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CONVERTING SALVATION: Protestant Missionaries in Central Australia, 1930s-40s

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A thesis submitted in September 2004 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University
DECLARATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, my own work, except where acknowledged in the thesis itself, and the material has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for a degree at this or any other University.

[Signature]

David Trudinger

30 August 2004
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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my Supervisor, Professor Ann Curthroys, for the advice and assistance that she has provided me during the ‘long march’ of this thesis. Her marvellous support and encouragement have been much appreciated. I also thank John Docker, Peter Read, and Robert Barnes at the Australian National University for their help.

The staff at the various libraries and research archives I have utilised have always been very helpful. I thank especially the staff at the National Library of Australia, the Mitchell Library, the South Australian Museum Archives, the Mortlock Library at the South Australian State Library, the State Records Office of South Australia, the Lutheran Archives, the Ara Irititja Archives, Uniting Church Archives, and the libraries of the Universities of Adelaide and Queensland, and, of course, the Australian National University. I would like particularly to thank Lea Gardam, John Dallwitz, Ron Lister for their friendly help, and Jonathan Nicholls especially for lending an ear and dispensing advice at some crucial times.

I thank the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Institute and the Australian National University for financial assistance during the research and writing of the thesis.

I owe an especial debt of gratitude to my family for giving me the time, support and understanding one needs from loved ones to complete this sort of project. Especially I thank my children, Ben and Ava, for their love, tolerance and good humour. Eve, my partner, has been a tower of strength and support to me and for this, among many other things, I dedicate this thesis to her.
Abstract

Using the intellectual, political and discursive 'construction' of a Presbyterian mission site, Ernabella, in Central Australia during the 1930s and 40s, and against the background of the established and iconic Lutheran mission at Hermannsburg, missionary discourse on indigenous Australians is examined, particularly the discourse in which the significant Presbyterian missionary JRB Love and his fellow churchman Dr. Charles Duguid participated. Discursive and political interactions between these two and missionaries such as FW Albrecht of Hermannsburg and John Flynn of the AIM are utilized to explore the fraught and fragmented nature of the missionary discourse in Central Australia in relation to issues such as rationing and feeding, curing indigenous illnesses, 'half-castes' and the removal of children, work and education issues, language and translation, and the christianization, conversion and 'civilising' of indigenous people. Missionary discourse and praxis is approached through a provocative reading of the French Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas whose delineation of the face to face *encounter with the Other*, where responsibility is taken for 'men dispossessed and without food', is posited as having some relevance and resonance to and within the mission site itself. While conflict, unequal power relations and paternalism were evident, with missionary discourse sharing traces of racial and cultural disparagement of Aborigines with a wider colonial/settler discourse, the general 'avidity of the colonial gaze' was diluted in the mission contact zone with traces of hospitality which at least to some extent replicated and reciprocated the politics of hospitality proffered to the missionaries by 'their' Aborigines. Central to this discourse of hospitality was the unorthodox preparedness of the Love/Duguid administration at Ernabella and (to a lesser, but surprising, extent) FW Albrecht's regime at Hermannsburg, to 'convert' the notion of 'salvation' from one with mainly spiritual connotations to one more to do with the physical 'saving' of the indigenous body and the indigenous collective: saving bodies became as important, if not more so, than saving souls, the traditional missionary imperative. While some complicity with colonial, cultural and religious regimes for re-forming and re-making the indigenous body is acknowledged, some reassessment is suggested to postcolonial (or postmodern) readings of mission sites as always places predominantly of cultural destruction, domination and hegemony.
Preface

I was born in 1949, the son of Presbyterian missionaries, Ronald and June Trudinger, at Ernabella Mission Station. I lived on the Mission site until 1957, when our family left Ernabella under difficult circumstances. I remember that from Ernabella you could see Mount Love, a beautiful purple sight in the blue distance and to me, as a small boy, the most imposing mountain in the world. My father told me that it was named after the Rev. JRB Love, who had been superintendent of Ernabella before I was born. Perhaps it was the name. Even then I knew that ‘Love’ was an important thing. Perhaps it was just the mountain. But I used to wonder then about Mr. Love and who he was. I have other memories of this time, such as shadowy, now-forgotten figures talking in hushed voices about the ‘imagined destinies’ of the Aborigines, of the possibility of them ‘dying out’.

Mission history is, then, in my blood. Fifty years after seeing that mountain, I have written a thesis in which JRB Love and Ernabella Mission Station figure prominently. Yet, strangely perhaps, I feel no intense desire to either defend or criticise missions, or missionaries themselves. I have a certain sympathy and admiration for missionaries, these committed people, deep in the Outback, with their Doctrines and their Book. Yet I also have a distaste for their arrogance and presumptions, and I feel a deep empathy and admiration for Aboriginal people who had to attempt to make sense of these strange intruders into their country.

I have no wish to write a grand narrative in the style of the triumphalist missionary epics of the past. But while most in this country were indifferent to the fate of Aboriginal people, or rode roughshod over them, there were men and women who encountered Australian Aboriginals in their Landscape, as the Other, and in that gestural ‘moment’, which might last a lifetime, that face to face encounter, were established complex and ambivalent bonds, some of dominance and deference, but also others of desire and fantasy, of affection and possession, of obligation and responsibility. It is more in the attempt to begin to unravel these sorts of affiliations than any simple desire to defend or censure that I have written this thesis.
Abbreviations

AAM – Australian Aborigines’ Mission
AFA – Aborigines’ Friends’ Association
AIM – Australian Inland Mission
AMS – Aerial Medical Service (forerunner to RFDS)
APB – Aborigines Protection Board (SA)
BM – (Presbyterian) Board of Missions
CP – Chief Protector
FRM – Finke River Mission
GAA – General Assembly of Australia (Presbyterian Church)
NLA- National Library of Australia
NT – New Testament
NT – Northern Territory
RFDS – Royal Flying Doctor Service
SA – South Australia
SAM – South Australian Museum
SASL – South Australian State Library
UAM – United Aborigines Mission
Figure 1. Missionaries and the Other: ‘Sunday Afternoon Service. Ernabella. August 1943.’ JRB Love standing and preaching, and the Love and Young families seated next to him facing the ‘congregation’ (photograph from the Borgelt Collection at the Aria Ititija Archives, Adelaide)
CONVERTING SALVATION: Protestant Missionaries in Central Australia, 1930s-40s

Introduction

Ernabella and Hermannsburg: these two Mission Stations were the sites of two significant Protestant missionizing ventures in Central Australia in the 19th and 20th centuries. Ernabella, a Presbyterian mission established in 1937, was set in Pitjantjatjara land in the Musgrave Ranges in the far north of South Australia, while the white-washed Kraal of Lutheran Hermannsburg, founded some sixty years earlier in 1877, rose up from Arrernte land on the Finke River in the (now) Northern Territory.¹ Dotted around them on the map of the Dead Centre of our period, the nineteen thirties and forties, were the cattle and sheep stations of the iconic white settlers of the Inland, the pastoralists. Henbury, Glen Helen, Tempe Downs, Kenmore Park: the stations were the vanguard of the (mis)appropriation of the ancient and aboriginal Central Australian landscape. Vanguard and appropriation are words suggesting contest. Central Australia

¹ The Pitjantjatjara (Ernabella) and Arrernte (Hermannsburg) were the principal, but not the only, Aboriginal peoples with which the two missions interacted. Luritja and Pintubi people, for example, also had dealings with both missions, as well as others. Also, I will generally refer to the indigenous people at Hermannsburg generically as Arrernte (which as a language name includes dialects currently referred to as the Southern, Western, Eastern and Central Arrernte languages) although the Lutheran missionaries generally dealt with the Western Arrernte; similarly, I will refer to the people at or around Ernabella generically as Pitjantjatjara, although, as indicated, other Western Desert peoples attended the missions, including the Yankunytjatjara-speaking people, Yankunytjatjara being a very similar dialect to Pitjantjatjara: see Cliff Goddard, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English Dictionary, 2nd ed. (Alice Springs: Institute of Aboriginal Development, 1992), pp. viii-xi. I have resisted the recent tendency to refer to Pitjantjatjara people as Anangu. Regarding the English spelling of Australian Aboriginal peoples, I use currently accepted variants; in the text, however, in quotations, other variants may be used; a number of variants of Pitjantjatjara have been used historically, and older spellings of Arrernte, for example, include Arunta and Aranda, are common in the literature. Note that a new spelling 'Arrunta' is at present being used for the western dialect in Lutheran publications: see Harold Koch and Myfany Turpin, "Book review: 'Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary' (compiled by Henderson and Dobson 1994)", Aboriginal History 21 (1997), p. 233 and Paul GE Albrecht, From Mission to Church: 1877-2002: Finke River Mission (Adelaide: Finke River Mission, 2002), p. xi. Note: the inset photograph is of the Ernabella homestead and its environs taken before its 'establishment' as a mission.
was (and is) a contested landscape. From 1877, missionaries have been significant actors in that contest, along with pastoralists and Aboriginal people, and others, with their words and actions, discourse and praxis. This thesis seeks to unravel the discourses and practices of the Central Australian missionaries about Aborigines from those of other Europeans, situating these actors within the indigenous landscape, where Europeans acted out their discourses partly as fantasy, partly as narrative, as history.2 My project is not so much to question the assumption that colonial discourse was a monolithic discourse – such a notion of a singular homogenous discourse has been undermined by the work of scholars such as Ann Laura Stoler and Nicholas Thomas - as to differentiate the discourses about Aborigines of the particular missionaries examined in the thesis from those of other proximate European actors, and in particular from each other.3 While such a multiplication of

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2 The concept of discourse, and the related Foucaultian notion of discursive formation, are concepts that have now been in common use in the humanities for thirty or forty years and probably do not need defining at each subsequent use (although I do not suggest the concept of discourse is unproblematical, with Foucault himself using it in different ways: see Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault* (London: Routledge, 2003)). ‘Discourse’ has become part of the stock in trade of the historian. I might point out however that I utilize an understanding of the term ‘discourse’ as ‘a way of thinking and speaking’ shared by a loosely defined group of people, and as such related to the Foucaultian ‘discursive formation’ defined as a group of statements in which it is possible to find a pattern of regularity defined in terms of order, correlation, position and function: see David Macey, *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 101. I also follow Nicholas Thomas in noting a general failure of the historiography to acknowledge the contested, conflicted character of colonial discourse, which failure does not allow, as Thomas observes, the ‘Other’ to mark and reformulate that discourse: see Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism’s Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994), p. 3. One of the points I hope to make in this study is the tremendous impact of the Aboriginal people on the missionaries. The point, however, will be made more indirectly than explicitly, as my focus is on the white people. Indeed, by focusing on the missionaries, I face the potential of recapitulating a major colonialist sin of representation and action, that is, to imagine away the indigenous people. That is not my intention and I hope not an outcome of the work. To focus on the complexity and agency of missionaries is surely not to deny the complexity and agency of indigenes: see my discussion below in this chapter.

3 See, for example, Ann Laura Stoler, “Rethinking colonial categories: European communities and the boundaries of rule”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1989) and especially Thomas, *Colonialism’s Culture*. It may also be appropriate here to clarify my use of the (sometimes) contentious word ‘colonial’, and its even more troublesome fellow ‘postcolonial’. I follow Nicholas Thomas and Bart Moore-Gilbert in a broad use of the term ‘colonial’, using it to characterize a certain set of relationships between an ‘intrusive’ metropolitan power or powers and an indigenous people or peoples which may occur or persist either before, during or after a formal constitutional ‘colonial’ relationship: see Nicholas Thomas, *Out of Time: History and Evolution in Anthropological Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory: Context, Practices, Politics* (London: Verso, 1997). I use the word then to apply to relationships between Europeans and Aborigines in the early 20thC, after the Australian colonies had federated and dropped their colonial status. I think the phrase ‘the on-going colonial present’ is as apt to this country and relationships between white and black as it is to Africa, India, South-East Asia, despite different sets of circumstances. It can be argued, of course, that what remained as far as the indigenous peoples of Australia were concerned was a form of internal colonialism: see the interesting
discourses may seem to undermine the utility of the concept of discourse, it points more towards a utilization of the notion in a more nuanced fashion so that the complexities, ambivalences and discontinuities that reside in historical situations are taken into account, along with the commonalities that characterize types of global or widespread discourses. Both settler-pastoralists, to take one important group of European actors, and missionaries, built 'stations', and in so doing were constructing more than mere timber and corrugated iron structures, they were constructing representations of themselves and their Others: they were forming structured worlds and small universes, but they were also forming words, sentences, discourses, they were making statements, to the indigenes, to their fellow Europeans, to history. But what were they saying? And what were they doing?

**an enigmatic history**

The history of Christian missions to indigenous peoples in Australia is an enigmatic, uneasy, recalcitrant history. It is a history of our time (a time when a significant strand of Australian historiography is examining the relationships
discussion about settler colonies and terms such as 'colonial' and 'postcolonial' in Anna Johnston and Alan Lawson, "Settler Colonies", in A Companion to Postcolonial Studies, ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 360-376. 'Postcolonial' I use interchangeably with colonial (see Ashcroft and co-authors' problematical definition which extends the meaning of 'postcolonial' from all the way back to the beginning of the colonial relationship to the present: B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, and H. Tiffin, The Empire Writes Back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 2) but generally I restrict the use of the term to what I take to be the 'postcolonial' era, i.e. post-World War 2. As I am examining missionary discourse and praxis particularly in the decade of the 1940s, this dividing line comes, possibly unfortuitously, in the middle of that decade. I should also add, as a clarification, that in this study I am using terms such as colonial discourse/missionary discourse to refer to discourses relating to Aboriginal people and/or any matters affecting the relationships between indigenous and European people. 4 Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, Routledge Classics ed. (London: Routledge, 2002 (first pub. 1969)); also Thomas, Colonialism's Culture.

The cast of 'colonial actors' in the Centre in our period was probably as colourful and variegated (and similar, taking out the fishermen and trepangers and adding stockmen) as the 'trepangers, traders, surveyors, miners, administrators, telegraph operators, pastoralists, buffalo shooters, Chinese traders, fishermen, police, adventurers, and missionaries' of the Daly River 'white' social system near Darwin in the 1900s as Deborah Bird Rose describes it: see Rose, "Signs of life on a barbarous frontier: intercultural encounters in North Australia", in The Archaeology of Difference: negotiating cross-cultural engagements in Oceania, ed. Robin Torrence and Anne Clarke (London: Routledge, 2000), 215-237. In relation to pastoralists, it should be said that while I am satisfied that as a group they were roughly representative of general 'white' attitudes towards Aboriginal people, it must be admitted that, in general terms, as Reynolds notes: 'The pastoral industry was the single most important agent in the destruction of Aboriginal society and the squatters were often the most persistent advocates of racist theories'; Henry Reynolds, Frontier: Aborigines, settlers and land (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 106. While Reynolds is referring more to the 19thC, his point applies with as much force to Central Australian pastoralists in the early to mid-20thC: see C. D. Rowley, The Remote Aborigines (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1972 (first published 1970)).
between the indigenous peoples of this ancient country and recent European intruders) yet not of our time (a time which is secular and uncomfortable with religious conviction and proselytizing). For a period in the tortuous and tortured history of those relationships, missionaries were one of the few groups of white people in the country who not only thought seriously about Aboriginal people (perhaps others did in the safety of their coastal homes) but 'penetrated' both physical and interiorized boundaries and lived with them, in their own way. But this was the thing: in their way. Not our secular, postmodern way. Not the way we would have done it. They are an enigmatic and recalcitrant type, for historians as much as for anyone else.

They have an enigmatic history also because they had become, until very recently, almost invisible in the history of our history, as were the indigenous inhabitants for much of the long two hundred years of writing and contemplating on the European 'settlement' of this continent. The historiographical trajectories of the indigenous peoples and the missionaries who lived with them have been yoked together. When the Great Australian Silence ended and historians began to 'discover' the original inhabitants of this country, as (we told ourselves) Cook had 'discovered' the continent two centuries earlier, we hardly noticed the missionaries. 6 This reluctance to examine the missionary factor in Australia is possibly more pronounced than in other countries where missionary activity took place in colonial environments, such as Africa, India, North America. All countries have buried pasts, histories, which they can choose to confront or exorcise or leave hidden. The missionary encounter with Aboriginals is a buried past that has remained, to a large extent, intractable. Missionaries are as alien to us, almost, as Aboriginal people were to the early European intruders; they are the exemplary version of that peculiar Australian phenomenon, a strange breed. They are, in a profound sense, Other to us, and until very recently historians have left them alone as much as possible.

Since the publication of *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions* in 1988 which, with its dense collection of essays, was a watershed in missionary studies in Australian history,⁷ there have been an increasing number of fine studies, from differing perspectives, of mission and missionary history, including the work of Stevens, Brock, Halse, Choo and others, as well as an increasing recognition of the place of missions in Australian, religious and Aboriginal history in more general works, such as those of Broome, Carey, Attwood and Rowse.⁸ John Harris’s monumental work *One Blood* (1990), while written from a committed Christian (while occasionally critical) perspective, valiantly attempted a history of all significant missionary activity in Australia since 1788.⁹ However, apart from Barbara Henson’s sympathetic portrait of Hermannsburg’s FW Albrecht,¹⁰ there has been a dearth of scholarly work on our period relating to the history of the missions at Hermannsburg or Ernabella, although a substantial book on the Namatjira School of art at Hermannsburg contains a number of very useful essays on the Lutheran mission.¹¹ The Lutheran publishing industry in Adelaide has produced, over the years, a number of non-academic works on Hermannsburg, including Leske’s *Hermannsburg: a vision*

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and a mission and Scherer’s Venture of Faith; to describe these as non-academic is not to denigrate them, but merely to indicate their perspective and motivation. FW Albrecht contributed the chapter in Leske’s book that covered the history of Hermannsburg during our period. His son Paul Albrecht’s 2002 book is a welcome contribution to the Hermannsburg literature. Overseas, there has been an explosion of scholarly work on missions, with important work by Terence Ranger, Thomas Beidelman, Norman Etherington, Brian Stanley and Andrew Walls, among many others. The most significant, however, without question, has been the work of Jean and John Comaroff, culminating in their magisterial and vastly influential 1991 opus Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa followed in 1997 by Volume 2, Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier. The Comaroffs see the missionaries in early 19th century South Africa as ‘agent, scribe and moral alibi’ for the colonizing project, evangelical bearers of a strident Protestant ideology and involving African natives in a matrix of symbolic and material transactions which bound them hegemonically to the colonizing project. While I choose to see more hospitality than hegemony in the specific mission sites I study, anyone writing currently in mission history is greatly indebted to the Comaroffs. This thesis then is part of a recuperative historiographical turn that seeks to explore the meaning of the missionary in Australian and Aboriginal history, in a finite but significant slice of time and space, the time being the shift from the protectorate to assimilationism before, during, and immediately after World War Two, the space Central Australia.

I wish here to retain the ‘enigmatic history’ of the Central Australian missionary, not in the earlier sense of a shadowy, forgotten history but in a more nuanced, postmodern sense, appropriate to the vulnerable, fragile and ambivalent

13 Albrecht, From Mission to Church, 1877-2002.
existence in which they lived, with an Aboriginal Other who was both familiar and alien, an Other whose alterity seemed at times absolute, and yet an Other of whom both the Europeans’ religious and civic culture demanded a convergence into the one, the Same, the Self, an assimilation into a religion, Christianity, and a white nation-state, Australia. It might then be possible to read the experience of the missionaries as a discordant, experimental, ambivalent, postmodernist narrative, as a more hesitant venture or project where both ‘sides’ were reaching out to each other in a sort of tentative amalgam of hospitality and hostility rather than as purely an exercise in arrogance and power, or, along a different trajectory, in Christian triumphalism.

ventures

While I utilize both words venture and project in this thesis in reference to missions, I prefer the former.\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Venture} has connotations of adventure, which was the attraction to some, the promise and the power of the exotic; a venture of faith, as well as a venture into an unknown Inland, which missions along with explorations usually were, as well into as more metaphorical unknowns. The notion of \textit{joint venture} is also relevant here as Protestant missionaries saw their missions as partnerships with congregations back in the home churches, with the mission Boards, other missions and missionaries (although sometimes there was also rivalry, particularly with Catholic missions), even with God Himself, who was always with them, as He was with Moses in a similar sort of Wilderness, or so they believed. There was the notion of a joint venture with ‘their people’, the particular indigenous community, tribe, or group the missionaries attached themselves to and to whom they often became conjoined psychologically and emotionally.\textsuperscript{16} Also, to conclude, venture carries with it more easily than project the final, ultimate connotation of failure, the \textit{failed venture}. All missions existed

\textsuperscript{15} Nicholas Thomas utilizes the term ‘colonial projects’ in his brilliant work \textit{Colonialism’s Culture} as it conveys something of the fragmentary, fractured notion of colonial culture and discourse he is arguing as opposed to a homogenous or unitary notion; \textit{project} however gives a little too strongly the impression of a well-organized, boundaryed, defined exercise that did not always apply to the rather chaotic and poorly resourced entities that were missions: see Thomas, \textit{Colonialism’s Culture}, pp. 105-106.

\textsuperscript{16} The reverse happened as well, at times: the indigenous community itself became attached to particular missionaries, often according them status within the indigenous group.
on a daily possibility of failure and abandonment, and this should be understood if missions and missionaries are to be made explicable at all.

My reading then of the relations between the Central Australian missionaries and the indigenous peoples who ‘came in’ to the mission sites of Hermannsburg and Ernabella suggests a more diffused and ambivalent version of power relations. Even Jean and John Comaroffs’ celebrated version, in the South African missionary context, of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, as qualified and nuanced as it is, is still finally an analysis of missionary and colonial power.\(^{17}\) Power in these Australian sites seemed to run much more both ways than even a muted theory of hegemonic relations may suggest. The Australian Aborigines were reluctant to convert to the new religion. Conversion never took place with the rapidity that occurred elsewhere, for example in Africa or in the Pacific. Australian missions struggled to gain converts, hardly a record of the untrammeled exercise of power. The missionary could cajole, persuade, suggest, bribe, yet they often found, in the face to face relation, the disconcertingly recalcitrant ‘cheeky Abo’, the unfathomable Other, who could in the end disappear into the desert and abandon the mission for ever.

Yet they usually came back. For food, clothes, tobacco, or artifacts of western technology which they often adapted for their own purposes. Adaption had ensured their survival in a precarious environment. And they often came back with ‘sly civility’ on the white man’s terms: attend the Sunday church service or perform some work before you get the food.\(^{18}\) But they could eat as well on their own terms: the rationed food, the ‘good soup’, was shared with ‘undeserving’ kinfolk. And the mission was invariably a safer, more hospitable place than elsewhere in the white man’s World. But the Aboriginal people had their own World to slip back into, the world of their fathers, their ancestors, the world of their Dreamtime, the world that existed before the white man came, and still

\(^{17}\) Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vols 1 and 2.

existed, though rapidly diminishing, beyond the mission border, beyond the
creek, beyond the enigmatic missionaries.¹⁹

the ‘construction’ of a mission station

Through a narrative of the creation, construction and early career of a single
Mission Station, Ernabella, I examine missionary discourse and praxis about
Aborigines in Central Australia in the 1930s-40s. I write here a discursive
narrative, telling not so much of the ‘nuts and bolts’ construction of the mission
site but using its contested and negotiated beginnings, and the discourse of
significant missionaries associated with it, to re-examine the thinking about
Aborigines that was going on in the missions of the iconic Centre. My principal
characters are Dr. Charles Duguid, the founder of the mission, and Reverend
JRB Love, the Presbyterian missionary most associated with Ernabella’s early
years.²⁰ As an important backdrop, as context for the study of a new mission in
Central Australia, I use the much older, Lutheran mission site of Hermannsburg,
with the discourse of its superintendent of these years, Pastor FW Albrecht. Part
of my narrative of Ernabella is a contest between Duguid and John Flynn for the
‘hearts and minds’, and pockets, of the Presbyterian Church. So Flynn, a
missionary to the white people of the Centre, and his discourse on Aborigines, is
also part of my story.

It is the interlocking nature of these four lives, as well as of the discourses about
Aborigines in which they participated, which may be useful in providing a
context for exploring the history of missionary thinking and action in Central
Australia. Their interactions were numerous and significant. Some were friends,
some enemies; some formed productive partnerships or temporary alliances with
each other to advance their cause; all participated in discourses on indigenous

²⁰ Duguid was not, in a technical sense, a missionary but for a number of reasons, including his very close
association with Ernabella Mission, his participation in and contribution to Australian missionary discourse
about Aborigines, and for ease of discussion, I include him in discussions in the thesis as a ‘missionary’.
Depending on the context, references to entities such as ‘the missionaries’ or the ‘Central Australian
missionaries’ refer most often to Love and Albrecht, and sometimes to the missionaries at the Ernabella
mission site only, or to all these and Duguid. The context, I hope, will usually clarify to whom the generic
term refers.
people which became contested and fractured under the pressures of praxis on the mission site itself.

