda            |           |
| a logwood for years?         |                             | kardai           |           |
| from E of O, also            |                             | Katju            |           |
| ambark in store, country N.} |                             |                  |           |
| ant ships then               |                             |                  |           |
| no text                      |                             |                  |           |
| sleep                        |                             | anku             |           |
| sleepy                       |                             | ankuela, ankeila |           |
| Seven Sisters star           |                             | Kunkarunkara     |           |
| red star near this           |                             | Kampukata        |           |
| .15° E of this star is       |                             | Tukur            |           |

Tindale (1934 MS, p.266)

## Appendix 11

### Section of Bolam's sketch map, c1926 (Tindale 1924-36 MS)



The quality of the original is such that it has been difficult to reproduce clearly Bolam's map. The circles and semi-circles read clockwise from the left include the names 'Will-yarra in W.A.', 'Allen-jurra', 'Ande-gerrie', 'Kook-arra', 'Parnkalla', 'Wirrunga' and 'Youl-barran'. Finally, the centre circle includes the words 'Ooldea, meeting place, appears tribe extinct now, probably Koogurda'.

## Appendix 12

### Explicit references to Bolam in Tindale (1937 MS)

| <b>1937 headword</b>             | <b>Gloss</b>          | <b>1937 page no.</b> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| (mal:ang, after Bolam)           | black snake           | 38                   |
| (marbila after Bolam)            | frilled lizard        | 44                   |
| mulja wiNan (mulja wingun Bolam) | cartilage in nose ... | 53                   |
| mulku (mule-goo, Bolam)          | cat                   | 53                   |
| (bangi-bangi, Bolam)             | centipede             | 76                   |
| (parl parl, Bolam)               | ringneck parrot       | 78                   |
| per:i (berri, Bolam)             | nails, finger-        | 79                   |
| (bia bia, Bolam)                 | cockatoo              | 80                   |
| (tjilka mala, Bolam)             | echidna               | 101                  |
| (tjilka mala, Bolam)             | bat!                  | 101                  |
| (djuladjili, Bolam)              | grass parrot          | 108                  |
| (ungari, Bolam)                  | clever, 'law maker'   | 114                  |
| (wiaratja, Bolam)                | cave owl              | 127                  |

## Appendix 13

### ‘Unattributed’ Bolam references in Tindale (1937 MS): accompanying a Tindale headword in parentheses

| 1937 headword              | Gloss           | 1937 page no. |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| kamandi (komadi)           | liver           | 14            |
| kandan (gundun)            | chin            | 15            |
| kuru indu (indo)           | eye lashes      | 33            |
| kudrudru (kwudrudu)        | heart           | 34            |
| mako (maku, pardi)         | grub            | 36            |
| mara muljul (mu:ngun)      | wrist           | 43            |
| mara Nali (narlea)         | thumb           | 43            |
| miNari, mingari (mingari)  | mountain devil  | 48            |
| minga (minga)              | ants            | 49            |
| mun:a (muna)               | head gear       | 54            |
| muritja, moritja (malgara) | phascogale ...  | 55            |
| Nal:a (nalja)              | forehead        | 61            |
| njik:u (nee-goo)           | elbow           | 69            |
| njimi (nimi)               | lips            | 70            |
| ta, tja (da)               | mouth           | 92            |
| takal (djagal)             | bicycle lizard  | 92            |
| teiro (tir:u)              | tiger snake     | 96            |
| tinbu (tu:ka)              | fox             | 97            |
| walputi (walbudi)          | banded anteater | 118           |
| wartu, wardu (wauratoo)    | wombat          | 124           |
| jambil (umbil)             | shoulder        | 132           |

## Appendix 14

### Unattributed Bolam references in Tindale (1937 MS): headwords in parentheses

| 1937 headword | Gloss               | 1937 page no. |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------|
| (kintakinta)  | butterfly           | 22            |
| (kodilka)     | scorpion            | 27            |
| (kulta)       | shingle back lizard | 29            |
| (kundelia)    | ribs                | 30            |
| (kundjilga)   | swallow             | 31            |
| (kurabin)     | frog lizard         | 31            |
| (kwia-kwia)   | bad, no good        | 34            |
| (minkeri)     | mouse, bush         | 49            |
| (mita)        | blue tongue lizard  | 51            |
| (molinga)     | slow worm           | 51            |
| (muradi)      | fish                | 55            |
| (muta muta)   | short, small        | 56            |
| (nanji)       | frog                | 57            |
| (ning:a)      | gecko               | 69            |

## Appendix 15

### Tindale's 1940 Antikirinya catalogue entry (1940, p.178)

'Anta'kirinja, 'Ande'kerinja Antakirinja

Loc.: Head-waters of Hamilton, Alberga, Wintinna and Lora Creeks north to Erldunda, Central Australia; south to Stuart Range; at upper limits of Lilla Creek, but not extending down to the Finke River, which is Aranda country. (Movements since 1917 have taken portion of tribe south to Ooldea. Earlier movement was from west after massacre by them of some previous inhabitants of Mount Chandler district; closely related to Jangkundjara.)

Alt.: Antakerrinya, Andekarinja, Antekarinja, Andigirinji, Andigarina, Andingiri, Antigerinya, Andjirigna, Unterrgerrie (ms.), Tangara, Yandairunga, Mbenderinga, Madutara.

Ref.: Giles in Taplin 1879, Krichauff 1886, Howitt 1891, Helms 1896, Mathews 1900 (1), Bates 1918, Elkin 1931, 1940, Tindale in Fenner 1936, T.

### Appendix 16

#### Sociological data card I.1 from Tindale's 1933 expedition (SAM 1933MS)

The two versions of this card are notable for Tindale's reversal of the names in the 'tribe' category in the top right corner of each card. They are presented in the order in which they appear to have been written by Tindale.

No. 1 Native name Koneia Jukkur Tribe (Andakeringa) Yankunja  
 Sex ♂ Age 19 Secret name \_\_\_\_\_ White name Tammy  
 Where born Kularda Subclass Goyder Spr. Totem Koneia carpet snake  
 Father's name \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe Yankunja Where born Adilla N. of Wipin  
 Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_ Where died Aputana N. of Wipin  
 Mother's name \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe \_\_\_\_\_ Where born Mapanapiti N. long way  
 Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_ Where died Living at Hamilton Downs  
 Brothers \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sisters 2 youngers  
 Husband's or Wife's name \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe Yankunja  
 Where born N. of Ernabella Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_  
 Male Children \_\_\_\_\_ Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_  
 Female Children \_\_\_\_\_ Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_  
 Photographs nos 1-129 on 2 1/4 x 3 1/8 film negative Loc. Ernabella Date 31.5.1933 Remarks (over)

---

No. 1 Native name Koneia Jukkur Tribe Yankunja (Andakeringa)  
 Sex ♂ Age 19 Secret name \_\_\_\_\_ White name Tammy  
 Where born Kularda Subclass Goyder Totem Koneia carpet snake  
 Father's name \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe Jank Where born Adilla N. of Ernabella  
 Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_ Where died Aputana N. of Wipin  
 Mother's name \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe \_\_\_\_\_ Where born Mapanapiti N. long way  
 Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_ Where died Living at Hamilton Downs  
 Brothers \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sisters (2) youngers  
 Husband's or Wife's name \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe Yankunja  
 Where born N. of Ernabella Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_  
 Male Children \_\_\_\_\_ Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_  
 Female Children \_\_\_\_\_ Subclass \_\_\_\_\_ Totem \_\_\_\_\_  
 Photographs F.S. nos 1-129 on 2 1/4 x 3 1/8 film negative Loc. Ernabella Date 31.5.1933 Remarks (over)