The thesis will also look at the way discourses of missionary Protestantism were constructed and disseminated between the metropolis and the colonial sites of the missions, particularly through correspondences between the missionaries and their Boards. Each mission station, whether Presbyterian or Lutheran, was under the aegis of a Board of Missions, which administered the Church’s various missions, organized the missions’ budgets, recruited and paid the staff, approved policy and purchases, negotiated with State and Federal governments, and with other agencies of the church, reported to the church’s peak bodies or meetings and, not least, corresponded and negotiated with their missionaries. We need to take into account the broad missionary approaches that were determined at a Board (or higher) level to decipher the impact at the local mission site. A number of missiological alternatives were available to missions in the 1930s and 1940s, from an exclusionary evangelical conservatism that believed that Christianity had to supplant heathen indigenous beliefs through to more moderate, liberal approaches that saw Aboriginal spirituality as complementary to Christianity. Within these broad approaches, we need also to examine the varying religious motivations of the missionaries themselves – particularly the evangelical Lutheran faith of Albrecht and the Moderate Presbyterianism of Love – to see how these may have shaped the discourses in which they thought about Aboriginal people.

It is a stereotype and often a fallacy to see missionaries as rigid, stern Men of the Book, as unchanging and unresponsive as the Rock of Ages, and missionary

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21 Mission (and more general) discourse about Aborigines was, of course, also constructed and disseminated through public and religious media such as newsletters, film, brochures, books, visits, and lectures. To examine this area of the discourse fully would involve a separate (and very useful) study.


23 See Carey, Believing in Australia, pp. 10-19 for a excellent summary of evangelicalism (the traditional mode on Australian missions) and an introduction to the early history of this ‘religious success story of the Australian colonies’: ‘A personal belief in conversion, godliness and mission’ puts its essence in a nutshell. Yet it is still often a matter of degree and judgement as to who is ‘evangelical’ and who is not, and is not always a matter susceptible to objective assessment. JRB Love believed in conversion, godliness and mission, yet I have positioned him as a Moderate progressive for reasons delineated in the text.
discourse as a monolithic discourse focused solely on the spiritual salvation of heathen natives. Henry Reynolds, though recognizing the missionary commitment in Australia to the Aboriginal cause, still characterizes it as 'more interested in Aboriginal salvation than their suffering,' and 'more interested in Aboriginal chances on the fields of heaven than their fate on the sunlit plains of Australia.' An examination of the discourse and praxis of the missionaries of Central Australia during our period suggests that some of the evidence runs counter to this assessment: that it may have become more important or urgent to some missionaries to concern themselves with the suffering of the Aborigines here on earth than the question of salvation in a future world. This exegesis of the missionary experience might tend to undermine the conventional critique of missionaries that, whatever charity, good works, and even food they may have dispensed, it was ultimately only in the service of the 'conversion project'.

Australian historical writing about black-white relationships has tended to oscillate between the two poles of an all-powerful colonizer with a victimized and colonized subaltern population, a ‘domination’ model, and another pole which privileges Aboriginal agency but itself moves between a ‘resistance’ model, which stresses Aboriginal struggle in opposition to white intrusion, and an ‘accommodationist’ model which acknowledges the cooperative and collaborative aspects of past colonial relations. My position in this thesis is more aligned with this latter, accommodationist reading of colonial encounters. My argument will be, not that desires to dominate, reshape, reform and exploit the Other were absent in the missionary dialectic with indigenous people (to a greater or lesser

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25 For a powerful (historical) fictional account of a European evangelical missionary (based on George Augustus Robinson) who, as Emmanuel Nelson has noted, is a metaphor for the imperialist and Christianizing impulse, and who distributes medicine, food, clothes and tobacco as a form of economic and physical control, see Colin Johnson, Doctor Woorredy's Prescription for Enduring the Ending of the World (New York: Ballantine, 1983) and Emmanuel S. Nelson, "The Missionary in Aboriginal Fiction", Southerly (December 1988): 451-457; but for a more nuanced, complex characterization of a fictional missionary (also probably based on 'real life'), see the character of Father Heriot in Randolph Stow's brilliant To the islands (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1962); see also below, n. 9, chapter 2.
extent they existed in all colonial and postcolonial cross-cultural engagements) but that they were, on some sites, secondary to other considerations. One broad imperative of this work is that missionaries and Aborigines on these two mission sites were in relationships of such physical, psychological, and social proximity and dependence that unidirectional theories of dominance and cultural imperialism on one side or helplessness and victimhood on the other are unconvincing and fail to explain fully the powerful ties of humanity and hospitality that amounted at times to possessory bonds which developed between these missionaries and those they habitually called ‘our Aborigines’. Mission stations were sites where relationships of mutual convenience, reciprocity, and hospitality existed.\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{the Other}

This thesis contends that simplistic (mis)understandings of colonial discourse can be subverted by theoretical criticism and by the study of colonial actors such as missionaries. In examining the lives and discourse of the Central Australian missionaries, I want to utilize the insights of postmodernist and postcolonial history but simultaneously interrogate and question some of them. The most important concept I wish both to co-opt and to contest is that of the postcolonial Other and attendant ideas of desire and possession.\textsuperscript{28} Edward Said’s \textit{Orientalism}, a seminal text of postcolonial studies, argued that ‘Orientalism’ existed as a construction of the Western imagination and that the West, in writing and producing bodies of knowledge about the Orient, produced a single, abstracted figure, the Arab, Europe’s Other.\textsuperscript{29} This production was, according to Said, intimately connected to the creation and continuance of Western power and

\textsuperscript{27} I acknowledge that in arguing that missions were sites of accommodation where relationships of mutual convenience and obligation were developed in environments of apparent and actual inequality is to follow a historiographical tradition which includes works such as Eugene D. Genovese, \textit{Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made}, First Vintage Books Edition (originally published 1972 by Random House) ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), and, in Australia, McGrath’s ‘Born in the Cattle’ which recognize the complexity of contact zones where hostility and hospitality are inextricably fused.

\textsuperscript{28} The reader may note that Other is sometimes capitalized, sometimes not. I do not follow a consistent line on this matter, other than to use ‘Other’ or ‘other’ as I think best suits a sentence. I do not mean however anything significant by the use of the alternative. While some scholars posit some analytical difference in the use of the ‘o’ and the ‘O’, I do not.

\textsuperscript{29} Edward W. Said, \textit{Orientalism} (London: Penguin, 1995 edition (first published 1978)). We only need to substitute ‘the Aborigine’ for ‘the Arab’ to catch immediately the power of Said’s conception of the abstracted figure in terms of Australia’s history and history of social relations.
dominance in the Orient. Said’s interpretation of the Orient-West encounter was so powerful that the effect of its explications and extrapolations in postcolonial studies has been generally to assume that colonizer and colonized always existed of necessity in conflict with each other, the binary opposition Self/Other seems always antagonistic, and the Other is always a figure seen by Westerners in contemptuous and conflictual terms.  

The concept of the Other in the Saidian sense does have value for us in elucidating the mission site. Figure 1 (the frontispiece) is a photograph of an outdoor Sunday service at Ernabella in 1942 with the white missionaries, dressed in their Sunday best, sitting stiffly in a row on a pew facing, at an appropriate distance, the naked and semi-naked black bodies seated variously on the ground, their Aboriginal Others. While the scene is partly produced from the pious conventions of centuries of ‘the Sunday Service’, it resonates powerfully as an ‘encounter’ of the European Stranger with the Native Other. It is instructive that the two groups appear to face each other obliquely, at an angle, as if in some way this might ‘deflect’ somehow the force of the encounter.

The missionaries also, as Said’s Orientalists, became ‘experts’; they produced ‘the Aborigine’ for their Boards, for their congregations back in the metropole, for church newsletters for which they wrote. They represented and constructed an Aboriginal Other for various purposes, some of which may have been related to Said’s power and dominance. We need, however, to consider the limitations of the Saidian Other, the focus of the orthodox postcolonial Gaze, which reduces the agency and autonomy of the Other in the light of an absolute power directed from the colonialisit side. This postmodernist relationship with the Other seems based upon a dialectic in which the only possibilities are being dominated or dominating. The Saidian Other, while applicable at times, may not always be useful in the missionary context where missionaries were caught within a colonial discourse which saw the Aborigine as savage and primitive, radically

30 I have deliberately and very briefly (and inadequately) here described Orientalism in terms of its general reception in the world of postcolonial studies, rather than enter into a debate on the actual arguments of the book: see the Afterword in the 1995 edition of Said’s book (see previous footnote). The literature on Orientalism is vast, but see now Valerie Kennedy, Edward Said: a critical introduction (Oxford: Polity Press, 2000).
different and inferior yet were also bound to a Christian discourse that saw the Aborigine as equal to the white man in God’s eyes, equally a sinner but on those grounds equally entitled to salvation.

Said’s analysis has come under scrutiny by some post-colonial scholars for the failure to take into account the nuances and complexities of the relationship between colonizer and colonized. Homi Bhabha, for example, seeks instead to emphasize critical negotiations across the colonial divide. For Bhabha, the relationship between colonizer and colonized is fraught because of contradictory psychic patterns in colonial relations such as the desire for, as well as fear of, the Other. Bhabha, in reworking orthodox notions of the ‘stereotype’, posits a certain ‘fixity’ of colonial representations (the noble savage, for example) yet which have to be constantly repeated, demonstrating complex conflictual anxieties in the colonizer.\footnote{Homi Bhabha, “The other question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism”, in Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994 (essay originally published 1992)): 66-84.} Bhabha describes the colonial desire for a ‘reformed, recognizable Other’ as being countered by a fear of the Other’s immutable difference.\footnote{Homi Bhabha, “Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse”, in Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994 (essay originally published 1987)): 85-92.} So an important contribution to thought (for our project, as well) is Bhaba’s insight that the dominant discourse constructs ‘otherness’ in an ambivalent manner; that is, while it attempts to construct the Other as radically different from itself, it must also ascribe an element of its identity to the Other in order to justify whatever control it exerts or wishes to exert. These notions of complexity and ambivalence in the relationship with the Other may be useful to us in the project of deciphering missionary discourse.

We may however, in the process, attempt to destabilize some of Bhabha’s own concepts. It is arguable, for example, that the ascription of similarities to the ‘Native’ by the missionary was done as much to defend that ‘representation’ against the dehumanizing and discriminatory prejudices of settler discourses as to exercise power or control.\footnote{See Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson, eds., Colonial Photography: Imag(in)ing race and place (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).} Bhabha’s project is not in the final analysis to decipher the colonial voice, as mine is, rather to decode the silenced native voice,
to find examples of its ‘intransitive’ resistance.\textsuperscript{34} However, Bhabha’s analysis of the Other, for our purposes, is incomplete and unsatisfactory, as the colonizer, even while nervous and ambivalent, remains all-powerful, bent on domination. I suggest that the postcolonial ‘other’ of Said and Bhabha with its relatively fixed and negative connotations cannot fully explain the complex and intricate relationships that the mission contact zone produced between missionaries and Aboriginal people and that some additional explication of ‘other’ may be useful. Thus, in terms of a critique of the notion of the Other as applied to missionary ideology and praxis, I want to utilize some of the insights of the French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas in his delineation of what he called the face to face encounter of the Subject with the Other.

**another Other**

I put forward then the central explorations of the thesis, to what extent ‘saving bodies’ began to take subtle precedence over ‘saving souls’ both in the discourse and praxis of Central Australian missiology during the 1930s and 1940s, and whether this was a deliberate choice by the missionaries, to take on the responsibility for the physical rather than, or at least prior to, the spiritual salvation of ‘their’ Aborigines. It would seem apparent then that any concept of the Other that gestured towards this acceptance of ultimate responsibility for indigenous bodies needs to go beyond the orthodox postmodern/postcolonial Other we have discussed above. In Levinas’s ethical universe, the Other appeals to the Subject to go towards, to welcome and to take responsibility for the Other. This Levinasian encounter also has the sense of an absolute ‘otherness’, an absolute alterity, a ‘noncomprehension’, which sometimes characterized missionary relations with indigenous people. The Other’s moral summons is based, according to Levinas, on the primacy of the Other’s right to exist, and on the edict: ‘Thou shalt not kill’.\textsuperscript{35} To Levinas, it is the Other’s difference that commands the response of responsibility: I am responsible to the other (he judges me) and I am responsible for him to the point where I must ‘feed him with

\textsuperscript{34} Homi Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817”, in Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994 (essay originally published 1985)): 102-124.

bread from my own mouth'. Ultimately this responsibility means that the other cannot be left to die alone. Levinas often quotes a line from Dostoevsky: *We are all responsible for everyone else – but I am more responsible than all the others.*

Jacques Derrida is one of the most eminent commentators on Levinas. I wish to take part of Derrida’s gloss on Levinas in *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, and apply it selectively and suggestively to missionary discourse and praxis. The book is a farewell to Levinas, written soon after his death. It is also an extended meditation on what Levinas wrote about the French word *adieu* and an interpretation of Levinas’s ethics as the ethics and politics of hospitality and welcoming. I am interested particularly in the ‘welcome’ that Derrida sees as the first Levinasian gesture in the direction of the Other. Derrida in his delineation of a Levinasian encounter uses the French word *hôte* which denotes both host and guest. *We are reminded*, he says, *of the implacable law of hospitality; the hôte who receives (the host), the one who welcomes the invited or received hôte (the guest), the welcoming hôte who considers himself to be the owner of the place, is in truth received in his own home. He receives the hospitality that he offers in his own home; he receives it from his own home, which, in the end, does not belong to him. The hôte as host is a guest. The dwelling opens itself to itself, as a ‘land of asylum or refuge’. The one who welcomes is first welcomed in his own home. The one who invites is invited by the one whom he invites. The one who receives is received, receiving hospitality in what he takes to be his own home, or indeed his own land.* Derrida then speaks of ‘this originary dispossession’, this withdrawal by which the ‘owner’ is expropriated from what is most his own.

While Derrida does concede that it is difficult to convert Levinas’s hospitality, his ‘welcome’, to a political or cultural space (such as a mission site), the passage

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39 It includes the eulogy for Levinas delivered by Derrida at the cemetery in Patin on 27 December 1995.
40 Ibid., pp. 41-42 (slightly amended for my purposes).
above is extraordinarily resonant in terms of the nuanced dynamics of the missionary-Aboriginal encounter. Using the language of Levinas provocatively, sometimes literally when he meant it metaphorically or abstractly, can we argue that the missionaries saw their coming to Central Australia as a form of ‘welcoming’ and hospitality, that they wanted the Aborigines to see their ‘face to face encounter’ as an act of generosity, as a ‘welcome’ because it stood sharply against the mean-spirited harshness of general settler/colonial discourse and practice? Were they attempting, awkwardly and often gracelessly, to acknowledge the primacy of the Aboriginal right to exist (‘Thou shalt not kill’) and live in their ‘household’ (whose ownership is ambiguous) or mission site as an ‘asylum or refuge’? But caught in the resonating ironies of the Derridean articulation of the hôte, did not the best of the missionaries sense that they were, in a profound way, being invited by those they had invited, that their guest was in fact their host?

The Pitjantjatjara also have words to match these Levinasian and Derridean notions. The ‘face to face encounter’, for example, has a lovely equivalent in the Pitjantjatjara word tjunguringanyi that has a primary meaning of coming together, to assemble, to meet, with a secondary, euphemistic sense of making love or sexual intercourse. We also note, as an accompanying motif, the Pitjantjatjara word walytja, meaning ‘one of the family, someone you care for and who cares for you.’ Pitjantjatjara people, as other Aboriginal Australian peoples, have an all-inclusive or classificatory system of relationships, which gives permission to people to be addressed as though they were a member of one’s close family. Even unrelated outsiders may be considered walytja if they behave appropriately and are accepted by the community. Rarely, but significantly, some European missionaries have been accepted as walytja by Pitjantjatjara people. Such a bestowal may have been given for a myriad of reasons and motivations, most of which may be irretrievable or undecipherable. But the

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41 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
42 For these definitions and explanations, see Cliff Goddard, *Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Alice Springs: Institute of Aboriginal Development, 1992).
43 Information provided to the author by Ron Lister of Ara Iriritjja Archives in 2003.
gesture of reciprocal hospitality and the desire to possess the (European) other as indigenous motives cannot be discounted.

**desire and possession**

I am also interested in the topographies of Mission Sites as metaphorically suggestive of missionary-Aboriginal dynamics. Thus the Ernabella Creek that ran between the European mission buildings and ‘the blacks’ camps’, as Love called them, suggests itself to me as a sort of controlling metaphor for the thesis: the creek (*karu*) as a liminal space where the encounter between Aborigine and missionary takes place." In the nature of metaphors, this merges both actual and symbolic, as the creek bed was the locale for the first school class at Ernabella, with a white schoolteacher wearing a suit facing his others: naked Aboriginal boys and girls squatting in the sand, the first exchange of knowledge, the first gestures, the first gaze, the first halting words of the Comaroffs’ ‘long conversation’.

The *karu* serves as the boundary between buildings of the mission compound – the marks and signs of possession by these Europeans – and the Aboriginal camps; it is both a representation of the maintenance of a social distance between missionaries and the Aborigines, and a porous buffer through and around which to negotiate the meanings, gestures, glances, the structures of the ‘contact zone’. The spatial organization of the Hermannsburg mission site, the *Kraal* as Paul Carter calls it, was quite different to Ernabella: the social distance that existed on the Presbyterian site evaporated at Hermannsburg so that the Arrernte lived in African-style huts in close proximity

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44 I am indebted here to the imaginative uses that Greg Dening makes in his Pacific histories of ‘the beach’ as a similar (but different) metaphor for the ‘place’ where the encounters between Natives and Strangers take place: see Dening, *Islands and Beaches: discourse on a silent land: Marquesas 1774-1800* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980) and *Mr Bligh’s Bad Language: passion, power, and theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).


46 See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), especially the Introduction. Pratt’s phrase ‘contact zone’ is one useful way to conceptualise the colonial site, although I would query whether some of her emphases regarding ‘intractable conflict’ and ‘coercion’ are applicable to (some) mission zones. The notion, according to Pratt, treats the relations between colonizers and colonized in terms of ‘copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power’: again, on my readings of these mission ‘contact zones’, where I suggest that the subtle diffusion of power relations gave indigenous people more ‘power’ and ‘control’ than has been accepted by the historiography, I would modify Pratt’s statement.
to the white missionaries.\textsuperscript{47} An Ernabella missionary visiting the Lutheran mission in the 1950s commented that ‘the first thing you noticed was that the Aboriginal homes were right against the missionaries’ homes, and you looked out the window and you saw the Aborigines’ homes and they walked past the window. There was no getting away from them, they were on top of you all the time.\textsuperscript{48} Possession and proximity in the theatre of mission came in many guises.

Possession also came in the guise of need. The missionaries needed the Aborigines as much as ‘the natives’ needed them: for their survival, the missions had to be seen to be attracting a clientele so as to justify their role and draw funds from church and government. So statistics on indigenous numbers at church, at school, at camp flowed back constantly from mission sites to Boards in correspondence, newsletters and reports. Yet always there was the powerful and countervailing ability of the Aborigines on the Missions to come and go at will, despite the conditions of safe haven and rationing regimes as powerful attractions. At Hermannsburg, it could be argued that the eye of the missionary could reach everywhere due to the architectural topography of the mission, that the panoptical gaze was exercised, and where everyone lived in fairly close proximity. Yet even here, as Paul Albrecht has noted in relation to his argument that the Arrernte have retained much of their culture, they only had to take a five minute walk and they were on their own and could do what they liked, without any interference from the missionaries. So they kept up all the customs and practices that they wanted to and gave up only those they wanted to give up.\textsuperscript{49}

At Ernabella the boundary set up by the Creek not only ensured that appropriate social distance was maintained but also that the missionary gaze or eye stopped at the Creek. This foreshortening of the panoptical gaze allowed a certain freedom to the Aborigines to be Other, to retreat to the Camp across the \textit{karu}. Children at Ernabella were taken from their school desks and sent after their parents if they had been left behind on a walkabout. In a sense they were almost

\textsuperscript{47} Paul Carter, The Lie of the Land (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), for example, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{48} Ara Iritiṯa Archives, Adelaide: “Document S1503”.
being forced to be Other, they were being dis-possessed, sent back across the
boundary that separated them from their World, sent across the Creek in a
radical inversion of centuries-old missiological policy that said: we have the child
now, fixed in and by our gaze, let us possess them until they are truly ours and
the Lord’s. So there was possession and dis-possession on these sites, along
with hospitality and hostility, on both sides. Complexity was built into the
psychic and physical structures of the mission site, just as it was into Genovese’s
slave plantation and McGrath’s cattle station.

clarifications

Some clarifications and acknowledgements: first, my major emphasis is on
missionary discourses regarding Aboriginal people and the way the missionaries,
through the discourses, represented Aboriginal people and culture, and the
encounter with them, to themselves, to their Boards, and other parties of
interest, and to indigenous people. But I am also interested in how the discourse
was conducted on the ground, in the Landscape of Central Australia, with the
Aborigines; that is to say, I am also interested in praxis. So I examine
missionary discourse through the imagining and establishment of a mission,
with its predecessor in the Centre as context, and through the words and acts of
significant actors in the histories of these missions.

The scope of my study is not synoptic. I look only at the two missions and
principally at Ernabella, although to understand the discourse of Duguid, and of
Love in particular, it will be necessary first to move backwards in time from
1937, the date of Ernabella’s establishment. My interpretation also is limited to
these Missions and their missionaries. I do not intend or expect that any
suggestions offered regarding these two missionary ventures and their actors to
apply beyond them, although they may add some caution to attempts to dismiss
missionaries quickly as vanguards of colonialism and imperialism, wielders of
inordinate power or cunning constructors of hegemony.

I acknowledge that a focus on white European missionaries may allow a vision of
indigenous people as ephemeral actors, flitting briefly across the white
missionary stage, playing bit parts, not belonging. Conversely, from such a perspective, the missionaries, in their Mission Station, may be fixed as the centre of their particular universe, as the major actors, as belonging. It takes a effort of imagination to recall that the indigenes were in their land, their country, it was they who belonged, and in most cases it was the missionaries who were ephemeral, alien, and who eventually left the mission site to ‘go home to their own people’. By concentrating on the missionaries, I even face the danger of making the Aborigines invisible, erasing them from my (hi)story. I hope that my indirect delineation of the impact of Aboriginal people on the missionaries, which I see as profound, unstabilizing, subtle, nuanced, impassioned, and poignant, may be sufficient to deflect this danger.

The focus on missionaries, and especially on Duguid, Love, Albrecht, and Flynn, four dead, white, European males, also raises questions of gender and power, and will tend inevitably to minimize the significance of other actors in these colonial encounters, such as their wives (all had wives intimately involved in their enterprises); as well as other missionaries, and colleagues, members of Boards of Missions, and administrators. There are also related problems with writing about small universes or bounded landscapes, such as the mission station. As the South African historian David Bunn suggests, there is a danger in analyzing a closed system: one can be drawn into the narrow universe of the mission enclave and not see or account for external elements (perhaps of coercive power) which may be forceful, if often subtle, influences on what happens inside the mission compound.

The focus on the missionary discourse is, then, from a number of perspectives, problematic. It is especially so on the question of agency. My (necessarily limited) perspective may give an impression that all the thinking, the discourse

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50 Deborah Bird Rose gives the stark example of the Jesuits who began their mission on the Daly River in high ethnocentric hopes and yet it all ended suddenly, in tears and abandonment, with the mission investment in stock and buildings (to which the indigenes had contributed their labour) sold off to the highest bidder: Rose, “Signs of life”, 215-237. We should note here, too, that a number of mission sites, including Ernabella and Hermannsburg, have been ‘given back’, under land rights legislation, to the original custodians of the sites.