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## Errata

- P.9, line 4, 17, 22; p.10, line 1; p.86, line 14; p.87, line 21; p.89, line 22; p.93, line 17; p.105, line 17; p.118, line 6; p.126, line 17; p.128, line 1; p.157, line 9, 23; p.179, line 5; p.207, line 19; p.248, line1: ‘communicational’ to ‘communication’.
- P.9, line 7, 19; p.14, line 18, 22; p.90, line 6; p.91, line 23, 28; p.95, line11; p.97, line 17, 25; p.99, line 6, 7; p.101, line 3; p.130, line 27; p.186, line 2, 4: ‘communicational’ to ‘communicative’.
- P.11, line 8: ‘lingusitic’ to ‘linguistic’.
- P.12, line 14: ‘fastidiousnes’ to ‘fastidiouness’.
- P.13, line 3: ‘material turned up’ to ‘material that turned up’.
- P.19, line 21: ‘contests’ to ‘contexts’.
- P.35, line 13: ‘devalue of the work’ to ‘devalue the work’.
- P.37, footnote 31: ‘discussed a later chapters’ to ‘discussed in later chapters’.
- P.53, line 11: ‘[r]’ to ‘[ʀ]’.
- P.54, line 26: ‘chapter 1.2’ to ‘section 1.2’.
- P.56, line 29: ‘as English [l], [n] and [t]’ to ‘as alveolar [l], [n] and [t] as in English’.
- P.76, line 12: ‘are they are of’ to ‘are they of’.
- P.87, line 5: ‘drawing his experience’ to ‘drawing on his experience’.
- P.93, line 18: ‘effected’ to ‘affected’.
- P.98, line15: ‘cattle station’ to ‘cattle station English’.
- P.100, line 8: ‘know’ to ‘known’.
- P.100, footnote 15: continues with the final sentence: ‘It is also worth noting that there is an Ilpili west of Papunya in the Northern Territory.’
- P.101, footnote 18: ‘Oodnadatta’ to ‘Oodnadatta’.
- P.105, line 22: p.173, line 2: ‘practiced’ to ‘practised’.
- P.117, line 11: ‘Amata’ to ‘Amata’.
- P.117, line 22: ‘Pitjatjantjara’ to ‘Pitjantjatjara’.
- P.133, line 15: ‘Jones’s’ to ‘Jones’.
- P.135, footnote 9: ‘Teichelmann, and Schurmann’ to ‘Teichelmann and Schürmann’.

P.136, footnote 11: 'Black (1917, p.3).' to 'Black (1917, p.3), and, of course, in the pioneering work of Wilhelm Schmidt (1919).'

P.145, line 8: 'Wells'[s]' to 'Wells''.

P.146, line 25; p.149, line 13; p.150, line 13; p.153, line 27; p. 212, line 5; p. 219, line 27; p. 220, line 6; p.220, line 13: 'Helms's' to 'Helms''.

P.147, line 8: 'construction the language' to 'construction of the language'.

P.149, line 8: 'included' to 'include'.

P.153, line 27: 'if in they' to 'if they'.

P.155, line 12: 'not no appear' to 'not appear'.

P.160, line 16: 'close the homestead' to 'close to the homestead'.

P.165, line 8: 'Pitjantjatjara' to 'Pitjantjara'.

P.170, footnote 10: 'voyage' to 'journey'.

P.173, line 14; p.303, line 26: 'Schurmann' to 'Schürmann'.

P.179, line 2: 'Pitjatjantjara' to 'Pitjantjara'.

P.189, line 2: 'Wells's' to 'Wells''.

P.207, line 16: 'a common a response' to ' a common response'.

P.210, line 5; p.219, line 11; p.223, line 4, 14: 'Giles's' to 'Giles''.

P.221, footnote 17: 'effect' to 'affect'.