51 See n. 2 above.

about the Other, in fact was happening on one side only, thus replicating to some extent the hegemonic discourses of knowledge and power which the West brought to the encounter between colonizer and indigene. My use of the postcolonial and philosophical concept of the Other in a work of history is, also, not without its problems, as it is with any collectivist, 'historically voided' abstraction.53 In a work that deals with one side of a particular colonial encounter (even the word 'side' tends to elide differences and fractures within each side), the use of some (ultimately inadequate) abstraction, whether 'Aborigines', 'indigenous Australians', 'Other', even 'Europeans', is unavoidable. In the end, it is a matter of judgement whether more is gained than is lost from the use of a particular abstraction. One has to acknowledge that all perspectives and all approaches are limited and circumscribed. The emphasis in this thesis on the missionary discourse and praxis may well have the danger of underestimating Aboriginal agency, individuality and difference, but one hopes this is at least partly counter-balanced by the recognition that the narrative of the missions in this period in the Centre was not a monolithic process directed and formulated only by European discourses and actions. In any case, in regard to the above difficulties, I acknowledge them at least, even if I cannot always account for them or resolve them.

sources

First, some general notes on sources for this essay, then some specifics. It was Ann Laura Stoler who observed that anthropologists and ethnographers have often treated colonizers and their communities as 'unproblematic' and their political agendas as 'self-evident' yet if these characterizations were applied to the colonized, 'our ethnographic sensibilities would be disturbed'.54 Missionaries have similarly been treated historiographically in homogenizing, totalizing terms,

53 See Anne McClintock, "The angel of progress: pitfalls of the term 'postcolonialism'", Colonial Discourse, Postcolonial Theory, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 252-266, where McClintock warns that 'historically voided categories' such as 'the Other', 'the subject', 'the postcolonial' and other similar abstractions run the risk of 'telescoping crucial geopolitical distinctions into invisibility' (p. 255). It is a fair warning. The Aboriginal Other may differ in important historical and political aspects from the Asiatic or Oriental Other of Said, although this may be more of a problem here if we were relying more on the orthodox postcolonial constructions of the other. As it is, the Levinasian construction originates, at least, on a more ethical and universal plane while it is conceded that a problematic arises in its application to geopolitical realities.
54 Stoler, "Rethinking colonial categories", p. 136.
without a more subtle and nuanced approach that is alive to their complexities and the differences between their discourse and that of other colonial actors, and the somewhat fractured nature of their own discourse. Missionaries often possessed intimate knowledge of indigenous customs and ceremonies, and linguistic competences based often on many years of living with native people. For these reasons alone, missionary writing is worth reading. But whether a mission newsletter, a propaganda tract, a serious book, or correspondence unintended for publication with Boards or colleagues, the material may be useful in delineating missionary discourse. There are always limitations of the genre. Much missionary primary literature is propagandist in nature and singularly positive about missionary achievements. The indigenous voice is usually absent. Yet even the ‘simplest’ or most strident missionary’s journal, diary, letter may be a useful source of discursive inflections, ambivalences, and information about the Other, as well as revelatory of the writer. As W. van Wyk Smith has argued, a critique of the textual record of Europe’s encounter with indigenes must yield ‘radically different readings’ as its ‘disarticulations’ reach back into the colonial texts of the past: ‘Any examination of a range of primary [colonialist] texts will reveal varying distances between speaking voice and object, widely different degrees of percipience and empathy, significant variations in willingness to shed preconceptions and engage with the unfamiliar, and spectacularly different demonstrations of the ability to do so.’55 While it is inevitable that European notions and stereotypes will pervade all Western representations, missionary sources are now increasingly seen by most historians and ethnographers working in indigenous studies as providing a potentially rich vein for understanding the encounter between black and white.56

My most important primary sources were the correspondences between missionaries and Board, particularly during the administrations of JRB Love and

56 Nicholas Thomas notes that anthropologists have often refused to draw on missionary sources as these were labeled by traditional anthropology as paradigms of ‘biased’ unprofessional description. He makes the point that both ‘professional’ ethnographic accounts as well as non-ethnography such as missionaries’ correspondence, should be scrutinized and used as a means ‘to understanding the metropolitan intrusions which make observation and description possible’: Thomas, Out of Time, p. 14.
FW Albrecht respectively. The collection of Presbyterian Church records at the Mitchell Library in Sydney are a rich source of correspondences between Love (and other missionaries at Ernabella) and his Board, while the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide and the Burns-Albrecht Collection in the South Australian Museum are repositories of Albrecht’s communications to and from his Board as well as comprehensive sources for Albrecht’s prolific output in letters, articles, newsletters, and booklets. The JRB Love Papers, held at the Mortlock Library in the State Library of South Australia, are a voluminous collection of Love’s letters, journals, diaries, articles, and notes written over a lifetime and give the reader insights into the thinking of this interesting and scholarly missionary, as do his published output, including his 1936 book, *Stone-Age Bushmen of To-day*. The Blue Books recording the official life of the South Australian Presbyterian Church history are also in the Mortlock Library, along with other Papers of the Church, including AIM Papers. The State Records Office in Adelaide among other things houses the records of the dealings of the Aboriginal Protection Board (APB) with missions in South Australia and is a treasure trove of information and documentation. The large set of Duguid Papers held in the National Library is supplemented by Duguid material in the South Australian Museum, as well as his published output. The John Flynn Papers at the National Library are important sources for Flynn, as are his (at least) four biographies. The Ara Iritija Archives in Adelaide now hold considerable material, documentary, oral and photographic, on the early history of Ernabella, including the Ernabella

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57 Their correspondences (in Love’s case) with Rev HC Matthew of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, and with the Reverend J Reidel of the Finke River Mission Board in Albrecht’s case, are invaluable sources: because of their volume and their semi-confidential nature – they were not public letters, but letters between colleagues on the (unwritten) understanding that they were essentially private and confidential communications, often in relation to sensitive material concerning other colleagues, other churches, government agents and agencies, and, not least, where attitudes towards Aborigines, particularly Aborigines and their encounter with Europeans and the European culture, could be aired and discussed without prejudice, as it were. These were the days of letters that took weeks, sometimes (due to floods, truck breakdowns) months to get through; few telephones; and telegrams usually used only in relative emergencies. For Superintendents of mission stations, their principal line of communication was with their Board, or, specifically with the Secretary of the Board. It was a matter of time and space. Time was often of the essence here, yet in most cases, to gain approval for a course of action, approval was needed from the Board. All superintendents inevitably found this difficult and frustrating. The space, the mission station, was their responsibility, they were the people on site and yet permission was needed from men (only men on these Boards) who had little or no experience of mission station life. Frustration was built into the structures of frontier mission station administration.
Superintendent’s Logbook, a significant (and daily) source for JRB Love’s views on superintending the new Mission and its (occasionally willful and intractable) inhabitants, both indigenous and white!

schema

The basic scheme of the thesis is as follows: after this Introduction, chapter one is a foundational impression of the first mission established in Central Australia, Hermannsburg, with its superintendent FW Albrecht, from 1926 to the 1940s, to provide some context and comparison for the later study of Ernabella and its missionary discourse. Chapters two and three examine the thinking about Aborigines of JRB Love prior to the establishment of Ernabella mission, to which he was appointed in 1941 after an already distinguished missionary career in north Queensland and Western Australia. Chapters four, five and six explore the humanitarian and activist discourse of Charles Duguid as reflected in the narrative of the struggle within the Presbyterian Church, and particularly Duguid’s struggle with John Flynn and the AIM, over money and resources for the establishment of a mission to the Aborigines. The remaining five chapters cover the Love regime at Ernabella, which ended in 1946. The first two of these, chapters seven and eight, concentrate on his early years on the mission site, including his preliminary and preparatory visits to the area in 1937, immediately prior to its establishment, introduce some significant issues, and end in a ‘gestural moment’ in 1942, when Love and Albrecht meet at Ernabella. Chapters nine, ten and eleven, covering the last four years of Love’s administration, are more thematic, examining discursive issues of power and control in relation to indigenous bodies, including ‘half-caste’ bodies, and discipline and surveillance; biomedical, rationing and feeding issues, and the problem of ‘work’; and, lastly, tensions and fractures in missionary discourses of translation and language. A Conclusion follows.
CHAPTER ONE: ‘Men without food’¹: Hermannsburg and FW Albrecht

The ‘station’ is a particular form of colonial and frontier idiom; in 19th and early 20th century Australia, cattle and sheep stations populated the pastoral and pioneering texts of Australian colonial history as they began to populate the landscape.² Clearing the country of its indigenous inhabitants and setting up stations was a deliberate statement of colonial intent: we are here to stay. The station was therefore a signifier of solidity and substance, of stasis, of anti-nomadism.³ It was a powerful sign of possession and power, naturalizing and normalizing European notions of ownership by attempting to control and dominate an alien landscape through built structures and superior technologies. A station was more than just a named dot on a sheet of paper, it was an inscription that not only erased what had been there previously, but was also a

¹ Emmanuel Levinas in Totality and Infinity referred to the primary, primordial obligation to ‘feed the hungry’: ‘To leave men without food is a fault that no circumstance attenuates; the distinction between the voluntary and the involuntary does not apply here’ says Rabbi Yochanan. Before the hunger of men responsibility is measured only ‘objectively’... The face opens the primordial discourse whose first word is obligation...’: Emmanuel Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 201. The inset photograph is from Barbara Henson, A Straight-out Man: F.W. Albrecht and Central Australian Aborigines (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1992); opposite p. 78. It shows (from left) Pastor Albrecht, Dr Duguid, and Reverend David Munro on arrival home at Hermannsburg from the camel trek west in 1936 to the Haasts Bluff area with a view to ‘saving’ the people there, the Pintubi and the Ngalia, from ‘white encroachment’.

² ‘Station’ is not of course a uniquely Australian idiom: mission sites were called stations, for example, in Africa and India, while in India, the secular versions were places where the English colonial officials and administrators resided.

³ Paul Carter has noted the incongruity of the European distaste for nomadism: ‘Is it not odd that ours, the most nomadic and migratory of cultures, should found its polity, its psychology, its ethics and even its poetics on the antithesis of movement; on the rhetoric of foundations, continuity, genealogy, stasis? Is it not decidedly odd that a culture intent on global colonization should persistently associate movement with the unstable, the unreliable, the wanton and the primitive?’ See Paul Carter, The Lie of the Land (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), pp. 2-3. Yet the aversion to nomadism is perhaps not so surprising, given that settled modes of productive and property relationships have been long seen by Europeans as inextricably linked to higher stages of civilisation.
sign of (and a signpost to) what was to come. A station as a scratch on a map, as inscription, overwrote the indigenous site that it now usurped. What Europeans saw as an empty and unutilised landscape – a *terra nullius* – began to be populated with stations, filling in what was seen, by eyes and ears blind to the fecund and living landscape the Aborigine saw, as the Great Australian Loneliness. And mission stations, too, carrying these marks and signs of erasure as well, also came as harbingers of hospitality to the inhabitants of the landscape. It was, finally, this stage, this Landscape, against which and upon which our particular cross-cultural encounters were set; among the red sand hills, white gums and mission stations of Central Australia the varying ‘texts’ of the ‘long conversation’ between missionaries and indigenous people were discussed, negotiated, argued and agreed (or disagreed) upon, as well as inscribed and imposed.

Before Ernabella Mission Station, there was Hermannsburg Mission Station. As the crow flies, only about 300 miles of ancient, arid desert and mountain range separated the two mission sites. Yet they were separated by more than mere space. Sixty years of deep historical time had passed from the establishment of the Lutheran mission in 1877 to the founding of Ernabella. In addition, the two Christian denominations that had sponsored the ventures, while both Protestant, differed significantly in their theological and missiological emphases.

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5 Ernestine Hill, *The Great Australian Loneliness* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1968 (first published 1940)).

6 About half way on its journey from Hermannsburg, the crow if it looked to its right would see the majestic Uluru and the equally magnificent Kata Tjuta.

7 I use the singular for both Churches despite the fact that Lutheranism in Australia, at least until 1966 and Union, was racked by division and schism, as was its Presbyterian counterpart, whose Scottish ‘Disruptions’ had their ramifications in the Australian colonies: see Rowland S. Ward, *The Bush Still Burns: The Presbyterian and Reformed Faith in Australia 1788-1988* (Brunswick: Globe Press, 1989). The early years of Hermannsburg were dogged by crises within the ‘two synods’ when the Mission came close to being abandoned: see M. Lohe, "A Mission is established", in *Hermannsburg: a vision and a mission*, ed. E. Leske (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977): 6-40; also E. Leske, *For Faith and Freedom: The Story of Lutherans and Lutheranism in Australia 1838-1996* (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 1996), esp. chapter 6. Indeed, the first Lutherans had emigrated to South Australia from 1838 due to schismatic and religious freedom issues in Prussia. Despite their divisions, however, Lutheran Churches remained more like each other than resembling any other Protestant denomination.
The Lutherans, German and often rural, had been 'outsiders' in Australia, self-perceived victims of Continental state religious persecution, excluded from the mainstream of social and religious life in Australia. The Lutheran Church was conservative, Confessional, and evangelical, emphasizing the Law, the Gospel, Grace, guilt and the consciousness of sin, and the Bible as the infallible and literal Word of God: on the mission site, these doctrines and dicta 'translated' into strict regimes of conversion, discipline and surveillance, and work. The Presbyterian Church, especially in the Victoria and South Australia of the 1930s and 1940s, was more an establishment and mainstream denomination. While not denying the Reformed 'truths' of justification by faith and the primacy of the Bible, as well as the post-Reformation evangelical imperative to take the Gospel along with these truths into all the world, Presbyterians had generally placed greater importance in the missionary venture on education and the sowing of the seeds of Christianity among native peoples by patient precept and preaching. Yet the Church had historically possessed two principal wings, Moderate and Evangelical, which persisted into the 20th century. In the 1940s this

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8 This generalisation is not intended to deny that individual Lutherans contributed significantly in both the 19th and 20th centuries to the national life: see ibid., (Leske), pp. 115-127.  
9 Robert J. Scrimgeour, Some Scots Were Here: A History of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia 1839-1977 (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1986). Also see, as background, relating to a slightly earlier period to ours, D.L. Hilliard, "The City of Churches: Some Aspects of Religion in Adelaide about 1900", Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia (1980): 3-30. One broad point of reference: in the 1933 census, 10.76% of Australians identified themselves as Presbyterian/Reformed, 0.92% as Lutheran: see Hilary M. Carey, Believing in Australia: a cultural history of religions (St Leonards, N.S.W: Allen and Unwin, 1996), Appendix, Tables of religious affiliation for censuses of population and housing, 1901-1991, p. 201. By an 'establishment' denomination, I do not of course mean 'established' as the State Church but that especially in South Australia, there were greater links between the Presbyterian Church of the 1930s and 40s and the upper echelons of political and commercial power than existed in relation to the Lutheran Church. Duguid, for example, enjoyed and expected easier access to influential politicians (such as various Ministers of the Interior, and high ranked officials, some of whom were Presbyterian) than Pastor Albrecht, who accepted this point gracefully.  
10 These points about the two Protestant Churches are meant, again, as very broad generalisations, and should not be overdrawn, nor are they meant to apply invariably to individual missions of each Church. But even sweeping generalisations have their use in identifying underlying similarities and differences between entities or institutions such as churches and denominations.  
11 See Ward, The Bush Still Burns, especially chapter 2; also, for the roots of the dichotomy in Scottish religious history, see Brian Stanley, ed., Christian Missions and the Enlightenment (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001). This is not to say that these were the only two 'wings' in the Church, or that other denominations did not have similar characteristics. In fact, most mainstream denominations had and have sectors, or 'wings', that could be characterised as 'evangelical' and 'moderate'/lberal', with the criteria being roughly the extent to which the evangel, the spreading of the good news of Christ, is confined to a more or less explicit and all-consuming mission of proclamation, usually allied to a essentially literal (evangelical) or liberal interpretation (moderate) of the Bible.
dichotomy even surfaced in the remote mission site of Ernabella. However, Presbyterian Ernabella initially followed the Scottish Moderate mission tradition of settled modernization, the progressive diffusion of Christianity over time as part of a gradual encounter with non-European societies. But like political parties of different persuasions, who tend to resemble each other in the performance of governance, mission stations of varying models, whether Lutheran or Presbyterian, often began to 'speak' to and about their indigenous visitants in similar sorts of ways, utilising the same discourses. Yet at the same time this curious phenomenon of affinity is noted, attention is drawn, inevitably, to unmistakable points of difference. Discourse can, like statistics and beautiful numbers, be rubbery and unstable.

equivalences

Part of the reason for this state of affairs may be the malleable, ambiguous nature of some of the missiological concepts with which missionaries dealt. Vincente Rafael, in his 1988 book on Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines, notes similarities in the notions of conquest, conversion and translation.\(^1\)

Conquest and conversion, aside from their primary meanings, may connote the surrender of a person's desires and possessions to another: 'Conversion, like conquest, can thus be a process of crossing over into the domain - territorial, emotional, religious, or cultural - of someone else and claiming it as one's own.'\(^2\) Translation, too, can be something like an equivalent to conversion, 'in expressing in one language what had previously been expressed in another.'\(^3\)

\(^1\) See ibid., (Stanley, ed.)
\(^4\) Rafael, Contracting Colonialism, p. ix.

‘Translation’ of course has its own profound ambiguities, ambivalences and contradictions, particularly in the colonial and Biblical contexts of missionary sites: for an argument (in the African context) that sees mission texts as ‘dialogical’, the product of sustained and contentious conversations between missionaries and ‘native’ interlocutors, see Derek Peterson, “Translating the Word: Dialogism and Debate in two Gikuyu
The significance of these equivalences for our discussion of the mission sites is that they 'highlight the dialectics of force and persuasion, of interest and desire', of possession and dispossession, of dominance and generosity that played out on these mission sites in similar, and different, ways. For example, the sense of the 'force' behind conquest can be a corrective to the more benign notion that conversion in the contact zone of a mission can be seen in terms of a conversation between the missionaries and the indigenes. While this thesis does point to the politics of hospitality, and the ethics of responsibility and obligation, underlying the peculiar relations between the missionaries of Central Australia and the original inhabitants, it does not suggest the absence of unequal relations of power and dominance on this missionary frontier, or that missionaries can escape altogether some complicity in the colonial 'conquest' of Australia. It does surmise a benignity that was absent in large measure in other colonial sites, insisting on the existence of strong affective ties of possession and dependency between the interlocutors of the 'conversation', as well as powerful and autonomous humanitarian impulses on the part of missionaries, even on conservative and orthodox mission sites such as Hermannsburg.

**power and possession**

I argue here the possibility that possessory imperatives and power relations on the mission site worked both ways, not necessarily equally, but still, significantly, in ways not sufficiently acknowledged by the historiography. A former superintendent of Hermannsburg, Gary Stoll, remarked perceptively in a 2003 television documentary on Hermannsburg that he suspected that the indigenous people were trying to do with the early missionaries what the missionaries were trying to do to them: assimilate them into the Right Way of Life. The Arrernte may have thought, particularly in the early days of contact, that they may persuade the missionaries. The ethnocentric assumption is that the Europeans do the persuading. A vignette from the same documentary: a

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brief snatch of old film showed Pastor Albrecht standing and talking with Moses, the blind Aboriginal evangelist of Hermannsburg and an iconic figure in Hermannsburg’s ‘mission narrative’. Moses dominates the scene completely. His physical presence - the black face framed with white hair and beard – his demeanour, his body language, his bearing, offer no trace of ‘the colonial subject’, no sense of obeisance. On the visual evidence alone, these are men conversing in a ‘face-to-face encounter’, at approximately the same level of power relations. Still it is only one small segment of film – and film and photographs can carry differing layers of meaning – yet it is another clue as to the complex relationships, which perhaps ought not to be defined too quickly, between white and black on a Mission Station.

conversion and salvation

There is another strategy I wish to utilise in adapting Rafael’s approach of ‘equivalences’: that of broadening the reach, in particular, of the concepts of conversion and salvation. I refer in this study to the ‘conversion project’ as a kind of shorthand term for all that is suggested by the Christian reception of Christ’s Great Commission, ‘to go into all the world’, preaching the Gospel and converting the pagan, the heathen, and the non-believer. The conversion project has been, historically, at the core of the missionary and evangelical enterprise. Without it, a mission, it may be argued, would not be a mission. Conversion, the change from sinfulness to righteousness, is intimately connected, of course, in this sense to the notion of salvation, the redemption of sinful man through the vicarious death of Christ.

A central argument of this work is that the experience of the Central Australian missionaries significantly transformed the meanings of salvation and conversion from the orthodox, spiritual sense to a more physical and secular import, that the original and primary missionary imperatives of conversion and ‘saving souls’

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19 The principal Biblical reference is Matthew 28: 18-20, referred to as the Great Commission, or sometimes as the Evangelical Mandate.
became, as well, 'saving bodies and 'converting' Aborigines from 'primitive', nomadic savages to 'useful citizens', and that this was due, at least in part, to a developing sense of ultimate responsibility for the Other. One must here make several careful qualifications. I do not suggest that the Central Australian missionaries were the first missionaries to show concern for the Aboriginal 'body' or a Levinasian sense of responsibility for the Other. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, it was missionaries who often held out the possibility of Aboriginal physical survival when majority settler opinion was assuring itself of their imminent extinction. I do suggest, however, that in the space and time under consideration in this thesis, the relative weight given to 'saving souls' as against 'saving bodies' shifted significantly in favour of the latter. I am also not suggesting that the conversion project as recognised in traditional missiology did not still carry weight in the Central Australian missions, or that it was completely jettisoned for a purely secular interpretation, or, for that matter, that an increasingly sophisticated anthropological and ethnographic scrutiny of indigenous cultures was not having some influence on the conduct and discourse of missionaries. However, what is apparent from the texts is that the enunciation of the traditional project was limited more and more to the public arena, in evangelical propaganda, in church and mission newsletters, and

20 I am not suggesting, either, that the broader use of conversion and salvation language was unique to the Central Australian missionaries such as Love and Albrecht, or that it was an interpretation or a hermeneutics of mission which they 'invented' in some way. The tension between a spiritual and a social sense of 'responsibility' has probably always been present in the proclamation of Christianity. Indeed it could be characterised as the inherent tension between the Great Commission and the Great Commandment (to love your neighbour), between righteousness and justice, between the Evangelical Mandate and the Social Mandate found in Genesis 1: 28-30 and Genesis 9: 1-7. Even a publication such as the Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions accepts that 'the prominence accorded to the Great Commission in the past two hundred years is not apparent in previous church history': A. Scott Moreau, ed., Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), p. 412. And even recently the theoretical problem has been discussed in missiological circles, for example at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism in 1974 and subsequent conferences, at one of which this formulation was advocated, which is prefigured by the Love/Albrecht 'formulations' with which this study is concerned: 'Seldom if ever should we have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbour will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person': see ibid., p. 412. It is evident, however, that in the colonial era, at least up until the 1940s, emphasis has been placed by most missions on the spiritual dimension of salvation. This has been so in Australian Christian missions as well. But we ought to be sure that we are not ignoring evidence of a concern with more secular aspects of 'salvation' simply because of a historiographical prejudice or bias in favour of a more narrow interpretation of how missionaries practiced on mission sites.

sermons. Increasingly, over the extended time scale that missionaries such as Albrecht and Love were ‘in the field’, in their missionary activities, private communications and correspondences with their Boards, their notions of conversion and salvation were becoming secularised.

On the face of it, the orthodox conversion project on both Missions proceeded as usual: church services and Bible translation went on, and at least at Hermannsburg, the older mission, confirmation classes were held, converts were made and Native Evangelists travelled to the outstations; the home audiences and congregations for both missions were told by newsletter and photograph of the magnificent efforts of their missionaries to ‘take Christ to the primitive Native’; funds were called for to build churches and provide Bibles; prayer was called for the souls of ‘savages’. In such ways was the Gospel taken ‘to the ends of the earth’.

Yet one is forcibly struck reading through the (private) correspondence, and the thinking of these missionaries as evidenced in papers, articles, and books, at the relative lack of emphasis placed on the orthodox conversion project and conversely the immense, intense, urgent emphasis placed on survival mechanisms relating to water, food, shelter, health as well as modernizing techniques such as education, employment and training projects designed to ‘convert’ the savage into a ‘useful citizen’, and increasingly, the collective (the ‘tribe’) into cohering and surviving entities.22 The concerns are rarely along the lines of the evangelical desire to ‘convert’ and ‘save’ individual souls. Rather the desperate questions asked are: ‘can we save them from dying, from disease, can we feed them?’ and ‘can we save them’ or ‘convert’ them in such a way that they

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22 Along with the desire to ‘save’ the Aboriginal body, which is one of the foci of this study, was an important, and related, desire on the part of the Central Australian missionaries to save the collective or the group (usually referred to as the ‘tribe’) with whom they were working. Again, I do not suggest they were the first, or only, missionaries to be concerned for the survival of particular indigenous collectivities. But it could be argued that there occurred around the 1930s a subtle shift in emphasis within the missionary discourse along with a concern with saving Aborigines as physical individuals to saving them as part of a larger entity (tribe) whose survival was seen as important and crucial. Evidence of this shift may be noted in the text of our missionaries’ correspondences and conversations. I do not necessarily wish to underplay this shift by my suggestion of the primacy of the ‘saving bodies’ element in Central Australian missionary discourse.
(individuals and tribe) will fit eventually into a modern state, as citizens, as productive members? We are forced to take cognisance of the weight of this discourse, because of its preponderance in the literature, and attempt to give it some autonomous existence, rather than either being merely incidental to the (orthodox) conversion project, or simply a version of the ‘civilising mission’. It seems to me that while the conversion project was still stated and privileged on a rhetorical and public level it was de facto being abridged, minimised, and deferred by significant Central Australian missionaries. And this seems to have applied at times to the more traditional and evangelical Lutheran mission model at Hermannsburg as it did to the Moderate and progressive ‘new’ Presbyterian model at Ernabella.

**to leave the Word of God and serve tables**

Indeed, it was Albrecht who was most explicit on this matter. He had been under criticism from some Lutherans from the start of his superintendency of Hermannsburg in 1926 for not focusing sufficiently on the traditional conversion project, for not fashioning Hermannsburg as an exemplary Lutheran ‘mission’. It came to a head in the early 1940s when the Chairman of his own Board contested, in effect, Albrecht’s interpretation of his missionary call:

> Our station or stations have become to a great extent “feeding stations”...I know it is, to a great extent, unavoidable. But what the apostle said 1900 years ago applies today too: “It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables”.

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23 The distinction I am making here is not encompassed by the old and well-worn dichotomy between Christianizing and civilising on mission sites. ‘Civilising’ in this context and on traditional mission sites generally meant the re-forming of the indigenous body in the image of the West in terms of clothes, manners and modes of living (although this did not, of course, preclude, and may well have included, concerns for physical well-being); see Kathryn Rountree, "Re-making the Maori Female Body", *The Journal of Pacific History* Vol. 35 (2000): 49-66; in an Australian context, see Jean Woolmington, "The Civilisation/Christianisation Debate and the Australian Aborigines", *Aboriginal History* 10:2 (1986): 90-98; also generally see Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vols 1 and 2. While there are undoubtedly some connections between ‘civilising’ and ‘saving’, and both Missions in Central Australia attempted some ‘civilising’ of their ‘natives’, especially Hermannsburg which made strenuous attempts to re-form the Arrernte into a sort of German village peasantry (with boot-making and other leather-work), they are discrete notions.

The catalyst for Johan Riedel’s reproach was a letter from another missionary at Hermannsburg who had observed that he found it ‘difficult to remember I was a missionary here’. Albrecht’s response was a poignant defence of his position. It is worth quoting comprehensively as it situates the conservative Lutheran pastor in uncomfortable opposition to the missiological orthodoxies of his Church, and gives an insight into the life of a missionary to Aboriginal people in Central Australia. The attack concerns and upsets him: ‘I would have written before had I been quite clear as to what to say. But although even now I cannot say I am sure of what to say I feel it is my duty to reply.’ He begins with his response to the statement of his fellow missionary, Pastor Sam Gross:

I don’t know what to make of it. I have tried to take over as much of the work as I possibly could; on the other hand the work at Alice Springs has been largely in his hands, with all the opportunities connected with it. Here at the station if we are both here, we take the services in turn, but I have all the Sunday afternoons. Evening devotions are held by Br. Gross in English. Besides this Br. Gross has the Cash Store, the Cash Book, Child Endowment accounts, and helps with truck repairs if needed...My work is: the supervision of the vegetable garden, tannery and boot making including sales of these goods, Management of Haasts Bluff, the management here, confirmation lessons. I don’t wish to enlarge on these things, as this will not help us in this matter. I can assure you that when I came here I found even more difficult conditions and there was nobody to assist me and promise any relief.26

The fleeting note of self-pity and defensiveness in reference to Albrecht’s early days at Hermannsburg in the late 1920s is significant as it may help to locate, for us, the rationale behind his powerful justification. It is also curious, and not a little amusing, that in his enumeration of the divisions of labour between himself and his missionary colleague Albrecht initially makes Gross’s case for him. But he goes on:

It is a fact that our stations are to a large extent ‘feeding stations’. I know what this implies and what it has meant to me. At the same time I cannot get away from one loud voice in my heart which says: give ye them to eat. This applies to all our undertakings, even to the last at Areyonga. I have seen too many perish because Christians in this country have listened.

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25 Statement of Sam Gross: see ibid: Albrecht to Riedel, 18 Dec 1943. I noted in my Preface that ‘mission history was in my blood’: Pastor Gross’s daughter Marie married my uncle, David Trudinger, my father’s brother, who was a schoolteacher at Hermannsburg Mission and after whom I was named.

26 Ibid.
more to the Anthropologists who say: leave them alone, that is the best you can do for them. 27

The missionary cannot help a dig at the ‘Anthropologists’ but he firmly positions himself, buttressed by the scriptural citation, in a discourse of indigenous physical survival:

I know this cannot be said of our Church. On the other hand I feel the question must be asked whether we have done all we could “to give them to eat” so that they would not perish. I am afraid that is not the case. The disaster of 1929 and preceding years should never have overtaken us. 28

The reference to 1929 refers to the extended drought that began as the young missionary began his term of office in Central Australia. The drought brought devastation to the animal herds of the Mission and death to a large number of the indigenous inhabitants of the Mission and the surrounding area. In later years, Albrecht constantly referred back to the trauma of those days: it seemed to alter forever the missionary ‘model’ he had brought with him from the Hermannsburg Missionary Institute in Germany, of Pietist missionaries preaching the Word of God and creating a self-sustaining community among heathen but healthy natives. 29 The reality in the Australian Interior was much more terrible, and terrifying, to Albrecht. He never forgot it. So he went on, to Riedel, eloquent and impassioned even in his imperfect English:

Furthermore, we must not overlook the fact that God has led us into a work where we have to care for the body if we wish to have souls to be cared for. For instance, if we had not stepped in at Haasts Bluff in time, today there would be no Natives left to care for; white people with stock would have seen to that. And now there are nearly 400 there. I know much more could and should be done religiously, which you may take as proof that it is a feeding station only. However, you will admit we have to have the people first before missionary work proper can be done. 30

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27 Ibid., (Albrecht’s underlining).
28 Ibid.
30 Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Riedel, 18 Dec 1943 (my italics).
The theologically conservative Lutheran Albrecht is conceding that the 'missionary work proper' as he called it was not what was being done at Hermannsburg. He concedes that it ought to have been, by the book, by the Book. But he is caught in the icy grip of an inexorable logic: you cannot have souls to save unless the bodies containing those souls survive. The body must be saved and possessed before the soul can be possessed. Albrecht's model was that of the traditional Lutheran mission. But it was being turned upside down by events, by facts, by deaths:


can we afford to sit back and let matters take their course, saying we feel not called to do this work? I would repeat again: if others would and could do it, I should be only too happy to leave these things alone. As it is, however, I have no choice lest I should go away from this place later on with the feeling that I have dodged my responsibility because it meant work so different to what I thought missionary work should be.\(^{31}\)

**panoptical time**

The strength of Albrecht's defence silenced his Chairman, at least momentarily. Before looking briefly at the history of his superintendency from 1926 to attempt to understand the discourse of ultimate responsibility whose 'language' the conservative evangelical missionary now (partly) spoke, it is worth musing for a moment on how missionaries such as Albrecht and Love might have been able to reconcile their positions with the orthodox missionary discourse of conversion and salvation. Mission stations, it seems, were places that possessed an unusual, almost gnostic sense of time. Missionaries (certainly Love and Albrecht) were often imbued with a notion of the large, global sweep of time, along the lines of what Ann McClintock has called 'panoptical time'.\(^{32}\) In contrast, for example, pastoralists possessed a much narrower framework of time; their time was seasonal, the next crop of sheep or cattle, the next shearing, calving, lambing, the next rain. This is not to say that missionaries who ran sheep and cattle did not have some of the same concerns as pastoralists but their religious time frame was much wider than a secular, seasonal one. They saw themselves as under the aegis of God who worked not only in mysterious

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\(^{31}\) Ibid., (my italics).

ways but also in mysteriously lengthy ways. Both Love and Albrecht were explicit in their preparedness to wait years, a lifetime, even longer, for their missions ‘to bear fruit’. Their harvest-time would be of God’s choosing, not theirs; they were patient and prepared to wait. In both their theologies, in Lutheranism and particularly in Love’s Presbyterianism, there was a strong religious undercurrent of predestination, broadly defined: everything is worked out, all will be revealed in God’s great Plan and God’s good Time.\textsuperscript{33}

The Ernabella missionary as well took an elevated view of ‘time’ in relation to the conversion project. In 1944, in commenting on the time away from the mission for Aboriginal boys under initiation, he remarked that:

their years of adolescence are under the charge of their tribal elders rather than of the missionaries. I think we must acquiesce, for some years to come, at least, and never seek to break the authority of their elders: but in due time to win the elders, too, to the way of Christ. I think I could work up enthusiasm and have a large number of men and women baptised soon. And what would be the good of that?\textsuperscript{34}

\textit{In due time}: this elongated conception of time allowed the two missionaries the space to negotiate new and broader meanings for the Christian ideas of conversion and salvation. It also gave them some personal margin of error from the orthodox measurements of progress on the mission site: conversions, numbers of indigenes attending the Sunday services, the extension, across the landscape, of churches, schools, and houses, the increasing indigenous enmeshment with Western ways of work and time discipline, and other routines of mission life, dress, food, language. These ‘traces’ of civilization and

\textsuperscript{33} In a sermon in Adelaide, Albrecht articulated the ‘length’ of his vision: ‘We are asking ourselves whether our Natives ever will manage and establish themselves...we can only continue if we refuse to retaliate or treat these people according to what they deserve in the eyes of this world. ‘Love to the end’ would mean here that we would not expect this generation neither the next of these stone age men and women to come round and establish themselves...One year in the development of a race may mean many hundreds of years. Think how many hundreds ya thousands taken by our fathers to reach this stage; they were never nomads and were used to making a living from the soil...They are the Lord’s, too. It is now a matter for us to continue in our love. And we cannot do otherwise, as love is the only thing that will remain, even beyond the grave’: Albrecht, “Burns-Albrecht Collection”: sermon (undated), entitled ‘Love Unto the End’.

\textsuperscript{34} Presbyterian Church of Australia, "Board of Missions correspondence: ML MSS 1893 Add-on 1173/MLK box 2502/Folder 2/Reports and Policy statements 1938-1945: The Policy of Ernabella (Rev. JRB Love 1944)”, (Mitchell Library, Sydney).
christianisation were never given the importance by Love or Albrecht that they were on other missions, which is not to say they did not forward evidences of them for the consumption of their Boards and their home constituencies, the metropolitan churches in South Australia and elsewhere, the synods and the assemblies. But the two missionaries were themselves convinced that the 'fruits of their labours' lay well into the future, that the 'long conversation' would continue to take place for generations to come, and in fact would only continue to take place if the present generation was given a future into which to survive.

we do not come to kill

From the perspective of the early 1940s, when, as we shall see, Albrecht returned to Hermannsburg from a war-time 'exile' in Adelaide (enforced by anti-German sentiment) and met JRB Love at the new Mission at Ernabella on the way, the encounter between the missionaries and the Arrernte has already been in progress at Hermannsburg for 65 years. To glimpse the 'making' of Albrecht as the missionary he was in the 1940s, and the particular missionary discourses in which he participated, to provide us with a context for the closer examination of the Ernabella missionaries, we need to look briefly, through Albrecht, at the history of the mission he took over in 1926.

The thousand-mile, two-year journey of the first Lutheran missionaries from Bethany in South Australia to the site that was established as Hermannsburg in 1877 has been represented as iconic in Lutheran literature.35 Certainly Albrecht himself saw it in this light: '...in this journey into the heart of a Continent we feel the heartbeat of our Church. It was, and always will remain, one of the most heroic missionary journeys in Australia.'36 Albrecht always retained a self-conscious sense that he was following in the steps of prophets and pioneers,

35 See for example Lohe, "A Mission is established", (ed. Leske); also see Diane J. Austin-Broos, "Narratives of the Encounter at Ntaria", Oceania 65 (1994): 131-150 for an interpretation that compares indigenous and Lutheran narratives of the encounter at Ntaria (Hermannsburg) and sees the Lutheran account as voiding the Aboriginal Landscape of society and history, that is, of not including the Arrernte as historical actors. See my related argument in chapter 7 below regarding the limitations of what I call 'establishment' discourse foreclosing indigenous history and involvement.
36 Albrecht, 'Albrecht Material', Lutheran Archives: 'Into the Heart of a Continent'. See also Lutheran Herald, 11 Nov 1950.
men in the mould of Old Testament heroes such as Abraham and Moses.\textsuperscript{37} While the early fortunes of the Mission varied (it was actually abandoned from 1891-1894), and was not established on a secure footing until the superintendentship of the remarkable Carl Strehlow (1894-1922), it was significant that, as Mervyn Hartwig noted in his seminal doctoral dissertation, the German missionaries were the first Europeans to go to Central Australia to make a permanent home there.\textsuperscript{38} It should be noted that the 'home' was the attempted creation of a self-sufficient Lutheran mission community patterned on a German peasant village.\textsuperscript{39} But despite this imposition of European colonial forms, while the mission and the pastoral frontier arrived in the area at about the same time, the local indigenous people, initially cautious, were eventually able to distinguish the missionaries from colonial perpetrators of violence: in Levinasian terms, they could see in the 'face' of the missionaries the words: \textit{we

\textsuperscript{37} Note the naming of the older Aboriginal men at Hermannsburg as (for example) Moses, Jakob, Abel privileging the same Old Testament tradition.

\textsuperscript{38} M.C. Hartwig, "The progress of White settlement in the Alice Springs District and its effects upon the Aboriginal inhabitants, 1860-1894", (Ph.D thesis, University of Adelaide, 1965), p. 472. Hartwig's thesis on the progress of white settlement in the Alice Springs district and its effect upon the Aboriginal inhabitants during the years from 1860 to 1894, written forty years ago, remains one of the most significant scholarly treatments of the early history of Hermannsburg. Further to the discussion in the Introduction above: much of the historiography on Hermannsburg has come from within the Lutheran community such as Leske, ed., \textit{Hermannsburg: a vision and a mission}, to which FW Albrecht contributed a chapter, and Paul Albrecht's recent book: Albrecht, \textit{From Mission to Church}. In his preface, Paul Albrecht concedes that he cannot bring 'the required objectivity to the task' and that Hermannsburg 'still awaits the complete history' (viii). One of the strengths of the book is, in fact, its subjectivity: note the fascinating account of Albrecht's own intellectual and theological struggle to reorient the missiology of the most revered mission site in Australia (including a reassessment of the missiology of his father). FW Albrecht himself received a sympathetic and perceptive biographical treatment from Barbara Henson in her 1994 study: see Henson, \textit{A Straight-out Man: F. W. Albrecht and Central Australian Aborigines}. Brilliant but necessarily episodic and tangential treatments of Albrecht and Hermannsburg occur in Carter, \textit{The lie of the land}; Barry Hill, \textit{Broken Song}; T.G.H. Strehlow and Aboriginal Possession (Sydney: Knopf, 2002); and Tim Rowse, \textit{White flour, white power}. Rowse’s \textit{tour de force} is a delineation of assimilation through a study of the colonial technique of rationing in which the Lutheran missionaries’ invention of what Rowse calls ‘mercantile evangelism’ receives a novel and imaginative treatment. A compendium of essays on Albert Namatjira and the art movement that followed him at Hermannsburg contains some excellent writing on the Mission: see Jane Hardy, J.V.S. Megaw, and M. Ruth Megaw, eds., \textit{The Heritage of Namatjira}.

\textsuperscript{39} According to Norman Etherington, writing of South African missionary ideologies, Louis (Ludwig) Harms, the founder of the Hermannsburg Missionary Institute in Hanover (which initially sponsored the Australian mission), harboured chiliastic expectations of a Dark Age for the Church in Europe, consequently sending missionaries ‘freed from every undesirable trait of modernism’ out into the world to missions aimed at drawing indigenes into ‘the communal economy of enclosed mission settlements’. The original models for Harms’ missions were, apparently, medieval missions to the Saxons: see Etherington, “South African Missionary Ideologies 1880-1920: Retrospect and Prospect”, in Missionary Ideologies in the imperialist Era: 1880-1920, Torben Christensen and William R. Hutchinson, eds. (Denmark: 1982): 191-199, p. 194.
do not come to kill. So the Arrernte displayed their hospitality by accepting the invitation of the Lutherans to be guests in what was in fact their own home. It is to Albrecht's credit that he came to grasp this reality of the missionary – Arrernte encounter at Hermannsburg: the Aboriginal attachment to their land. The white man had irreversibly taken the nation and the land, and now it was the missionary's task to 'convert' and 'translate' his Aborigines into suitably useful citizens, economic and social, in the white capitalist economy and society. Much of the urgency in the missionary ventures of both Love and Albrecht was in the attempt to 'save' indigenous bodies, lives, peoples, tribes: by feeding them, curing their ills and incorporating them into white economies and polities. The urgency was compounded by the knowledge that the ruthlessness and severity of the European encounter with the Australian Aborigines meant that their death and possible extinction would follow any long term failure of this 'conversion project.'

**contract and reciprocity**

Of course, the indigene's reaction to the early missionaries was more than mere Levinasian hospitality. As Hartwig's gloss on Elkin's notion of 'intelligent parasitism' put it, the Arrernte's strategy of 'intelligent exploitation' extracted the necessaries of a hard life in Central Australia - haven, food and water – from the

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41 Therefore his insistence in early (1930s) letters to Charles Duguid and to the authorities referring to the retention of Aborigines in *their own country* as the necessary condition of their survival: see, for example, Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 25 Aug 1939, and Albrecht to Minister for Interior (copy), 14 Aug 1935.
42 Love and Albrecht differed somewhat on the *rate* at which this 'incorporation' should and would proceed: Albrecht, partly because of Hermannsburg's closer proximity to white economic centres such as Alice Springs, from the late 1940s and 1950s, while he certainly wished for a more gradual transition away from the 'contaminating' white centres, saw it as not only inevitable, but occurring rapidly; he produced a stream of papers on related subjects such as 'The Question of Economic Rehabilitation of Aborigines' (1953), 'Not an Unqualified Blessing: Aboriginal Citizenship' (1954), 'Apprenticeship for Aborigines' (1955), 'Employment of Aborigines at Cattle Stations' (n.d.), 'Aspects of Mission Work among Aborigines living at cattle stations' (1956), 'Citizenship for Aborigines' (1959), 'Stages of Transition' (1961), albeit generally urging caution and dousing white liberal expectations regarding the ease of the transition: see Albrecht, "Albrecht Material", Lutheran Archives. Love saw the process as inevitable, but wished, as did Duguid, to delay it as long as possible, and was perhaps more sanguine that it *could* be so delayed; in the meantime, helping indigenous people, with white supervision, gain the tools they needed to cope with the transition: see especially chapters 10-11 below.
43 See McGregor, *Imagined Destinies*, for a brilliant delineation of the ramifications of the 'doomed race' theory which was often the context or subtext of missionary discourses of 'saving the Aborigines'.

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Lutherans. But the missionaries, in terms of Hartwig’s suggestion that the relationship between Aboriginal people and Europeans in this phase of the encounter was symbiotic rather than parasitic, also intelligently exploited the indigenous people. They now had what they desired: a ‘congregation’. But in return, they had to feed it. The newly appointed Albrecht, whose appointment as superintendent of Hermannsburg in 1926 ended a four-year interregnum following the death of Strehlow, explained this ‘contract’ in 1927. Writing of the ‘remarkable economic circumstances under which the natives have to subsist here in the inland’, he wrote:

Their main food source is meat and some plants. To survive they have to be constantly on the move... Now if a man is forced to move around constantly, he cannot simultaneously be instructed in the Word of God. If the missionaries desired to instruct the men, they had to become responsible for their sustenance.

Albrecht here draws a tight logical link between the need to restrict nomadism and the conversion project, between feeding and preaching. However, in this passage, he was writing very early in his superintendentship and principally about the pioneer missionaries. Later, as he saw more and more desperate ‘dispossessed men without food’, the links between food and the conversion project became somewhat more tenuous; men without food needed food to survive, to live, not just to remain sedentary for sufficiently long to hear the Gospel. In any case, there were always varying understandings of the reciprocities on both sides: Arrernte migrated to the mission, and stayed there, because they could get food more easily than if they had to hunt and gather their food, and because the mission represented a refuge from an increasingly hostile and rapacious white settler caste. In return for this, the indigenous people would live under mission discipline, listen to the mission preaching, and

44 Hartwig, "The progress of White settlement", p. xxi. See AP Elkin, "Reaction and Interaction: A Food Gathering People and European Settlement in Australia", American Anthropologist 53 (Apr-Jun., 1951): 164-186. Hartwig reads the reactions of Aborigines to white incursion into Central Australia as moving along a spectrum from ‘fear and avoidance’ through ‘tentative approaches’ to ‘intelligent resistance’ and ‘intelligent exploitation’. He avoids adopting Elkin’s concept of intelligent parasitism on the grounds that ‘the relationship established between Aborigines and Europeans during this phase of Aboriginal reaction was symbiotic rather than parasitic.’
46 See Rowse, White flour, white power, pp. 42-46, also citing suggestions by Annette Hamilton on Western
sometimes work for the mission. In later years, Albrecht would often write about his frustration when 'his Aborigines' would regard 'work' as a personal favour to him, leaving it when they felt the obligation had been discharged rather than operating within European conventions of 'finishing the job'.\textsuperscript{47} Differing understandings led to misunderstandings, frustration, and occasional hostility. But one is forced to acknowledge, from the start, a certain fragile hospitality and civility, even where it was 'contractual' and reciprocal, between German Australians and indigenous Australians at Hermannsburg.

\textbf{traces of religion}

The series of articles in which Albrecht delineated the Hermannsburg 'contract' between missionaries and Arrernte were written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the mission in 1877.\textsuperscript{48} Albrecht's document gives a compelling insight into the attitudes and discourse of a man at the outset of a forty-year missionary career in Central Australia, almost straight from 'the Mission House' in Hermannsburg, Germany.\textsuperscript{49} For us, it is a marker to measure the development of his thinking on Aborigines, to see how the militant, zealous young missionary of 1926 differed from the experienced, mature veteran of seventeen years later with his 'feeding stations' and his perception of how the model of 'missionary work' had changed. The narrative is a mixture of brief autobiography, reminiscences of 'joyful' arrival and reception at Hermannsburg, admonition to the metropolitan congregation for their financial neglect of its Mission, and a historical sketch of the establishment of the Mission and its early years, including an extended treatment of 'Missionary Strehlow', who 'has stamped the venture here with his personality and finally proved his loyalty by

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{47}] See, for example, in his paper 'Stages of Transition' (p. 3) in Albrecht, "Albrecht Materials", Lutheran Archives; also see Albrecht's 1983 interview with Phillip Adams, ABC, p. 17, transcript in ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{48}] See Albrecht, \textit{From Mission to Church}, Appendix 3, FW Albrecht, 'Fifty Years'. The articles were originally published in the \textit{Kirchen-Blatt} of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia, beginning with the edition of 19 April 1926 and concluding with the edition of 8 April 1929. They have now been collated, translated (by Pastor HD Oberscheidt) and published as an Appendix in Paul Albrecht's 2002 book.\textsuperscript{49}
\item[\textsuperscript{49}] See ibid., 'Fifty Years', p. 301. Albrecht spent six months in Canada en route to Australia and studied English and catechetics at Wartburg Seminary in Winnipeg.
\end{enumerate}
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his death in the desert.\textsuperscript{50} He then describes and defends his own early administration. In a section entitled ‘The congregation’, he comes, he writes, to ‘the real work of the mission’: to establish a Christian congregation. And into what sort of ground is the ‘seed of God’s word’ sown? he asks.