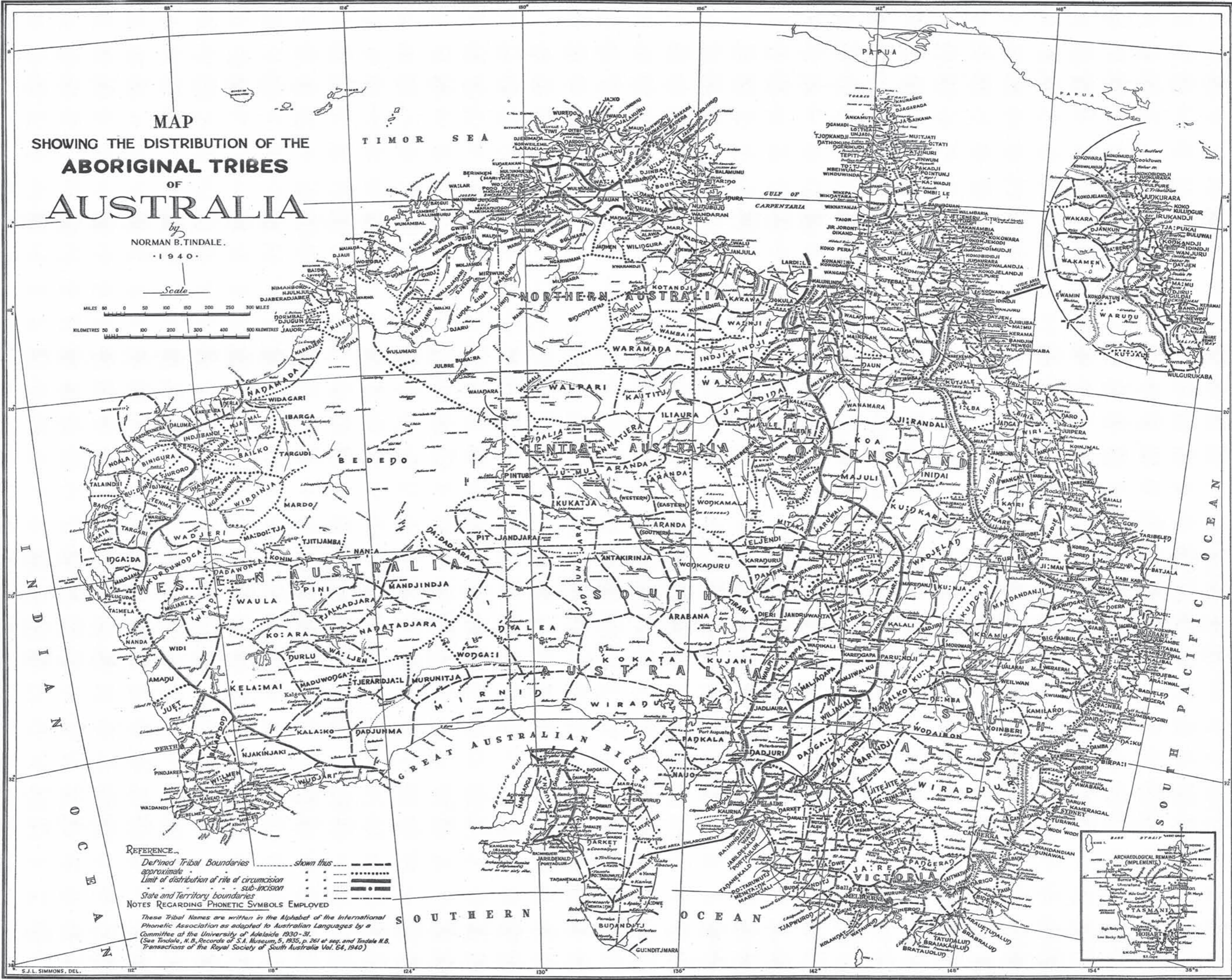
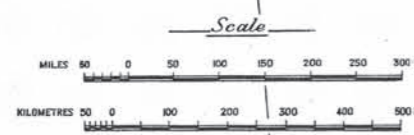
P.224, footnote 21: 'which is name' to 'which is the name'.

P.234, line 26: 'the Berndts's' to 'the Berndts''.

P.236, line 7: 'attempt' to 'attempted'.

# MAP SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES OF AUSTRALIA

by  
NORMAN B. TINDALE.  
1940.



**REFERENCE.**  
Defined Tribal Boundaries shown thus: ————  
approximate  
Limit of distribution of rite of circumcision shown thus: ······  
sub-incision  
State and Territory boundaries shown thus: ————  
**NOTES REGARDING PHONETIC SYMBOLS EMPLOYED**  
These Tribal Names are written in the Alphabet of the International Phonetic Association as adapted to Australian Languages by a Committee at the University of Adelaide 1930-31.  
(See Tindale, N.B., Records of S.A. Museum, 5, 1935, p. 261 et seq. and Tindale N.B., Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia Vol. 64, 1940)