Albrecht assesses the natives’ characteristics for his 1920s’ readers: they are ‘not at all disfigured’ and only the chocolate coloured skin ‘distinguishes them from white people’; they are great walkers, clever trackers, quick consumers and ‘true masters at going hungry’.\textsuperscript{51} The new missionary pronounces confidently on Aboriginal social life: they acknowledge no authority, they have no social structure, aside from their ‘totemic and marriage-class relationships’, the place of women is ‘thoroughly undignified’, excluded from the ‘secret, religious’ ceremonies, the property of her husband and his ‘entire marriage-class’.\textsuperscript{52} According to Albrecht, only ‘traces of religion’ were to be found in Aboriginal life; these ‘traces’ were based on fear or fertility: ‘[the Arrernte] appear to have lost all the more sublime needs of the soul.’\textsuperscript{53} Albrecht remembered the first missionaries to the mission who had originally despaired of people ‘too depraved and steeped in their sin’ and had even wondered at one point whether ‘it is really God’s will that these depraved heathens should have the gospel proclaimed to them’\textsuperscript{54} This ‘doubt’ had been ‘premature’, the Word of God was in fact ‘nibbling at their hearts’. The nibbling led to conversions and then a congregation, whose ‘care and expansion’ had now became Albrecht’s duty.

\textbf{the evil of laziness}

The most remarkable feature of the Arrernte, Albrecht had decided, beginning a life-long Lutheran disquisition into work and the Aborigine, was their ‘laziness’:

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p. 303. TGH Strehlow’s complex and beautifully written \textit{Journey to Horseshoe Bend} tells the narrative of his father’s death en route to Adelaide for medical treatment in 1922: see TGH Strehlow, \textit{Journey to Horseshoe Bend} (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1969).
\textsuperscript{51} Albrecht, \textit{From Mission to Church: ‘Fifty Years’}, p. 351.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., pp. 353-353.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p.353. Most initial colonial encounters with Aboriginal people, even by missionaries, perhaps especially by missionaries, seemed to result in similar verdicts to Albrecht’s. On closer, and longer, inspection and involvement, this judgement invariably changed, as did that of the Hermannsburg missionary: see Carey, \textit{Believing in Australia}, pp. 27ff.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 360, quoting Missionary Kempe in the \textit{Hermannsburg Missionblatt} of Jan 1888.
Just as hunger forced them to hunt and gather food, so now someone else has to constrain them to work. Even now that they are Christians and have seen the evil of laziness, they still cannot produce the will power to overcome it and force themselves to work.\textsuperscript{55}

From the start, Albrecht, the quintessential Lutheran, assigns a moral quality to the Protestant virtue of ‘work’, reinforced with scriptural authority. The Biblical verse he continued to quote throughout his missionary career in his papers and sermons considerably more than any other was St. Paul’s ‘As a man works, so shall he eat’, buttressed at times with the Old Testament God’s admonition to Adam to dig in the garden and ‘in the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread’.\textsuperscript{56} Albrecht insists on the critical importance of ‘work’ at Hermannsburg not only because of the Lutheran exegesis of these verses as holding universal and sacred authority, but because of the necessity to provide, through a livestock industry, food for the mission\textsuperscript{57}. Lack of rain had put paid to an early experiment in agriculture; by the 1880s the Hermannsburg missionaries had decided to concentrate on horses and cattle (primarily for sale) and sheep (for food). The mission was remote and the cost of transport so high that they had little choice. Things had not changed much by 1926, with the mission and its inhabitants now Albrecht’s responsibility. There were also mouths, even unconvertible and irredeemable mouths, to feed:

We have to cater for quite a number of old, crippled and sick people. Quite a few of them are heathens. Their endless stubbornness and unreceptiveness gives us little hope that they will ever become Christians, even though they hear God’s word every Sunday. They are nothing but a burden for the mission. But who would want to be responsible for turning them away when no one else would look after them?\textsuperscript{58}

It appears that the young Albrecht was already beginning to develop a sense of ultimate responsibility for the other – we might say a Levinasian obligation – that was relatively unconnected to any conversionary desire or expectancy, and which the terrible events of the next few years were to reinforce.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 352.
\textsuperscript{56} 2 Thessalonians 3:10; Genesis 3:19 (Revised Standard Version).
\textsuperscript{57} For the moment, at this moment (late 1920s), Albrecht was not considering the significance of ‘work’ in preparing the ‘natives’ for citizenship. This notion was to come later.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 319 (my italics).
the water of life

In these years, the Land and its ancient inescapable cycles were imposing themselves on the ideological vision of the Lutheran missionary. A long and terrible drought had set in by 1927 and it was not to lift until 1930. Cattle and sheep began dying. Hermannsburg’s cattle stock fell from 10,000 to 300. Worse, the Arrernte were succumbing. Over this period, many died. The small children were most affected. In 1927, on 8th June, a service was held at Hermannsburg to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the mission station. Moses, the blind Arrernte evangelist, preached on the subject of water. He remembered that the first missionaries had chosen the Ntaria site for its good supply of water. According to Albrecht, ‘Moses now demonstrated that, as God gave the missionaries the water for earthly life, God gave the water of life to the heathens through the missionaries.\textsuperscript{59}

But metaphor was collapsing under the weight of reality. The water of earthly life was drying up. As early as 1927, Albrecht was looking in desperation towards the Kaporilja Springs, a permanent spring producing about 3000 gallons of water a day and situated about four and a half miles above Hermannsburg, to provide succour to the mission station. But the cost of laying pipes was too great. Albrecht’s brief entries in the Hermannsburg Chronicle demonstrate the horror of the drought. He notes that between the Junes of 1926 and 1927, only 2 inches of rain fell at Hermannsburg, 300 cattle, 40 sheep and a number of horses were lost. By the end of 1927, the drought had still not broken. January 1928 brought one inch of rain:

\ldots but that left little impression on the country. Through the persevering drought the ground is so dried out, that even at a depth of ten feet one can find almost no moisture. The cattle and horses that are still alive find some miserable nourishment from bushes and rotted spinifex.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{59} Albrecht, \textit{From Mission to Church}: ‘Fifty Years’, p. 305.
\textsuperscript{60} PA Scherer, ed., \textit{The Hermannsburg Chronicle (1877-1933)} (Tanunda: PA Scherer, 1995): see entries for 1927, p. 58.
The drought went on and on: 'One can still see only miserable skeletons walking about... Often severe dust storms rage.' In 1929, the Superintendent reported that about 50 Arrernte were sick, 'without our knowing what is the matter with them, people affected by swollen limbs, which are very painful, and by a type of mouth-decay which makes eating very painful. The teeth eventually fall out'. At one point, most of the people were 'bed-ridden'. 10 died in one month. At the beginning of August, an expedition from the University of Adelaide, which included J.B. Cleland and Norman Tindale, diagnosed the problem as scurvy. 200 cases of oranges and lemon eventually came from the South after an appeal and 'the dreadful disease had been contained'.

The stark facts of the deaths of Arrernte children haunt FW Albrecht’s *Report to the Chief Protector on the Mortality of Infants at Hermannsburg*, covering the years from 1926-1930. At the end of the document, after attempting to allocate causes of death, such as scurvy, colds, bronchitis, whooping cough, and 'general weakness', Albrecht appends 'a list of several of the native families at the Finke River Mission, showing the size of the families'. Most had been severely diminished. Albrecht estimated that 49 children under school age had died in the period under review; he attributed most of the deaths to the drought conditions. In another report in 1930, Albrecht indicated that the year from July 1929-June 1930 had been 'the worst year on record since the establishment of the mission 53 years ago': most of the stock had died, and the Mission camels, which were necessary for water carting, were so poor, that at one point it was thought Hermannsburg may need to be abandoned. From July 1929 to July 1930, Albrecht reported, 41 people died at the station, including 15 infants, and only 5 were born.

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61 Ibid., see entries for 1928, p. 61.
62 Ibid., see entries for 1928, p. 65.
63 Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": *Report to the Chief Protector on the Mortality of Infants at Hermannsburg*.
64 Ibid.
the hills were silent

The traumatic events that inaugurated Albrecht's superintendency produced a radical shift in his conception of missionary enterprise. It forced him to broaden his notions of conversion and salvation. It forced him, an orthodox, small-town German Lutheran from Poland, to grapple suddenly with the Australian Landscape's delivery of death and devastation on an awful scale. Even his experience as a Red Cross nurse in the Great War had not prepared him for this.65 Listen to Albrecht remembering in a sermon over thirty years later, as he tried to make sense of it all through a theology (and a hospitality?) of suffering:

We had to bury more and more, not knowing what had caused their death. Then Scurvy set in openly, even if at that stage we did not know what it was. Most of our Native children died, and when we had our first two, it seemed but a matter of time and we would have to take them to the same place...How we longed for some advice from someone who knew what it was all about. There were no nurses, no doctors within 400 miles. The hills were silent and the bush did not talk. If we had known all this, known it was going to happen, we would have felt inadequate; we would never have faced it...[yet] our Native people would have never come so close to us, we would never have grown together so much if it would not have been for those years of suffering.66

let the water flow

FW Albrecht, in the early 1930s, embarked on an ambitious scheme to bring the water of the Kaporilja Springs to the Mission station. In his appeal for funds in 1932, 'Spring Water for the natives at Hermannsburg', he described the ordeal of the drought in apocalyptic terms: 'it was like walking into the valley of the shadow of death when one after the other had to be carried away.67 The water from Kaporilja would provide fresh vegetables to be grown in the Hermannsburg gardens to prevent scurvy and sickness, provide good drinking water, and allow the stock to survive and increase. It was to save the people and to prevent another year like 1929 that Albrecht made his appeal to 'please help to make the

65 See Henson, A Straight-out Man, pp. 3-4.
67 Ibid., 'Spring Water for the natives at Hermannsburg: An appeal of the Finke River Mission. 1932'.

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water flow': it was, he pleaded, a matter of life and death for 'our people'.

Yet it may not have been quite so straightforward, even for the 'straight-out'
missionary. While there were no chiefs in traditional Aboriginal Australia, there
were 'rainmakers' who wielded considerable influence and who often provided a
point of resistance to missionary intervention. There is some evidence this sort
of resistance occurred on a limited scale at Hermannsburg. How significant,
then, was 'water' as a missionary tool? To the Lutherans, the Kaporilja 'miracle'
was like Moses striking the rock and producing water. It represented, and was
represented as, more than just a matter of providing an alternate and much
needed source of water. It demonstrated to the missionaries, and they hoped to
the Arrernte, that God had not deserted them out here in the wilderness; that
the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of Martin Luther, was still with them: it
had an apocalyptic, theological force: it was not just about water, or rather, it
was about water as a signifier of life, of regeneration, of renewal, of the Lutheran
God. Water had a habit of becoming metaphorical.

the children of Israel

In fact, the Lutherans were much more likely to see their mission venture at
Hermannsburg in metaphorical and biblical terms than the more prosaic
Presbyterians who eventually established Ernabella. The Mission out in the

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68 Ibid.
69 With the assistance of 'friends of the Aborigines' such as Violet Teague, the artist, and her half-sister, Una,
TGH Strehlow, JB Cleland and others, as well as the Lutheran community and the public through a
subscription campaign, the money was raised, and with mission Aborigines doing most of the work, the pipes
were laid, and the 'water flowed' in 1935.
70 'Rainmakers' and 'witchdoctors' were also fertile ground for Western representations that sometimes
bordered on the fantastic, not only in Australian locales but overseas: see, for example, the well-known Jungle
Doctor series of books by Dr. Paul White, set in Tanganyika.
85-86 implied some previous 'resistance' to the missionaries' narratives of how the rain came. During his
early years at Hermannsburg, Carl Strehlow had banned increase and rain-making ceremonies but they had
gone on out of view despite the undoubted waning of traditional Arrernte ceremonial life after the arrival of
the missionaries: see Philip Jones, 'Namatjira: Traveller between two worlds', in Hardy, Megaw and Megaw,
eds., The Heritage of Namatjira: 97-136. After 1904, Strehlow softened his stand against Arrernte religion
and began to record aspects of it in his massive ethnographical depiction of Arrernte culture: Carl Strehlow,
The Aranda and Loritja Tribes of Central Australia, Hans D. Oberscheidt trans., 7 vols. (M.F. Leonhardi,
1907-1920).
desert, with its striking white washed church in the centre of the *Kraal*, has always been represented in the Lutheran literature as an iconic, covenanted institution of almost biblical proportions. Albrecht re-articulated this notion in a sermon to the Hermannsburg congregation in 1976, eight years before his death. He conceded that the history of Hermannsburg was ‘full of contradictions and human failures, sins and weaknesses’, apparently of mere human provenance. He then asks: how and why was this place chosen? And he is in no doubt that ‘God had had a hand in it’:

But why should He have chosen you here, people of this area? We know our God never acts haphazardly or without a certain plan in view. Why had he chosen Israel before other people? We have no answer to any such questions...However, of one thing we may be quite sure: He has accepted you as His own.73

This imagining of the Arrernte as akin to the Israelites in Egypt and Canaan, as a chosen people, was a representation, a foundational myth, that justified the missionary venture and made sense of it to the Lutherans and to Albrecht. In 1930, Albrecht, coming to terms with the effects of the drought, but still a militant and zealous Lutheran missionary, made a startling intervention in the culture and religion of the traditional Arrernte and utilised components of the Israelite foundational narratives to justify it. After a stabbing in the native camp, Albrecht gave Arrernte elders an ultimatum: he would not have another communion service unless the people put God’s law ahead of Aboriginal tribal law. In Henson’s account of the matter, the elders decide that a local ‘sacred cave’, Manangananga, where indigenous sacred objects, *tjurungas*, were kept, would be ‘opened to everybody’. Albrecht agrees. Henson’s Aboriginal commentators remembered how frightened everyone was when ‘the stones’ were taken out of the cave and put in front of everyone:

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72 See especially Lohe, "A Mission is established".
74 How the Arrernte ‘received’ this concept is not germane to our study, although it is a most interesting question: see Diane J. Austin-Broos, "The Meaning of Pepe: God’s Law and the Western Arrernte", *The Journal of Religious History* 27 (October 2003): 311-328.
75 Henson, *A Straight-out Man*, p. 53. Interestingly, contemporary Western Arrernte people speak of living by ‘two laws’, Arrernte law and God’s law. For an absorbing discussion of this phenomenon, using the concepts of ontology and ethnicity to explore it, see: Diane J. Austin-Broos, "'Two Laws', Ontologies,
First time we see that stone. Old man [Albrecht] start those opening words, In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, then everybody relax, we start to sing hymn. Then he preached about Moses and Aaron and the golden calf. Tjurungas were like the golden calf. Old man preach, and everybody look up, yes, that’s really true. We bin think about God make this free. Yes, stones very frightening for Aboriginal people, that’s why Pastor Albrecht go there, ‘Come here, everybody, come near, sit down here’. People touched them, children, everybody.76

Like the narrative of Forster’s Marabar caves in A Passage to India, ‘something happened’ at the Ntaria cave but what was it?77 We are given a few ‘facts’ but little to connect them or make sense of them. We would want to know of the extent of Albrecht’s influence in the ‘decision’ of the elders, although we assume, ethnocentrically, that his influence was large. Given that there is some evidence that the cave later re-assumed its former ‘place’ in Western Arrernte cosmology, what exactly was the ‘decision’? The Lutherans took the incident as conclusive evidence that the Arrernte had ‘come across’ and accepted the primacy of ‘God’s law’. From an indigenous perspective, it may have been merely a first step in the integration of Lutheran Christianity into ‘Arrernte law’.78 Manangananga confirmed the early Albrecht as a militant and zealous missionary who regarded the indigenous people as ‘pagans’ with only a ‘trace’ of religion. Much later, he was to characterise them as among the most ‘spiritual’ and religious people on earth.79 There was a journey of some distance in these words, as in his words to a young Baptist minister in the 1950s:

76 Henson, A Straight-out Man, p. 54, citing Arrernte men Edwin Pareroultja and Pastor Traugott Malbanka. It is one weakness in Barbara Henson’s sympathetic portrayal of Albrecht that she spends one page only on this important ‘incident’ where Aboriginal tjurungas are for the first time openly mocked and desecrated by the missionaries (with the apparent consent of the elders, although it is very possible that they were under some duress from the missionaries to do so).
77 E. M. Forster, A Passage to India (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965 (first published 1924)).
78 There are other possible shades of interpretation of the Manangananga incident. Philip Jones, for example, has argued powerfully that it not only represented a sharp end of the continuing Lutheran campaign to denigrate and destroy Arrernte religious life, but involved a conscious decision of the Christian Arrernte, particularly the native evangelists, to collaborate actively with the whites against their own religion: Jones, "Namatjira: Traveller between two worlds": 97-136, pp. 122-123. Also see: Austin-Broos, "Two Laws".
In the first couple of years I was at Hermannsburg and became proficient in the Aranda language, I was sure that I knew all about the Aborigines. But after working there for twenty-seven years...I'm thoroughly convinced I don't know anything at all about them.\textsuperscript{80}

As we follow the discourse and praxis of JRB Love and Charles Duguid, and the imagining and establishment of the second major mission to Aborigines in Central Australia, we will not lose sight of FW Albrecht of the first mission, a man who grew into his role as a missionary and then transformed it, and who, like his beloved and bewildering Arrernte, learnt to adapt to the Land and to its occupants. We will catch ‘glimpses’ of him working at Hermannsburg contemporaneously with Love at Ernabella, and catch ‘snatches’ of the discourses about Aborigines that Love and he, among others, participate in while ‘converting’ and ‘saving’ their Aborigines. We will see him in partnership with Duguid, going west on truck and camel in 1935, 1936 and 1939, attempting to ensure the survival of the Pintubi and the Ngalia people around Haasts Bluff. We will also note his rationalization of the work and discourse of John Flynn, the celebrated Inland missionary who, unlike Love, Duguid and Albrecht, had dedicated himself to the cause of the white people of the Interior.

\textbf{the whites began to treat us like Aborigines}

The last thing to do in this contextual chapter is to bring FW Albrecht to the point of a gestural ‘moment’ in 1942 when he met Love, the superintendent at Ernabella, for the first time at the Presbyterian mission site and the two agreed and disagreed in arguments about Aborigines. We will regenerate that ‘moment’ in chapter eight and examine it more closely. Albrecht had been in enforced exile from Hermannsburg since December 1940 because of the war and questions about his German background.\textsuperscript{81} Partly through the support of Duguid, as well as the assistance of the Aborigines’ Friends’ Association (AFA), he was able to return in 1942. His ‘exile’ can only have reinforced his sense of being an ‘outsider’ in Australian society. This role was largely cast for him by the circumstances of his birth, his religion and by his calling. But he had also

\textsuperscript{80} Henson, \textit{A Straight-out Man}, p. 229.

\textsuperscript{81} This experience was not new to Hermannsburg. Anti-German prejudice in World War 1 had resulted in Hermannsburg losing its Government subsidy from 1917-1923: see Rowse, \textit{White flour, white power}, p. 84.
willingly taken it on. Later in life, he explained his *modus operandi* when visiting outlying camps of Aborigines:

When we started visiting, we could soon see that we could not come as ordinary visitors to call on the station people; if we did that, then the Natives would keep well away from us. It was necessary for the Natives to see that we cared for them in the first place. So after calling at 'Government House', we would go to the camp, call on them, then settle down a little distance away, with or without tent. We would have our meals like other travellers, or doggers, boil the billy and eat in the open. The result soon became obvious: the people recognised we were there for their benefit, came to us with their many questions, complaints, and worries. We could soon feel and see that our service meant much to them. There was another side: the white people began to treat us like Aborigines, as outsiders.\(^2\)

The politics and poetics of hospitality (the poetics are heard in the simple acts of boiling a billy and bedding down beside the black camp), as well as the dialectics of possession, on the mission site are not then simply negotiated between the missionary and the indigene. The nature of these mentalities and processes was also shaped by the dominating and exclusionary powers of the white settler discourse and praxis. As we shall see, FW Albrecht and JRB Love were very different kinds of missionaries to the Aborigines. Neither conformed completely to type, either the evangelical Lutheran, or the progressive Moderate Presbyterian. Both were more complex than the stereotype of 'missionary' has allowed. But in their ability to negotiate a broader and more flexible interpretation, from within their own denominational and missionary discourses, of the Christian concepts of conversion and salvation, and in their determination to stand beside 'their' Aborigines, the 'dispossessed men without food', they were not dissimilar: they were 'with the black people'.

CHAPTER TWO: ‘Trace of the Other’¹: JRB Love and Aboriginal Australians before Ernabella

In 1972, when a furore erupted in the Adelaide press over suggestions by the then Governor of South Australia, the eminent scientist, Sir Mark Oliphant, that John Flynn had been in sympathy with some of the typically racist views of the early 20thC regarding Aboriginal people, the prominent lawyer and Presbyterian Howard Zelling wrote to support the remarks of the Governor regarding Flynn.² At the end of his letter, he wrote:

> Every time I go to Alice Springs I see the imposing John Flynn Memorial Church...but there is no memorial, imposing or otherwise, to the work among the Aborigines of the Reverend JRB Love, a former Moderator of the South Australian Presbyterian Church, first at Port George IV, and then at Ernabella...When I see a memorial to Bob Love as large as the one to John Flynn, it will be time enough for the Governor’s critics to comment as they have done.³

As Zelling pointed out forcefully, the nation’s plaudits on work done on its behalf

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² The catalyst for Oliphant’s attack was Charles Duguid, who had asked Oliphant to write the foreword to his book Doctor and the Aborigines (Adelaide: Rigby, 1972). In this book Duguid repeated the charges of racism and a lack of Christian care regarding Aborigines against Flynn that he had made nearly forty years earlier in the forums of the Presbyterian Church. The Duguid-Flynn feud is an important context for the narrative of the establishment of Ernabella, and one useful mechanism for distinguishing various discourses that related to Aboriginal people in the early to mid-20th century. Zelling’s introduction of Love into a debate over the AIM and Aborigines is also significant because it positions him by implication as the ‘third party’ in the struggle (which Zelling refers to in his letter) between Duguid and Flynn, which is where this thesis places him.

³ The Advertiser (SA), 6 Sep 1972, p. 5. Zelling, a Professor of Law at Adelaide University and a Justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia, was a significant lay elder in the Presbyterian Church of South Australia. It is only fair to note that during the controversy, which erupted in the letter pages of the Advertiser in September 1972, Flynn had his defenders as well as his detractors on the matter of his attitudes towards Aboriginal people.
in the Outback have not always been handed out in a fair and balanced fashion. Flynn has had churches built for him, suburbs and streets named after him, and his face inscribed on the twenty-dollar note, among other memorials and remembrances of his undoubted achievements. For Love, there are few if any memorials, ‘imposing or otherwise’. There is an imbalance in their country’s memorialising of these two near contemporaries, the one remembered as an iconic figure, the other (almost) forgotten.4

This chapter and the next introduce JRB Love through an examination of the development of his thinking on Aboriginal people prior to his assumption of the superintendency of Ernabella mission in 1941. The conception, establishment and development of that Mission, and a delineation of the discourse that accompanied it, form the core of the thesis. It is important, then, to trace the development of Love’s thought up to 1941 and begin to see how that thinking fitted into related national discourses on missionary enterprise, Aborigines, race, culture, whiteness, and civilization.

I wrote ‘(almost) forgotten’: while Love remains a shadowy figure even in the history of Australian missionary activity, it may be helpful to begin with a reading of some ‘traces’ of him in the literature, both to construct a sense of his current reputation, or representation, in the historiography of church, missions and indigenous Australians, and to use this fragmentary template as a starting point to construct a more comprehensive positioning of JRB Love, but one that may be less certain, more ambiguous and tentative.

friend of the Aborigines

Robert Scrimgeour’s 1989 history of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia contains a biographical note on Love who is called ‘one of the greatest sons’ of the Church.5 The note ends with this tribute: ‘He was a bushman, explorer, scholar, linguist, anthropologist, soldier, naturalist, minister of the Gospel, and

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4 The two men were born in the same decade, Flynn in 1880, Love in 1889.
friend of the Aborigines. If ever a man lived life to the full, it was J.R.B. Love.\(^6\) It is a fine tribute. If we note, however, that the ‘friend of the Aborigines’ wrote in 1915 that ‘it would be foolish to argue that all men are equal. The blackfellow is inferior and must necessarily remain so’, and then note that much later, in 1936, after fifteen years of missionary enterprise, this ‘friend’ could write in an annual mission report that a mistake of the ‘young enthusiast’ might be to treat ‘the Aborigine as an equal, which can only lead to friction and heartbreak’, we see that ‘the friend of the Aborigines’ is a more complex designation than might appear at first sight.\(^7\)

In his book *Not Slaves Not Citizens*, writing of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia from 1898 to 1954, Peter Biskup characterises the Presbyterian mission station at Kunmunya (Port George IV) as ‘one of the most successful missions of the inter-war years, as well as one of the most interesting.’\(^8\) He suggests that this success was due almost entirely to ‘the wisdom and farsightedness’ of its Superintendent, the Rev. JRB Love. Biskup compares Love favourably with other well-known WA missionaries of the time, Ernest Gribble.\(^9\)

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\(^6\) Ibid., pp. 215-216, although Scrimgeour has borrowed from Maisie McKenzie, who used similar words regarding Love: see McKenzie, *The Road to Mowanum* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1969), p. 104.


\(^9\) Ernest Gribble, superintendent of the (Anglican) Forrest River Mission from 1914-28, was, according to Biskup, ‘headstrong, self-righteous, and authoritarian’, much like his father, John Gribble. He resigned his post following condemnation of his treatment of fellow missionaries and Aboriginal people in a confidential report written by AP Elkin and commissioned by the Australian Board of Missions (Anglican) [see ibid., pp. 128-130]. Gribble has received a more sympathetic assessment from John Harris, who though conceding that he was a complex and difficult man, writes that ‘He was most difficult, however, to those who sought to harm Aboriginal people, and his anger at their mistreatment drove him to his obsession with isolating and protecting them’: see Harris, *One Blood*, p. 517. Yet according to Elkin, his relations with the Aborigines on the mission were fragile: he often resorted to physical assault, family life was discouraged, children were kept in compounds under continual supervision, parents who refused to let the mission take their children were denied access to rations, and tribal marriage laws were completely ignored: see Biskup, *Not slaves not citizens*, p. 129; also see now Christine Halse, *A Terribly Wild Man: a biography of the Rev Ernest Gribble* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2002). Neither Harris or Biskup mention it but the main character in Randolph Stow’s fine early novel, *To the Islands*, Heriot, the old, disillusioned missionary, was possibly based at least partly on Edward Gribble, given Heriot’s similarly cantankerous compassion for Aborigines, even though Gribble’s historical role in the Omalmeri massacre in 1926 is actually replicated in the novel in the character of Father Walton. Stow worked for a brief time as a storeman on the Forrest River Mission in the late 1950s,
and Rod Schenk. According to Biskup, Love practiced a moderate, tolerant and patient policy of 'enlightened gradualism'. There is also commentary on Love’s superior education, and his vision of missionary activity as more than ‘the mere preaching of Christianity’, as well as his use of indigenous spirituality as a foundation on which to construct Christian belief.

While discussing Gribble, Biskup identifies his primary failure as one of lack of tact, and conversely notes Love’s ‘excellent relations’ with the Aborigines Department. The head of the Department, and Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia, throughout the term of Love’s term at Kunmunya was the (in)famous AO Neville, architect of what one commentator has characterised as the ‘genocidal moment’ in Australian history when he said to a national meeting of Chief Protectors of Aborigines in 1937: ‘Are we to have one million blacks in the Commonwealth, or are we going to merge them into our white community and eventually forget that there were any Aborigines in Australia?’ Neville was also notoriously anti-mission, as Biskup documents, yet Love’s relations with Neville were ‘excellent’: was it merely tact and patience, or more a mastery of politic and political compromise for the sake of the mission and the people?

where he was told the story of the massacre and the early missionaries at Forrest River; see Randolph Stow, To the islands (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1962); see above, n. 25, Introduction; also Anthony J. Hassall, Strange Country: A Study of Randolph Stow (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1986).

10 Rod Schenk was a significant non-denominational missionary in Western Australia from the 1920s, working for the Australian Aborigines’ Mission (AAM), later to become the United Aborigines’ Mission (UAM). He founded and managed the Mt Margaret mission near Laverton, WA, from 1921-1954. While an enthusiastic and resourceful missionary, with ‘a concept of Aboriginal welfare which was considerably ahead of the times’, in terms of health and education, his attitude towards Aboriginal culture was almost completely negative, which was typical of the fundamentalist, evangelistic brand of missionology espoused by the AAM/UAM: see Biskup, Not slaves not citizens, pp. 131-134. Again Harris’s assessment of Schenk is more sympathetic. Although he too is critical of the ‘narrow-minded, regimental, repressive’ nature of his institution, Harris says his intentions were sincerely to do something for Aborigines ‘when others were doing nothing’: see Harris, One Blood, pp. 558-561.

11 Biskup, Not slaves not citizens, p. 127.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., p. 128.


14 Biskup, Not slaves not citizens, p. 70.
Apart from representing a powerful nemesis to Aboriginal people in the State, Neville was, to missionaries, anthropologists, and other interested parties, the gatekeeper to funds, resources and access to Aborigines in Western Australia.\textsuperscript{16} Love was not the only person to attempt to stay on the good side of AO Neville.\textsuperscript{17} But Love was also able to write in 1930, in terms that seem to ominously prefigure those of Neville’s seven years later, that ‘the solution of the half-caste problem is to train the half-caste to earn his own civilised living…and gradually lose him in the stream of white blood.’\textsuperscript{18} Once again, the closer we peer at the portrait of Love as ‘friend of the Aborigines’, the more complex and ‘grainy’ it becomes.

\textbf{we will never tolerate paternalism}

Love also gets a good press from Richard Broome in his \textit{Aboriginal Australians}.\textsuperscript{19} Broome, in his chapter ‘Mixed Missionary Blessings’, calls paternalism ‘the blot on the humanitarianism of the missionaries’.\textsuperscript{20} Despite characterising paternalism as ‘inherent’ in the Christian tradition, Broome suggests that not all missionaries were paternalistic and cites Love as an exception, quoting ‘this sensitive observer’: ‘In this mission (Kunmunya), we will never tolerate paternalism. These people are our equals in intelligence, and our superiors in physique. The only differences are in the colours of our skins and the fact that we have had centuries more practice at becoming civilized.’\textsuperscript{21} Given the

\textsuperscript{16} For a vivid portrait of Neville as a nemesis of Aborigines, see the evocative film \textit{Rabbit-Proof Fence} (2002).
\textsuperscript{17} Geoffrey Gray has noted the lengths to which AP Elkin went to establish good relations with Neville and argues that this was a part of a discourse of ‘helping government’: see the articles by Geoffrey Gray, "Mr Neville did all in (his) power to assist me": A.P. Elkin, A.O. Neville and anthropological research in Northwest Western Australia, 1927-1928", \textit{Oceania} 68 (1997): 27-46; "In view of the obvious animus: the discrediting of Ralph Piddington", \textit{Aboriginal History} 21 (1997): 113-132; "[The Sydney school] seem[s] to view the Aborigines as forever unchanging": southeastern Australia and Australian anthropology", \textit{Aboriginal History} 24 (2000): 175-199; "Dislocating the self: anthropological field work in the Kimberley, Western Australia, 1934-36", \textit{Aboriginal History} 26 (2002): 23-50.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 105.
\textsuperscript{21} Quoted from McKenzie, \textit{The Road to Mowanjum}, p. 88: cited in Broome, \textit{Aboriginal Australians}, p. 105. McKenzie does not give a source or a date for this interesting remark of Love’s, which must put at least some small doubt over the statement’s authenticity, especially when placed against contrary remarks made at about
paternalism inherent in these last phrases, this quotation from Love raises an acute point: disjunctions between discourse and praxis. This is more than the obvious point that statements cannot be taken at their face value. It is perhaps a problematic of the postcolonialist notion of discourse, born of linguistic studies, and retaining and privileging the pre-eminency of words, statements, language. The actions of historical actors (praxis) may run against the grain of the discourse within which they are or appear situated. With Love, we may note that discourse and praxis are not always aligned.\textsuperscript{22} The problematic may also lie, it should be said, in a historiographical tradition which privileges (as this thesis does) written sources (books, journals, diaries, reports) over the oral traditions (largely lost now) immanent in the mundane ebb and flow of relationships on a mission site. More (or less) accommodation, more (or less) resistance, more (or less) hospitality may have existed than can be discerned from the intransigent nature of words on pages.

Broome also contrasts conservative missionaries (in the majority until at least the 1950s) who believed that traditional Aboriginal religion and culture should be swept away with ‘liberal humanitarian missionaries’ like Love who held ‘more positive views’ of indigenous culture, and who saw the possibility of grafting the ‘new’ religion onto the rites and beliefs of indigenous spirituality.\textsuperscript{23} Broome sees Love as the epitome of the liberal humanitarian missionary and quotes him summing up their philosophy:

\textbf{Footnotes:}
\textsuperscript{22} As we will note, this does not always run against Love, as it does perhaps here: in fact, it appears a characteristic of him that his discourse runs behind or against his praxis, that is, his actions in the mission enterprise are often more progressive, less ethnocentric, paternalistic and dominating than his expressed attitudes, or those of the discourses in which he participated.
\textsuperscript{23} Broome, \textit{Aboriginal Australians}, pp. 109-110. Broome quotes Love on the applicability of some Aboriginal rites to Christian ones such as baptism and the laying on of hands. He wrongly dates the quote from 1914. He has cited McKenzie’s \textit{The Road to Mowanjum} as the source of the quote (p. 52) but McKenzie is in fact quoting a large excerpt from Love’s \textit{Stone Age Bushmen} (pp. 217-219), published in 1936. One of my points in this chapter is that the Love of 1914 could not have written the passage he wrote in 1936, although it is also noticeable that in some areas, such as questions of hybridity (‘the half-caste problem’), Love’s thinking was stubbornly resistant to change.
I yield to none in recognizing the real intellectual ability of the Australian Aborigines. I honour their real, and intense, religious sense and practices, and do not seek to overthrow these, but rather to use them as a basis for higher principles.²⁴

John Harris’ magisterial overview of mission work in Australia acknowledges Love’s work as linguist and translator, and sees him as following in the footsteps of the great early Lutheran translators of the Dieri and Arrernte languages.²⁵ He also approves of Love’s progressive missiology. He notes that only one of the 19th century missionaries, James Ridley, characterised Aboriginal religious traditions as ‘the thirst for religious mystery, a reaching out to God.’ It was, Harris comments, ‘to be another sixty years before Bob Love, among the Worora people in the north-west, was to dare to acknowledge that in an Aboriginal ceremony of washing and sharing water to drink, he glimpsed the shadow of the [Christian] sacraments.’²⁶

**the exemplary missionary**

Maisie McKenzie’s *The Road to Mowanjum* (1969) is written firmly within the missionary perspective and is useful for its provision of details of Love’s work at the mission site of Kunmunya. McKenzie paints a picture of an exemplary missionary who fashioned a policy of tolerance and non-interference in indigenous life. By imposing explicit prohibitions on practices such as ‘witchcraft or brutality’ which he could not condone, he believed that he would merely drive the practices underground, ‘making them all the more desirable.’²⁷ McKenzie’s mission station is an active, productive site: from early morning with the cutting of firewood and milking of cows and goats to prayers to work in the

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²⁵ See Harris, *One Blood*, pp. 838-839. Carl Strehlow and JG Reuther translated the New Testament (NT) into Dieri (1897) and Strehlow, when he went to Hermannsburg, in a stupendous feat, also translated the NT into Arrernte (Aranda). Although no complete book was published until after his death, parts of his translation were used at the Mission much earlier. His son, TGH Strehlow, revised the translation and the new Arrernte NT was published in 1956. FW Albrecht was instrumental in assisting and encouraging Strehlow to complete this task. It is important to emphasise also that none of these translation projects would have been completed (or even commenced) without the assistance, often expert, of indigenous associates. Note that Broome also documents Love’s linguistic skills and accomplishment in both translating parts of the Gospel into Worora and preaching to the Worora people in their own language: Broome, *Aboriginal Australians*, p. 110.
²⁶ Harris, *One Blood*, pp. 543-544.
afternoon for all, until the singing of hymns at the campsite at night.28 Despite
the narrative of mundane, quotidian activity with orchestration and a measure of
surveillance from Love, McKenzie argues that his policy was that the Worora
were to make their own decisions when it came to important religious and
cultural matters: ‘He would point them to another way by his example, but he
would force no issue that meddled with tribal tradition. “We shall not build
Christians,’ he was fond of saying, ‘by teaching people to despise and neglect
their parents.”’29

A pattern emerges in McKenzie’s narrative of the modus operandi of Love’s
‘education and example’ model of missionary enterprise. An issue would emerge
where one person, usually a respected elder, decided to ‘come across’ to a
European, missionary reading of a law, or ceremony, or part of it. He sought the
missionary’s assistance. Love gave his sympathy, but would refuse to issue a
public edict or pronouncement. The elder had himself to make the formal break
and attempt to carry the consensus of the community with him. According to
McKenzie, it was a successful formula.30 We can only take McKenzie at her
word.31 In any case, we do not know the context, or alternative contexts, to her
narrative of the indigenous initiation of change in the direction the missionary
desired. We do not know what subtle pressures may have been brought to bear,
and how powerfully they may have acted on the indigenous mind. We are only
dimly aware of other, indigenous motives. ‘Coming across’ must always have
been a complex and difficult bridge to negotiate.

27 McKenzie, The Road to Mowanjum, p. 87.
28 Ibid., p. 93.
29 Ibid., p. 118.
30 Two examples given of this modus operandi are in relation to circumcision and the betrothal of young girls
to older men: see ibid., chapter 8.
31 When McKenzie cites Love, often no reference is provided, so we sometimes do not know when or where
he said it. It is even difficult to avoid the suspicion (quite possibly unjustified) that she is putting words he
would (should?) have said into his mouth, that she is creating her own version or vision of JRB Love. It is
often especially tempting, even natural, for disciples or admirers to add, to subtract, to shape their ‘story’.
Perhaps I do it myself here. All writers ‘represent’, tell a story. McKenzie’s narrative is in the triumphalist
genre of the Good Civilized Missionary Among Good Savage Natives; she is not writing a thesis, too many
references might get in the way of a Good Story. Hers is a fine example of the genre, but to use it as a source
for history does raise some problems. The Kunmunya missionary enterprise still requires more historical
investigation.
McKenzie's narrative of the 'bright and happy' mission station may be overstated.\cite{32} However, there is little doubt that Love had forged a strong bond with the people, and had passed on skills to them to help them coexist, when necessary, with his own society. Encouraging them to retain their own skills, he had also paid a measure of respect to their culture, to their beliefs, to their way of doing things. He had watched the ceremonies and tried to understand them, he had encouraged them to continue to initiate their young, to pass on their traditions, he had shouted goodbye to the corpses laid in tree platforms along with the other men: he had done these things while still telling them about his own God: why else was he there? From the readings of observers like McKenzie, Broome and Biskup, it would be hard to expect much more from a missionary born in 1889. When the Loves left Kunmunya for Ernabella, 'the sobbing of a whole people filled the air.'\cite{33}

**your elder brother**

And yet the discourse is fraught. Love’s ringing pronouncement that ‘they are our equals in intelligence’, made in the inter-war years when the prevailing scientific view was that the mental capacity of Aborigines was less than whites, was a powerful statement.\cite{34} Yet we note Love limits the equality to intelligence. The minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia of 1936 have Love endorsing the words of Albert Schweitzer regarding ‘natives’: I am your brother, it is true, but your elder brother.\cite{35} Further on, we read Love pronouncing:

> Two extremes are to be avoided in dealing with the Aborigines: one is that attitude, so commonly met in Australia, of regarding the Aborigines as inferior animals, to be treated with contempt and kept in abject

\cite{32} She does mention the first visit of a doctor to Kunmunya in 1935 who found ‘an alarmingly high proportion of venereal disease, as well as leprosy’ on the mission site: McKenzie, *The Road to Mowanjum*, p. 98. Life on the mission site was not, perhaps, always quite what it seemed.\cite{33} Ibid., p. 103.

\cite{34} See, for example, Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*.

\cite{35} Presbyterian Church of Australia, “Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia [referred to below as GAA]: September 1936”, (Sydney, 1936), p. 94. Love is quoting from Albert Schweitzer’s *On the edge of the primeval forest* (1922). The quote from Schweitzer continues, in words again that seem to encapsulate Love’s missiological approach to relationships with indigenous people: ‘The combination of friendliness with authority is therefore the great secret of successful intercourse [between missionaries and ‘their natives’].’

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humiliation; the other is the error into which the young enthusiast might fall, of regarding the Aboriginal man as his brother, as he surely is, and treating him as an equal, which can only lead to friction and heartbreak.\footnote{Presbyterian Church, “Proceedings, GAA, 1936”, p. 96, in the ‘latest report from Kunmunya’, unattributed but almost certainly written by Love.}

The representation of Love that the literature has constructed to this point is incomplete. The image of the ‘liberal humanitarian’ and ‘friend of the Aborigines’ needs fleshing out, unravelling, positioning in the discourses of his time. Russell McGregor’s splendid 1997 book \textit{Imagined Destinies}, while only touching on Love intermittently, gives a guide to a broader, more complex sense of the man as situated in the fraught debates in the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century on race, evolution and the future of the Aborigines in Australia. While he acknowledges Love’s attempts to integrate Christian faith into the traditional Aboriginal order so as to cause as little disruption as possible to indigenous society, and his Presbyterian belief that a combination of ‘the Word’ and ‘work’ could save the Aborigines from the doomed fate to which most other people had consigned them, he also notes that the biological assimilationists such as Neville and JB Cleland appeared to have an ally in Love in the long debates over the ‘half-caste problem’.\footnote{McGregor, \textit{Imagined Destinies}, pp. 116-117, 176, 209-210.} Using McGregor’s approach as a rough guide, we will attempt to take a fresh look at the development of JRB Love’s thinking on missions and Aborigines.

\textbf{insisting too much on the religious side}

Born in 1889 in Ireland, James Robert Beattie Love was a son of a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend George Love and his wife Margaret, and was one of ten children.\footnote{Some of the details of this brief biographical overview are taken from Scrimgeour’s \textit{Some Scots Were Here} and McKenzie’s \textit{The Road to Mowanjum}.} His father came to Australia for reasons of health when JRB Love was only five months old and was a minister, first in Victoria, then in South Australia. His son trained initially as a teacher and was appointed in 1910 to Leigh Creek, a small coal-mining town 300 miles north of Adelaide. Love spent some of his spare time at a nearby Lutheran Mission Station, Killalpaninna. We have Love’s account of one of the Killalpaninna visits, in December 1910. Love was only 21 years old. The account is a forty-five page handwritten manuscript,
a journal of his visit decorated with skilled drawings of Dieri (Diyari) weapons and implements, and various gestures of the Dieri sign language. In Christine Stevens’ *White Man’s Dreaming: Killalpaninna Mission 1866-1915*, a nuanced narrative of the Mission, the author mentions this visit and refers to him as ‘a Presbyterian minister’. He was not that yet; one of the fascinating things about the document is that we catch Love at a very young age, before his epic trek North in 1912-14, before the Great War, before his theological training, commenting and making judgements on a Lutheran mission station.

At the outset of the visit, he is confronted by decisions being made about the removal of Aboriginal children. At an ‘outlying camp’, where the inhabitants are ‘exceedingly filthy and dejected’ and ‘plainly living lives of immorality’, a twelve year-old girl living with her mother and a ‘half-caste’ man is to be taken to the Mission Station at the request of the mission authorities ‘to save the girl from her obvious fate if living with her step-father’. At the last minute, it is decided to send her to Adelaide. Love notes the grief of the mother who threatens to commit suicide ‘when totally deprived of the child’, and he muses about the future of the young girl, assuming the worst: ‘What will become of a half-caste girl in a city of whites, is not pleasant to conjecture?’

At the mission site itself, Love, while impressed personally by the Lutheran missionaries, is somewhat more sceptical of their policies:

> Although I have the greatest respect for the Lutheran missionaries, they are not practical enough and insist too much on the religious side. I believe the missions should be primarily industrial, ultimately religious, but not solely, nor, necessarily, primarily religious.42

It seems that even at this early stage Love was prepared to advance the notion that the ‘primary’ purpose of missionary activity was ‘industrial’, not to convert

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41 Love, "PRG 214, Series 3, Killalpaninna visit 1910".
42 Ibid.
souls, although he makes the distinction that the latter was an 'ultimate' goal. He jots down what he calls the 'significant' response of one Aboriginal who ran away from the Mission because 'too much Jesus Christ yabber'. Yet he acknowledges that 'an industrial mission' on the scale he recommends is itself 'impractical' as 'the chief difficulty on this barren mission station' is to find suitable employment for 'the blacks'. As Stevens notes, Love's account does not represent as 'work' the Saturdays when the Aboriginal inhabitants of the Mission are free to engage in their traditional hunting and gathering, although he catches the joy of the young boys, arms full of little boomerangs, imitating their fathers, thrusting at sticks and small mounds of earth as at imaginary enemies.43

The people interest Love: Aboriginal elders are 'scarred old warriors' and the children are 'shaggy-headed little niggers' and 'rascals'. One old 'medicine man', berated by the missionary for his bag of bones which he 'points to kill', particularly impresses Love:44

Secretly I was more interested than shocked, and really admired the old man who was guilty of such bloodthirsty designs upon his fellows - two of the five bones were loaded, or had been pointed, which meant that, without the missionary's interference, two men were soon to die. In spite of his crime - and to himself probably, it did not appear as a crime, but merely a custom - the old man had a face full of power and a certain dignity, together with a fine physique...45

Significant features of this account of the young Love's visit to the mission are his interest in both the new discipline of anthropology (he mentions several 'anthropological' articles and cites AW Howitt at one point) and the Dieri language.46 Translation intrigues the inquisitive visitor: Love notes that the Dieri have 'a curious idea of what borders on the physical and spiritual, [a thing that] hovers between the material and immaterial. The Dieri word for this 'thing' is tepi.' Love gives a striking example: if the shadow of a stick falls on still water,

43 Ibid. See also Stevens, White Man's Dreaming, p. 228.
44 The missionary was Wolfgang Reidel, missionary at Killalpaninna 1908-1914.
45 Love, "PRG 214, Series 3, Killalpaninna visit 1910".
46 Alfred William Howitt (1830-1908), prominent Australian explorer, geologist and early anthropologist, who lived for a time among the Dieri.
there will be a shadow from that shadow on the bottom of the pool. This shadow’s shadow is *tepi*. The missionaries, Love writes approvingly, use *tepi* in speaking of the soul.47

Towards the end of the manuscript, Love suggests that ‘on occasion’, under threat of starvation, Dieri practised cannibalism on their children. He concedes that this was probably very rare as ‘none could be kinder, or more indulgent to their children, than these blacks, if once they have decided to let a child live after its birth, and if indeed, the woman permits the birth of a child’.48 In his early writing on Aborigines, Love often returns, almost compulsively, to these spaces of death, cannibalism and infanticide, which seem to act for him as significant markers of ‘savagery’ and ‘evil’. The young Love, reading his ethnography and anthropology, disciplines which were permeated in the early 20th century, as was popular discourse, by notions of social Darwinism, is already beginning to articulate the evolutionary logic of an upward progression of societies from savagery and barbarism to civilization, with Aborigines somewhere near the bottom rung.

**the grand pilgrimage**

In 1912, at the age of twenty-three, after two years of teaching, JRB Love undertook a commission from the Presbyterian Church of Australia to investigate the conditions of life for Aboriginal peoples in the Interior. His Report, *The Aborigines: Their Present Condition*, was the outcome of a two-year journey.49 Love traveled largely alone, and on horseback, from Leigh Creek, north of Adelaide, to Darwin, then south-west to Victoria River, and then east across the entire width of the Northern Territory to Camooweal and Charleville in Queensland from where he joined a droving team and worked his way home. It was an epic journey, in the footsteps and style of the explorers, the lone traveller(s) against Nature, against the Land, ‘against’ the Aborigines (Love is

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47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 JRB Love, *The Aborigines: Their Present Condition as seen in Northern South Australia, the Northern Territory, North-West Australia and Western Queensland* (Melbourne: Arbuckle, Waddell and Fawckner, 1915).
constrained to carry a gun). In keeping with the explorer genre, Love self-consciously keeps a diary, written on the run. His journey, while it looked back to the great explorers, also prefigured ‘the grand pilgrimage’ to the Centre, that ‘land rite of continental size’, in Tom Griffiths’ words, which began to become popular in the 1920s and 30s and has remained so ever since.\textsuperscript{50} In \textit{Hunters and Collectors}, Griffiths refers to this impulse of the early ‘white pilgrims’ to draw the Land into their grasp ‘with a net of meanings and ceremony, filling its spaces and defending its silences. They championed an indigenous culture, a white indigenous culture, that denies, displaces and sometimes accommodated Aboriginal traditions.\textsuperscript{51} While his discourse was weighted on the side of accommodation, Love, ‘friend of the Aborigines’, always felt the strength of the white pilgrim impulse.

Love’s Report was published in 1915\textsuperscript{52} and, according to the historian of the church in South Australia, ‘enabled the Presbyterian Church of Australia to obtain a clear picture of its responsibilities to the people of the North, especially the Aborigines.\textsuperscript{53} The Church may indeed have obtained a clear picture of its responsibilities but it largely ignored them: no new Presbyterian mission for Aborigines was established anywhere in Australia until Ernabella in 1937, twenty two years after the 1915 Report, and that with some opposition from the Presbyterian John Flynn’s AIM.\textsuperscript{54} In 1915, the Presbyterian Church had only two missions for Aborigines in Australia: in the Kimberleys, at Port George IV Sound (established 1912, later called Kunmunya) and at Mapoon in Queensland (1891). There were a number of overseas missions, in New Guinea, Korea, and in the Pacific, which often seemed more interesting and exotic to church pew donors, as well as more successful in terms of numbers and conversions, than

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 175.
\textsuperscript{52} The cost of publication was ‘generously borne’, according to the Foreword, by the prominent South Australian philanthropist Robert Barr Smith. All the photographs in the Report are attributed to ‘J. Flynn’: one of John Flynn’s enthusiasms was photography, which he used to great effect in his publications, such as the \textit{Inlander}; see Brigid Hains, \textit{The Ice and the Inland: Mawson, Flynn, and the Myth of the Frontier} (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), especially pp. 129-130.
\textsuperscript{53} Scrimgeour, \textit{Some Scots Were Here}, p. 215.
\textsuperscript{54} See chapters 4-6 below.
missions working with the historically more recalcitrant material of Aboriginal people in Australia.\textsuperscript{55}

History often surprises us with its coincidences and ironies. In 1912, the same year that JRB Love set out on his expedition North on horse to report to the Church on 'the present condition' of the Aborigines, John Flynn was also commissioned by the same Church to conduct a survey of 'religious conditions' in the Northern Territory. Flynn's 'expedition' was far better planned and financed than Love's venture. Flynn was nine years older than Love: one reason perhaps for his superior organisational skills at this time. In any case, these skills, as well as allied promotional and political abilities, became characteristic of his later career. In 1912, the ambitious and far-sighted minister from Victoria, working among scattered white settlers in the Beltana Smith of Dunesc Mission in South Australia, had been thinking for some time of extending the model of that Mission to the 'great empty spaces' of the Centre and the North. According to his first biographer, his preparations prior to leaving for the North concerned 'aborigines as well as whites': 'He had many discussions with his friend Robert Love, a young schoolteacher at Leigh Creek. Later Love was to win distinction as the anthropologist author of \textit{Stone Age Bushmen of Today}, and the Superintendent of the Port George IV Mission Station in Western Australia.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} To give some indication of the Presbyterian Church's interest and overall orientation concerning missions to Australian Aborigines, the mission work of the Church in Australia in the early years of the 20th century was carried out through the 'Foreign Missions Department'. Note that the corresponding department in the Methodist Church was the 'Overseas Missions Department': see Max Griffiths, \textit{The Silent Heart: Flynn of the Inland} (Kenthurst, N.S.W.: Kangaroo Press, 1993), p. 16. Similarly, the Anglican church in Australia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries placed Aboriginal missions very low on its order of priorities: see Noel Loos, "Concern and Contempt: Church and Missionary Attitudes towards Aborigines in North Queensland in the Nineteenth Century", in Swain and Rose, \textit{Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions}: 100-120, p. 104; also see Noel Loos, "The Australian Board of Missions, the Anglican Church and the Aborigines, 1850-1900", \textit{The Journal of Religious History} 17 (1992): 194-209.

\textsuperscript{56} W. Scott McPheat, \textit{John Flynn: Apostle to the Inland} (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), p. 60. For details of Flynn's careful and very political management of the appeal, the survey and the final Report to the General Assembly of the Church that initiated and established the AIM, see chapters 5-7 of McPheat's sympathetic biography. I exclude as a 'biographer' Ion Idriess and his famed book, \textit{Flynn of the Inland} (1932), which is more hagiography than biography, albeit one of the great, iconic hagiographies of Australian literature: see Geoffrey Dutton, \textit{The Australian Collection: Australia's Greatest Books} (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1985), pp. 143-146.
Apart from these discussions with Love, presumably about Aborigines, the indigenous people of Australia did not figure largely in Flynn’s ‘plot’, Report or plans for an Australian Inland Mission (AIM).\textsuperscript{57} This body was speedily established and given the imprimatur of the Presbyterian Church by its General Assembly in 1912. Love’s Report was not received until December 1914. By then the Great War was underway and the question of establishing new missions to the Aborigines, even if it had ever been seriously considered, was deferred indefinitely. In another irony, given Love’s subsequent and deserved eminence within the church as a missionary to the Aborigines, his Report could be read as a cry for more missionary work to be applied to the white people of the Interior as well as Aboriginal people and, as such, an imprimatur on the developing work of Flynn and the AIM. As well as being a firm supporter, along with Flynn, of the discourse of developing and populating the North and Centre with white settlers, Love saw the ‘uplifting’ of white moral standards in the bush as a task, so far unfulfilled, for the church.\textsuperscript{58} It was, of course, this alternative reading, initiated by Flynn and reinforced by Love, that was taken up with some vigour by the Presbyterian Church that fell in behind the powerful and popular force the AIM eventually became.\textsuperscript{59} Curiously, the paths of the two men crossed during their respective ‘expeditions’, at a brief, inconsequential meeting at Alice Springs in May 1912. The discourses on Aborigines of Flynn and Love were to coalesce, and occasionally collide, during the next thirty or so years.

\textsuperscript{57} ‘Plot’ is the term given by McPheat (p. 49) to Flynn’s clever machinations in both planning for a survey of the North and in ensuring the positive reception of the recommendations of the Report of the survey, one of which was the establishment of a Mission to the ‘far-flung white pioneer settlers’ of the Inland. This Mission was to be the AIM.

\textsuperscript{58} Flynn and Love shared, to some extent, the general public’s conceptions of the Inland/ the Bush that were permeated with social Darwinist emphases on the survival of the fittest and the superiority of the white race. For an argument that these conceptions had by the early 20th century replaced earlier, more complex understandings of ‘the bush’, see Richard Waterhouse, “Australian Legends: Representations of the Bush, 1813-1913”, \textit{Australian Historical Studies} 115 (2000): 201-223.

\textsuperscript{59} Love was to remain a strong supporter of the AIM throughout his life, with the exception of its treatment, or often more precisely, non-treatment of Aborigines. It was on this point that he formed a (temporary) alliance with Duguid; see below regarding the establishment of Eranbella, esp. chapters 4-6.
this extremely interesting and most neglected race

Love prefaces his Report by hoping that his suggestions will aid in the ‘uplifting’ of this ‘extremely interesting and most neglected race’. He insists that his first concern is for the children ‘of aboriginal and mixed blood, who are now growing up, mostly in idleness and, I am convinced, almost invariably in immorality, in the camps’. This was a Presbyterian man to whom idleness was almost a form of immorality. The solution was to give them ‘a sound Christian and industrial training’ to allow them ‘to live a decent and useful life’. But would enough children survive, even if ‘uplifted’ into missions such as Killalpaninna? That mission, Love notes, had had one birth to 18 deaths in 1910, and only 13 children out of a mission population of 165. He predicts (accurately, unfortunately) the demise of the Mission and its people. Of the country northwest of Oodnadatta, including that of the Musgrave and Petermann Ranges, Love writes prophetically: ‘Here lies a very alluring field for the missionary, and ethnologist. Living absolutely under primitive conditions...they still maintain the ancient customs which have largely disappeared from the settled parts’. These ‘primitive stone-age bushmen’ were a magnetic mission ‘field’, attracting the missionary and the anthropologist. Perhaps they were calling ‘alluringly’ for a missionary-anthropologist, two for the (colonial) price of one.

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60 Love, The Aborigines: Their Present Condition, p. 7. The Report was submitted to the Board of Missions in December 1914.

61 Ibid., p. 8.

62 The survival, or non-survival, of indigenous children seems an obsession with Love and, in different contexts, he refers to the theme repeatedly: it is part of the discourse and context within which he finds it acceptable to remove children from the environment of ‘the sordid camps’.

63 According to Christobel Mattingly and Ken Hampton, eds., Survival in our own land, revised ed. (Sydney: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992 (first published 1988)), the figures for 1910 were 1 birth to 15 deaths.

64 On the eventual fate of the mission and the Dieri, see Stevens, White Man’s Dreaming, esp. chapter 9, and Mattingly and Hampton, eds., Survival in our own land, chapter 22.

65 Love, The Aborigines: Their Present Condition, pp. 12-13. Note Love’s recommendation of a promising area for missionary activity, not implemented for 25 years until the establishment of Ernabella. In a comment which betrayed Love’s (and the nation’s) developing obsession with the ‘half-caste’ problem, he notes, with the use of (unconscious) sexual imagery, how the presence of a ‘fair-haired boy’ from the Petermanns proves that the white man’s influence had ‘penetrated’ to even this ‘remotest corner of the desert’: ibid., p. 13. In fact, Aboriginal children often had (have) very fair hair when young which invariably darkens as get older. Love’s assumption of miscegenation was just that, an assumption.
An interlude: in 1922, Love published *Our Australian Blacks*. It carried a rudimentary map of Australia with (appropriately) crosses where Protestant missions existed at that time in northern Australia. Love placed a question mark in the area (roughly) of the Musgraves and Pettermans to which he had referred in his 1915 Report. I reproduce it here as a map, for geographical orientation, but also as a 'map' of Love's vision.

Back to the Report: often, Love’s instincts seem in 1915 to be ‘with the whites’: Aboriginal killing of sheep or cattle is without excuse; cattle station managers get a sympathetic portrayal from Love (‘managers invariably ensure that the old and decrepit get a share [of bullocks killed for the Aborigines]’; the wage of an Aboriginal stockman may seem small but ‘one acquainted with the blacks’ will understand that, supplemented by the managers’ kindnesses, the wage is ‘more just than at first it might appear’; police sub-Protectors in the Territory ‘are usually willing to do what they can to help the blacks’; the Government ‘kindly’ supplies rations to Aborigines at isolated depots and stations: truly a pastorale of pastoralists, paternalists and protectors. Conversely, the representations of the indigenous people that Love selects for the Report are generally negative, although not always so: the positive images, however, the ‘bright and happy faces’, are usually due to the ‘kindly’ intervention of white missionaries or

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67 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
68 Ibid., p. 17.
69 Ibid., p. 41.
station managers. The life of Aboriginal people, in their traditional setting or where they have come into contact with low whites, is represented by Love as nasty, brutish, and occasionally shortened (by disease or by whites with guns).

**civilised constructions**

By these sorts of representations, Love self-consciously sets himself up as an ‘authority’ on indigenous matters. Tom Griffiths has noted the tendency of visitors to Central Australia, from about the 1930s, to become self-appointed experts, ‘authorities’ legitimised by their new knowledge to ‘pronounce’ on the ‘Aboriginal problem’, the ‘half-caste problem’, the development of the North and so on. Love, if not a pioneer of the frontier, was perhaps a precursor of these visitors.⁷¹ A photograph in Love’s Report of a Aboriginal boy in a camp has the unfortunately ambiguous title of ‘An Ugly Blot on Australia’. As Love used John Flynn’s photographs, here is a case where their discourses literally coalesced into one stereotypical representation of the Other. The text opposite the photograph refers to ‘the shabby and dirty little ‘humpies’ where some Aborigines live, while at Alice Springs and Henbury Station, according to Love, indigenous huts are ‘quite respectable’ and of a ‘civilised construction’, with thatched roof and walls.⁷² In the camps, however, the attitude of ‘the black gin’ to her child is ‘incomprehensible’. She seems not to care, according to Love, whether she keeps the baby or not: [she] will quite crudely discuss the matter with a white man: ‘might be me kill ‘em, piccaninny no good’.⁷³ Yet, if the children survive, notes Love, their kin treat them with ‘lavish kindness’. He describes their games and mimicry and is struck by the similarity with children ‘the world over’; yet underneath, suddenly, the ‘true savage’ is revealed by the children’s love of dismembering birds and small animals.⁷⁴

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⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 37.
⁷¹ Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*, p. 178. Of course, there was a difference: Love eventually ‘stayed’ in the Centre and became a ‘real expert’ (at least in European terms), that is, someone who lived in the Centre and, like Said’s Orientalists, could pronounce on ‘the Aborigine’ with ‘authority’.
⁷³ Ibid., p. 55.
⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 59-60.
Back in the 'sordid' camps, Love is 'startled' to see 'quadroons':

Of course, these children are no better than the others, yet it seems particularly painful that these children should be growing up to the life of the camps – in a word, white savages...[t]he blame rests largely with ourselves, in that we allow children to grow up to such a life, and make no effort to take them from it and lift them to a higher level.\textsuperscript{75}

We note the young Love's use of the word 'painful': it is the pain from the shock of seeing something that to Love is of almost primeval disorder, disjunction, disease. There is little or no acknowledgment in the Report of any 'pain' to Aboriginal mothers on removal of their children: to us, a troubling omission. Love even raises the necessity for the removal of children to a moral crusade. As for 'immorality', there is enough around for all: 'the gin...is at the disposal of any passing traveller for the price of a stick of tobacco or a piece of damper', often sent by her Aboriginal husband to the white man, who has 'no limits'. Love sees the whole 'camp' in moralistic terms: the black woman is immoral yet the plaything of both black and white men. Along with most commentators of his time, he denies her any agency or autonomy in these intricate tripartite situations.\textsuperscript{76}

\textbf{uplift them to useful men and women}

Against the 'sordid' camps of the 'blacks' outside the cattle stations and small white settlements, Love sets the (even then) iconic Central Australian mission, Hermannsburg. Love had arrived at Hermannsburg during a crisis in its history. Baldwin Spencer, as Chief Protector of Aboriginales in the Territory, had recommended Hermannsburg's transfer to government control.\textsuperscript{77} Love rejects

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 21.
\textsuperscript{76} Most missionaries of this and earlier eras took this position. But so did almost every white commentator: see for example Charles Chewings, \textit{Back in the Stone Age: The natives of Central Australia} (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1936). See here generally Ann McGrath, 'Born in the Cattle', especially chapter 4 (Black Velvet). We should note that the position of Aboriginal women in indigenous society, and its myriad representations, are still the subject of considerable debate, as well as whether the primary divide in contemporary (black/white) society is gender or race: see Diane Bell, \textit{Daughters of the Dreaming}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1993); also Helen MacDonald, "Speaking Objects: Diane Bell and the Making of 'Aboriginal Woman'", \textit{Melbourne Historical Journal} 27 (1999): 1-19.
\textsuperscript{77} Spencer's antipathy towards Hermannsburg was well known. The matter of closure in 1913, when Love was at the Mission Station, was moot by the time Love's Report was published as Spencer's advice had been rejected by the Administrator, JA Gilruth: see Derek John Mulvaney and John H. Calaby, \textit{So much that is new: Baldwin Spencer, 1860-1929, a biography} (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1985), pp. 309-
the criticisms made by Spencer of poor hygiene and ragged dressing on the part of the Aboriginal inhabitants of Hermannsburg although he concedes 'the habit of personal cleanliness is hard to instil into the aboriginal mind'. On the thorny question of dormitories for children, Love dismisses this criticism of Hermannsburg; he saw them as 'an absolute necessity'.

The principal defect of missions, including Hermannsburg, claims the young Love, is that 'not sufficient opportunities for self-reliance are allowed the blacks'. While many believe the 'blackfellows' cannot be trusted, 'minor positions' ought to be possible. Caught in the wider racist settler discourse, Love explains it patiently to the Board of Missions: 'it would be foolish to argue that all men are equal. The blackfellow is inferior and must necessarily remain so, but he is by no means so inferior as to be unable to rise above the level of a working animal.' To Love, the strongest argument in favour of Christian missions was in the 'bright, happy faces of mission blacks', a contrast to those of cattle station blacks: 'while religion without sound industry is idle, industry without religion is worthless...work among the aborigines is not a question of successfully raising stock. It concerns the souls of men.' This was the language the Board wanted to hear: while 'the blackfellow was inferior', his soul was (presumably) equal, at least in the eyes of God, to white souls. Nevertheless (Love went on) 'work' was necessary, for the Aborigines and the nation, as the land requires 'men and women to develop it':

It is a question of rescuing and uplifting boys and girls who, under present conditions, are most certainly doomed to a life of vice, sloth and disease, and of starting them in life equipped to take their places as useful men and women.

Love's discourse here is one of 'rescue' from the sordid, diseased and slothful native camps, the development of blacks for the greater development of

310. Interestingly, Love does not mention the source of the criticisms of the mission, although he mentions Spencer as author in connection with the fame of the Aranda 'to the ethnological world'. Love, *The Aborigines: Their Present Condition*, p. 23.

78 Love, *The Aborigines: Their Present Condition*, p. 30. Spencer had criticised the locking up of girls overnight in dormitories by the missionaries.

79 Ibid., p. 29.

80 Ibid., p. 31.
Australia, the 'equipping' of Aborigines to 'take useful places' in White Australia.\textsuperscript{82} The most vulnerable, even if rescued and taken to Adelaide, are the half-caste girls: who, asks Love, will marry a 'coloured woman' when white women are available? Love is, however, sufficiently sceptical of settler discourse to interpret the 'white bushman's cry' to 'leave the blacks alone' as meaning, in effect, that 'we have here a source of cheap labour and unbridled license [so] do not interfere with us'. Against this isolationist discourse, Love posits the intervention of Christ's Great Commission, the injunction to preach the Gospel to every nation. In any case, he argues, white 'interference' is inevitable: the only question is its nature. In the Interior, because of pastoralism and the overland telegraph route, a system of protective reservations 'is not possible'\textsuperscript{83} and Love recommends the alternative establishment of 'training stations', that is, 'industrial training on a sound religious basis' with a view to Aborigines 'going out and fighting their own way in the world when fairly equipped, so far at least as half-castes are concerned, we may save the Central Australian blacks from shameful extinction.'\textsuperscript{84}

'Fighting' here was perhaps a Freudian slip for 'finding': either way, it indicates Love's concern for the 'struggle' Aboriginal people faced 'in the (white) world'. Love's racial thought, however, becomes unclear here: he seems to be saying, train Aborigines and then set them loose 'in the world', the half-castes are more likely to survive (because they are better 'equipped' with skills, intelligence, or white blood?), thus averting shame falling on the good name of the nation. So the race may not be doomed. But of whom does the surviving 'race' consist? If

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., pp. 34-39. It is instructive to examine the discourse of Inland development as was produced in Australia and compare, for example, Flynn and Love who both participated in and privileged this discourse. Flynn can be said, of course, to have been instrumental not only in the production of the narratives of nation-building, character-building, and indeed (attempted) race-building but in creating the infrastructure, through the initiation of medical facilities, wireless links and aerial medical assistance, for developmental realities on the ground (and in the air!). But it should be said that both Love and Albrecht (as well as Duguid) attempted to include the indigenous people of the nation in this discourse, whereas Flynn's tendency (in which he was hardly alone) was to exclude them, explicitly or implicitly: see Max Griffiths, The Silent Heart, pp. 68-69, 168; contra, see Hains, The Ice and the Inland, but see below, chapter 6.
\textsuperscript{83} Interestingly, some 25 years or so after making this judgement, Love became superintendent of Ernabella Mission, a 'protective reservation' that provided what Love then described as 'the last, best hope' of the Aborigines of the Musgrave Ranges.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., p. 40 (my italics).
'half-castes', what of the 'full-bloods'? A few lines later, he again raises the
spectre, clearly 'painful' to him, of the 'practically white child in a blacks' camp'
and cites an unnamed writer on 'the aboriginal problem': 'The sooner this
miserable drop of blood is fused in the common reservoir, the better.' Love does
not necessarily approve of this sentiment, but again his drift is hard to catch:

Whether fusion, extinction, or separate existence shall be the ultimate
fate of the race is beyond our ken. We are concerned with the blacks as
they now are. If such fusion is to take place upon honourable terms, well,
did the writer quoted contemplate that?\(^{285}\)

Love seems to be feeling his way, uneasily, towards some 'honourable' solution
to 'the aboriginal problem'. All the possible 'final solutions', 'fusion, extinction,
or separate existence' appear to be still open in 1914, although as two of the
alternatives carry potentialities of great 'shame and dishonour', and 'separate
existence' appears 'not possible', the way forward appears almost impenetrable
to the young observer.

**we are their (uninvited) guests**

Love's diary or journal of his trek is a very different document to the Report.\(^{86}\)
Unrestrained by the terms of a commission, it is written in the genre of the
explorer-adventurer, adopting the laconic, humorous style of the bush traveller.
The Land is the underlying reality in Love's journal and he writes of it in terms of
death and decay: 'the whole place looks prehistoric'; 'the numerous large anthills
give the country the appearance of a deserted cemetery'. A lonely grave reminds
him of 'the horror of playing one's last card in vain on this Godforsaken, starving
track'. The 'blacks' themselves play a secondary role. Love is, curiously, more
sympathetic to the Aborigines, yet somehow more disdainful of them, in the
journal than in the Report: 'Visited in evening by an old nigger...No-one could

\(^{85}\) Ibid.

\(^{86}\) JRB Love, "Series 6: Journal of an expedition undertaken for the purposes of inquiring into the conditions
of life among the Aborigines of the interior of Australia under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church of
Australia: 27 Dec 1912 - 29 Mar 1914", in *Papers of JRB Love: PRG 214* (State Library of South Australia:
Adelaide). As the journal was a private communication, apparently not designed for publication, the author is
permitted to say things outside the scope of the discourse of the Board of Missions. The ways in which
Love's journal clarifies, obfuscates, amplifies or contradicts the Report is fascinating, and a more thorough
comparison of the two documents than can be essayed here would be instructive.
refuse these poor old chaps a feed, especially seeing that we are, in a sense, their guests, uninvited ones to be sure.\textsuperscript{87} We find, perhaps for the first time, some inchoate recognition in Love of the harsh realities and (in)hospitalities of dispossession.\textsuperscript{88} The condition of old Aboriginal women, however, particularly seems to disgust Love. It offends his sense of order, decency, cleanliness, as it does his sense of justice; these women seem simultaneously to attract his compassion and his contempt:

Nearly every camp contains one or two loathsome creatures - poor brutes, it is not their fault that they are suffering, for whom nothing is done, except that occasionally white men who see them give them some iodiform,\textsuperscript{89} vaseline or whatever remedy they may have, to put on their sores...Did not the law forbid it, one could put a bullet through the head of some [of] these piteous creatures, and feel that the act was only merciful and not unchristian.\textsuperscript{90}

In the Report, Love, for the benefit of the Board of Missions, had framed a 'pastorale' of Central and Northern Australian race relations, with 'kindly', well-meaning whites and docile, (potentially) doomed blacks. Here, in the journal, it is different: 'White men here all flashing revolvers on belt or saddle. Several nigger smoke signals going up in the distance.'\textsuperscript{91} There is violence and rumours of violence, amid fears and suspicions of 'the blacks' engendered by years of frontier wars. After a white man was killed, there is much furbishing up of revolvers, every man in the country is now wearing his gun when on the road'. Police and trackers gather. Then 'another murder is reported from Broome': 'the blacks are apparently looking for trouble now. These police raids will probably lead to [battles?], where many things will occur that may not be published.'\textsuperscript{92}

Here, in Love's private journal, we are in the dark, dangerous world of Reynolds' 

\textsuperscript{87} Love, "PRG 214, Series 6: journal of an expedition", p. 52.
\textsuperscript{88} It is possible that Love's 'mournful and melancholic' treatment of the Land is a projection of the colonialist guilt and fear about the dispossession of the indigenes of the land (which he evidently is beginning to feel) onto the Bush: see Bernard Smith, The Spectre of Truganini (Sydney: ABC, 1980 (Boyer Lectures)), and Griffiths, Hunters and Collectors, pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{89} Love means iodoform, a chemical compound with antiseptic qualities.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., p. 56.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., pp. 96-100.
Frontier.\textsuperscript{93} At times, Love is despondent: ‘The whole country is a poverty-stricken place, the Aboriginal question is not regarded seriously, and even the Church is apathetic.’\textsuperscript{94} He expects to be setting off to Victoria River in a week or two, ‘to collect more useless information about the blacks’. He is becoming aware of the force of opposition. The ‘pastorale’ is breaking down. He spends a night arguing with the mailman about the Aborigines:

In fighting for the blacks, the aboriginal missionary has, in addition to the native evils, to contend with opposition, often active and strenuous opposition, from most of the whites.\textsuperscript{95}

Love was beginning to imagine what it would be like being a missionary to the Aborigines in white settler society.

\textsuperscript{93} Henry Reynolds, \textit{Frontier: Aborigines, settlers and land}: see the discussion in the Introduction above at n. 5. If the historical memory of the ruthlessness and harshness of the white invasion and appropriation of this continent ever dims, I would suggest re-readings of this salutary book. In both discourse and praxis, word and deed, the Australian colonial settler (with some honourable exceptions) was a frightening and implacable enemy of the indigenous inhabitants. It is against the terrifying portrait of Reynolds’ Frontier that I place the (relative) benignity of the Central Australian missionaries: also see the brief discussion of the notion of the Frontier as a historical construct in notes 3–4, chapter 3, below.

\textsuperscript{94} It is, however, curious that Love does not mention, either in his Report or journal, that Baldwin Spencer was Chief Protector in the Territory at this time. He claims that there was little interest in Aborigines, yet Spencer was there, perhaps the most eminent and qualified man in Australia regarding Aborigines! However, it was apparently true that the Administrator JA Gilruth had little interest in Aboriginal welfare, as Love intimated after meeting him. Even Spencer, a friend, said of him: ‘I think it may be fairly said that he has neither the faintest sympathy with, nor the slightest understanding of, the Aboriginals’: cited in Mulvaney and Calaby, \textit{So much that is new: Baldwin Spencer, 1860-1929, a biography}, p. 306.

CHAPTER THREE: ‘Rites of Passage, Duties beyond Debt’¹: Love among the Savages

For the colonial imagination of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Central Australian landscape through which JRB Love had ridden on his ‘grand pilgrimage’ was both empty, and at the same time full of commercial promise, with immense potentialities of money and power on tap from the exploitation and development of the land, by ‘settling’ in stations and thus colonizing and civilizing the land. Naming the Centre as ‘empty’ was part of the process of removing the Aborigines from the scene, a process of erasure that went beyond mere representation and included dispersal, removal of children, and killings. This thesis interrogates to what extent missionaries were an oppositional force to this colonial erasure. It seems, on the face of it, that while most other Europeans viewed the original inhabitants of this country as impediments to the settlement and development of the land, even as they exploited their labour and their women, they remained a troubling but paramount presence to missionaries. This is apparent even in the discourse of the young missionary-to-be Love: no one (else) takes the Aboriginal question seriously.

Also evident in Love’s account of his journey across the Centre is the depiction of the Landscape as a point of mediation between the white visitants and the

¹ Emmanuel Levinas, *Dieu, la mort et le temps* (Paris: Grasset, 1993), p. 21: cited by Derrida, *Adieu*, p. 7. The actual phrase is ‘a duty beyond all debts’ and the context is this passage from one of Levinas’ lectures at the Sorbonne in 1975-76: ‘The Other who expresses himself is entrusted to me (and there is no debt with regard to the Other - for what is due cannot be paid; one will never be even).’ The inset photograph is from Love’s *Stone-Age Bushmen of Today* (1936), opp. p. xvi, and is titled as the frontispiece. The caption reads: ‘The author showing Worora men some pigmy stone implements found in other parts of Australia.’ Love seems elevated and privileged in the photograph, the civilised European in semi-military garb and riding boots, facing his Others as expert and explicator, but in what appears to be a scene of amity.
original inhabitants, its small and stupendous effects profoundly influencing the relationship of the peoples who, though sharing a concord, shared common experiences of the Land. We will see in the narrative of the Central Australian missionaries the immense influence of the immense Land itself, which possessed Aboriginal people and was possessed (or was it ever really possessed?) by these white intruders, both sides bound together by an environment that forever now included the Other, the Land that was in some ways more powerful than any ideology or theology or discourse, that could produce, through drought and death, the sort of trauma that could force an orthodox German Lutheran missionary such as FW Albrecht to transform his conception of Christian mission. Love, too, was to experience the potency of the Landscape and its hosts, the strange beings, the blacks, inextricably attached to it, with whites the ‘uninvited guests’. But at the moment, at this moment, with his experience as an ersatz ‘explorer’ behind him and his life as a missionary to come, Love was captured by the excitement and tension of the Frontier.

the frontier

The Frontier and its stations were locales for ventures and adventures. In European narratives of development, the early explorers had traversed this tabula rasa, ‘discovered’ inland Australia, and ‘paved the way’ for settlers seeking land, wealth and excitement, and for missionaries seeking redemption for the shadowy indigenes. Roland Boer has noted that, just as the Central Australian missionaries were geographical and spiritual explorers of a kind, exploration narratives and missionary texts shared common motifs, such as the notion of the call, divine strength, divine assistance in time of trouble, the all-surveying eye of Providence.2 Yet explorers were transitory; they came, saw, described, mapped, and then left. They only set up camps; the missionaries came to stay, in stations, often for many years (as was to happen in Love’s future). The sense, though, of (adj)venture, the stirring of curiosity, the evocation of wonder (and sometimes contempt) and even incomprehension of the Other and the otherness of life in the Aboriginal Landscape, were matters that influenced both the imported and evolving missionary discourses on the stations.

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2 Boer, Last Stop before Antarctica, p. 62.
These stations, mission and cattle stations, were outposts on the Frontier.\textsuperscript{3} Seen as the thin advancing line of white civilization, the frontier remained part of the Australian popular imagination until well into the 20th century and fed into the iconography of the 'pioneers' who peopled it, living pressed against the edge of darkness, of savagery and primitivity, on stations.\textsuperscript{4} Much of the literature of the outback was, and arguably still is, written and marketed in the genre of frontier, in the narratives of the exotic, the unknown, the primitive (referring both to Aborigines and the lives of the white settlers) and the masculine, and the freedom of the wide, open spaces.\textsuperscript{5} Mrs Aeneas Gunn's \textit{We of the Never Never}\textsuperscript{6} constructed a widely read, classic representation of the bush frontier in 1908 which congealed for many Australians the sense of the frontier as a place of adventures, rough and loveable bush characters, brave station owners and, sometimes, their plucky wives.\textsuperscript{7} Aborigines were often absent from this frontier genre, or caricatured or, as Dewar notes, reduced to impotent figures on the

\textsuperscript{3} The historiographical utility of the concept of the Frontier has been a matter for debate among historians, in Australia and overseas, especially in the United States since the publication of Frederick Jackson Turner, \textit{The Frontier in American History} (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1947 (first pub. 1920)). The notion of 'frontier' used to be thought of in linear terms, as a definable line on the landscape. Recent historiography sees it as a much more complex phenomenon with mental and psychic elements in its construction: see Lynette Russell, ed., \textit{Colonial frontiers: Indigenous-European encounters in settler societies}, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001). Lynette Russell argues that the boundaries and frontiers produced by cross-cultural encounters are not 'neutrally positioned', but are 'assertive, contested, dialogic', negotiated. She calls this space a 'hybrid space': see ibid., (Introduction). One might also call it a 'liminal space', a place of meeting, where a face-to-face encounter may take place, a beach, a creek bed.

\textsuperscript{4} Henry Reynolds in his work has utilized the concept of the frontier as a means of understanding relationships between whites and Aborigines. He has emphasized frontier conflict and violence but has also acknowledged the (limited) accommodation on both sides of the frontier. Reynolds delineates the persistence of basic theories of 19thC racism and how they permeated white discourse and remained there. It would be facile to suggest all the fears and hatreds engendered by these frontier wars dissipated overnight: it was still something the missionaries had to contend with in their oppositional discourse. In any case, what strikes one about reading Reynolds on 19thC settler discourses regarding the Aborigines is how little ideas and attitudes changed between the mid to late 19thC and the thirties and forties in the 20thC. Almost all of the specific lines of racism and prejudice survived through to at least this period. Reynolds himself has characterized the 1930s as more racist than the 1830s. With scientific racism weakening belief in racial equality in colonial Australia and social Darwinism undermining it altogether, Aborigines came to be seen by secular society as beyond redemption. Most missionaries, however, managed to retain the belief in the Aborigines as (slightly inferior) brothers and able to be redeemed through the blood of Christ: see Reynolds, \textit{Frontier: Aborigines, settlers and land} (St. Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1996).

\textsuperscript{5} See Mickey Dewar, "Frontier Theory and the Construction of Meaning in Northern Territory Writing", \textit{Journal of Northern Territory History} (1996): 15-24, and some of the books she notes; for example, W.B. Wildey, \textit{Australasia and the Oceanic Region} (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1876); A Searcy, \textit{In Australian Tropics} (Carlisle: Hesperian Press, 1909 (reprinted 1984)); H. W. Daly, \textit{Digging, Squatting and Pioneering Life in the Northern Territory of South Australia} (Carlisle: Hesperian Press, 1887 (reprinted 1984)).

\textsuperscript{6} Mrs Aeneas Gunn, \textit{We of the Never Never} (Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1908 (reprinted 1977)).
borders of European settlement. So when JRB Love wrote his *Stone-Age Bushmen of Today* in 1936, a book which in some ways, despite its title, presented a very different view of Aboriginal people from the orthodox settler and missionary discourses, it was subtitled *Life and Adventure among a Tribe of Savages in North-Western Australia*, and on its flyleaf, the publisher recommended other titles such as *Zambezi Days, Through Wildest Papua, Yukon Patrol* suggesting adventure stories, boys' yarns, exotic, wild frontier terrains in colonial lands. Yet the interest in 'frontier' literature was not only because of its depiction of the *primitif* and the savage, but was also generated by the domestication of this exoticism, by the normalizing *civil-isation* being freighted to the primitive frontier by (ad)venturers, whether they were explorers or missionaries, or both. But in 1914, after his expedition, Love was neither, and it is to his story we return.

**rites of passage**

The next few years must have been traumatic and tumultuous for JRB Love. In 1914, soon after his return from the North, Love volunteered to spend six months among the Worora people at Port George IV Presbyterian Mission (which became Kunmunya) in Western Australia, to assist the mission during a staff shortage. In 1915, he enlisted with the South Australian Light Horse Regiment and served with the Imperial Camel Corps in Libya and the Fifth Light Horse Brigade in Palestine. Lieutenant Love was wounded in a skirmish in Damascus and was repatriated home 'with a wound in the chest, a disabled left hand, a

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7 See Dewar, "Frontier Theory", p. 19.
8 Ibid.
10 The Mission desperately needed someone to stand in for missionaries who were due to leave on furlough. Love volunteered his services to the Foreign Missions Department of his church. The mission was originally at Port George IV, but, according to Harris, 'Love found the site unsatisfactory and moved it to Kunmunya in 1915': John Harris, *One Blood*, p. 872 (n. 112). Harris is almost but not quite right. According to McKenzie, Love arrived at Port George IV on December 1914 to relieve the Wilsons (the first missionaries there) who were going on furlough for six months. Robert Wilson, who had tentatively decided on an alternative site, had already designated the original site as unsatisfactory. While Wilson was still at the mission, Love had taken two exploratory journeys to check various sites out and agreed with Wilson's decision. The actual move to Kunmunya took place after the Wilsons' return and Love's subsequent departure. Love was to return to Kunmunya as Superintendent in 1927.
Military Cross, and the Distinguished Conduct Medal." He completed his Arts degree, which he had begun before his expedition through the Centre, then entered Ormond College at Melbourne University as a theological student. He was ordained as a Presbyterian minister, as his father had been, in Adelaide in 1921. He again volunteered for missionary work with the Aborigines, and was sent to Mapoon in North Queensland, where he was to remain for five years. In 1923, he married Margaret Holinger, a schoolteacher at the mission. Four years later, when Kunmunya was in financial trouble, he and his wife decided to go back: in Maisie McKenzie's reverential words, 'The die was caste. Bob Love's face was turned towards Kunmunya once again.' He was appointed superintendent and remained there for fourteen years. In the 1930s, he supported Charles Duguid's proposal to establish a mission in Central Australia, one that in some respects was similar to the type Love had recommended in ambiguous terms to an unreceptive Church in 1914, 'primarily industrial but ultimately religious'. In 1941, twenty-seven years after his earlier expedition, JRB Love retraced his 'grand pilgrimage' to the Centre, to Duguid's Ernabella. But we need to retrace our steps to continue following the development of his thinking on Aboriginal people.

**not yet a civilized construction**

By 1922, Love already had moved a long way from the young school-teacher at Leigh Creek. He had been to war, studied theology and become a minister, and had had some experience on two missions. While he was a missionary at Mapoon, Love published a small 36-page booklet for children called *Our Australian Blacks*. It is written in a simple style, because of its intended audience, and has the advantage of clarity. In the booklet, Love at times represents 'the blacks' positively: the skills of the traditional hunter-gatherers, their 'loveable' natures, their 'patience and generosity', the similarity of the children's games to white ones; but he also writes of the 'cunning old men' who take up all the wives, 'the poor old women who almost starve', the fear of spirits

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12 McKenzie, *The Road to Mowanjum*, p. 86.
in the dark, the strange customs, and that ‘space of death’, cannibalism. Love represents Aboriginal people as different from white people – the trace of the Other – yet also sufficiently ‘like ourselves’ that they can be ‘uplifted’. The tone is patronizing and permeated with conventional images of Social Darwinism, allied to a Moderate missiology:

And remember, too, that with all their bad habits, they have a great many characteristics that are good and loveable, and that makes it possible to do work among them to lift them to higher things. Would you expect savages, who have lived in ignorance for countless years, to be good and attractive in every way? Yet, again, we believe that all men are made in God’s image. This means that even the lowest of men have in them much that is good, and the possibility of becoming better.

Missions and missionaries, then, are necessary to ‘raise’ the Aborigine to our level. They are not yet a ‘civilized construction’, like the huts at Alice Springs. Love puts forward a vision of mission work as an all-encompassing, cradle-to-the-grave duty of care: ‘You see, then, that the missions to the aboriginals not only take the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus to these people, but also take care of the children, feed and clothe them, train them to earn their living, and watch over them when they are grown up.’ In 1922, with Love at the outset of his missionary career, a strong sense of duty, of responsibility touched with a sort of paternalism, was growing, along with a more conventional Protestant conviction

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14 On the poor women who starve: it may be, as Regina Ganter suggests, that Love’s depiction of Aboriginal women as weak and powerless tends to render Aboriginal society familiar and decipherable: see Regina Ganter, "Letters from Mapoon: Colonising Aboriginal Gender", Australian Historical Studies (1999): 267-285, p. 282. If so, then his discourse serves both to differentiate (very different examples of powerlessness) and to familiarise (powerless is also apparent in Aboriginal as well as white society). We may also note that, perhaps as a corollary, Love’s depiction of Aboriginal society is invariably patriarchal. There was nothing particularly unusual in this for his time, although both Albrecht and Love, perhaps because of their gender and age, appear to be much more comfortable in dealing with male authority figures (elders) in their respective client peoples than, for example, female figures. This also appears reflected in their discourse. Ganter’s article is of interest since her locale in this essay, which critically examines the colonising discourse and production of knowledge on Aboriginal womanhood of early missionaries, is Mapoon, Love’s first principal posting as a missionary. Nicholas Hey, Ganter’s missionary example, was a Moravian churchman who ran the mission on behalf of the Presbyterian Church. With his departure in 1919, Mapoon became a home mission of the Presbyterian Church of Australia: see Harris, One Blood, p. 496. Harris characterises Hey as ‘one of the foremost examples of those missionaries to whom everything Aboriginal was Satanic’ (p. 493), although he concedes that Hey mellowed over time. Love began at Mapoon in 1921, only two years after Hey’s 24-year regime had ended. The process by which the early Love differentiated his missiology from Hey’s, whose shadow must have been a profound influence, perhaps positively and negatively, and the extent to which it was differentiated from Hey’s, would be a useful one to examine.

15 Love, Our Australian Blacks, p. 20.
16 Ibid., p. 34.
that 'it is the Holy Spirit that is able to do such things...the Bible and the
religion of Jesus are everything on a mission station.' Love expresses the hope
that 'when our own people realise the duty we owe to these people of our
country', hospitals will be established in remote areas where 'the aboriginals can
be treated by themselves'. Love's language here is instructive: 'our own people'
sets a people or a race apart from another people, 'us' against the Other. It is
now 'our country' and we owe a duty to 'these people', who are in a sense our
guests. To be treated 'by themselves' completes the separation that Love seems
to imply is natural. It is better that they are with 'their own'; that is how it
should be. Love's argument for the segregation of Aboriginal people from whites
in hospitals prefigures the position he took in the debates, initiated by Charles
Duguid, that ensued in later years over the treatment by John Flynn's AIM of
Aboriginal people in its outback hostels, and in discussions with the Board of
Missions over hospital design. Love was never able to 'imagine' whites and
blacks sharing a roof in the intimate and exposed site that was a hospital. The
duty of care only went so far.

duties and debts

At the end of his booklet, Love proposes an unconventional theory of duty in the
colonial context. It begins with wrongs done: the settlers 'took the best of the
land for their cattle' and deprived the natives of their hunting and gathering way
of life, leaving them exposed to 'the vices of civilization, without its virtues'. At
first 'even Christian people did not realise...that they owed any duty to the
Aborigines'. Some thought they were 'hopeless', lacking even souls. But 'a
change came' and Governments and Churches began to see that they had a duty
to the Aborigines. But exactly what circumstance gives rise to the duty? Love
has a succinct answer: 'Because we are living on their land.' He continues in
full patriotic flow:

We are proud of this land; it is a good country, full of good things. During
the war we fought for it...We do not intend to let any other people take it

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17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., p. 21.
from us. And we have taken it from the people who first owned it, without paying for it.\textsuperscript{19}

Love is quite unambiguous about the 'dispossession', without recompense, of the Other's property: 'they owned it'. No \textit{terra nullius} here. But was it right? 'I think most would agree that they had the right to take the land, which was not being developed, and to put it to better use than the aboriginals were putting it...\textsuperscript{20} The dispossession, then, was justified. The land had not been developed. This was not, suggests Love, the fault of the indigenous people: it was true that '[the Blacks] did not grow any crops nor keep any animals, except the dingo...’ but he patiently explains that ‘the Blacks did not cultivate the soil [because] there is no native plant in Australia that can be cultivated to produce large food crops...so the blackfellow had no chance to develop the country.’ Love's line of argument countered a common settler discourse of indigenous laziness or stupidity, that the inherent deficiencies of a primitive people were to blame for the lack of development of the country.\textsuperscript{21}

Love, however, does not leave matters there. There is a crucial corollary to the justified dispossession: 'no honest nor Christian person would say that we have the right to live in a land without taking proper care of the aboriginals.'\textsuperscript{22} So the act of dispossession is done. It is now 'our country' yet it was 'their land'. The failure of the indigenous people to develop the land, though not their fault, conferred a right on the European to take the land. But the right is conditional on an obligation to care for the disposessed, as a partial act of recompense or reparation (we took it without paying for it). Even in the early 1920s Love is beginning to see missionary activity in terms of a national obligation and in a much broader light than a purely conversionary project. The religious element

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} The Love argument still has to be made today, as the old settler reasoning remains extant: see Jared Diamond, \textit{Guns, germs, and steel: a short history of everybody for the last 13,000 years} (London: Vintage, 1998) for an excellent articulation of the argument that the reason the Aborigines did not create a literate, food-producing, industrial democracy in Australia was environmental, and that the society they did create, of a nomadic, food-gathering lifestyle and economy, with minimal investment in shelter and possessions, was an entirely sensible adaption to the harsh Australian continent's El Nino-induced resource unpredictability: see ibid., pp. 295-321.
\textsuperscript{22} Love, \textit{Our Australian Blacks}, p. 35.
remains, since as a Christian, Love cannot forget what God has done for him through Christ. He asks the children: ‘How can we repay Christ for what He has done for us?’ But the response (‘do something for others who need help’) is still framed in terms of the discourse of duty and debt. The debt (to Christ) can never, by definition, be repaid. It is likely that Love would also have seen the debt owing to the indigenous people of Australia as impossible ultimately to repay fully: ‘one will never be even’\textsuperscript{23} The duty however remained.

**floating on a sea of evil**

In November 1926, while Love was still at Mapoon, the Board of Missions asked him to comment on the future of the Western Australian mission at Kunmunya which was in danger of being abandoned. He replied using an involved marine metaphor:

> There is no question. It [the mission] must go on. For generations the blacks floated on the precarious raft of native custom over the sea of evil. The Church has come to them, reached out a hand, partly pulled them off the old raft, but has not yet set their feet firmly on the safe ship of Christianity. To abandon them now would be to let them drop, not back on to their old raft, but into an abyss of sin without the check of savage law. This would be an act of treachery that the Church cannot contemplate.\textsuperscript{24}

On the same day, Love wrote to the Heathen Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland and tendered his resignation as Superintendent of Mapoon. He had determined that Kunmunya needed him again. So, in 1927, he returned to the Kimberley mission as superintendent where he began to build a reputation as one of the country’s most respected and learned missionaries.

**missionary speaking and the academy**

Such a reputation was partly attained through Love’s increasing involvement with the worlds of anthropological and linguistic discourse\textsuperscript{25} At Kunmunya, he

\textsuperscript{23} See this chapter, n. 1.
\textsuperscript{25} The two worlds were connected by scholars attempting to determine the prehistory and origins of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia through a study of Australian languages and their structure: see, for example,
quickly learned the Worora language and, with assistance from Aboriginal people, commenced translation work on the Gospels. In some thoughts on the subject in 1931, Love had posed the question: why bother to translate the Bible at all, why not let the Aborigines learn English, 'the language of all the country'? Considerable difficulties had been experienced, in Australia and overseas, by missionaries attempting to translate some of the central concepts of the Bible into indigenous languages. Love had two answers to this. One was that 'the Gospel in English will always be an alien Gospel to them.' Secondly, he wanted 'his' Aborigines to think of their Church at Kunmunya as 'the black man's church': 'I resolved that my people should have God's Word – and in their own speech - and come to cherish it, not as the white man's faith, but their own.' Love was clearly committed to the indigenization of the English Bible.

At the same time as he was working as superintendent at Kunmunya, Love was completing a Master's thesis on the Worora language through the University of Adelaide, under the supervision of JA Fitzherbert. Love's access to the academic world was also enhanced by his association with AP Elkin, a notable figure in the history of Australian anthropology, and the editor of the important anthropological journal *Oceania* during the 1930s and 40s, in which Love made an occasional appearance as author and letter-writer. Elkin was especially

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26 See the photograph at the beginning of chapter 2, above.
27 JRB Love, "Series 46: Printed matter 1911-46: Includes typescript of draft manuscript of 'The Aborigines: Their Present Condition as seen in Northern SA, the Northern Territory, North West Australia and Western Qld'. By JRB Love. 1914. (1 vol 120p)", in *Papers of JRB Love: PRG 214* (State Library of South Australia: Adelaide). Item 14, from which the citation comes, contains the manuscript for 'The Gospel for the Worora', printed by the London, British and Foreign Bible Society in 1934 but which is also in abridged form in *The Bible in the World* [a Monthly Record of the Work of the British and Foreign Bible Society] July 1931, pp. 105-7.
28 Ibid., item 14.
29 In 1933, Professor (of Classics) Fitzherbert congratulated Love 'on the way you have completed a very difficult piece of work'. said he would recommend him for the Master of Arts degree, and noted that Love had made 'an important contribution to our knowledge of Australian linguistics': Love, "PRG 214, Series 1, general correspondence", item 22: Fitzherbert to Love, 18 Aug 1933. It is interesting to note that, in an earlier letter, Fitzherbert gently but incisively attempted to persuade Love not to label the Worora language as a 'primitive' language: 'There is no reason why the Worora language should be any nearer to the primitive speech of the earliest man than is English. Each represents the same number of years of development from the speech of the Garden of Eden or the Tower of Babel, or wherever you wish to make your starting point': ibid., item 18: Fitzherbert to Love, 22 June 1931.
30 See Tigger Wise, *The self made anthropologist: a life of A.P. Elkin* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin,
important in interacting discourses between anthropology and missiology because of his connections to the churches (he was an Anglican clergyman and active in church and mission affairs). From the mid-thirties, Elkin had begun encouraging missionaries going ‘into the field’ to attend lectures in introductory anthropology at Sydney University. The two men first met when Elkin stayed at Kunmunya during a research trip in 1929. Elkin at the time described the mission as the ‘best run station’ he had ever seen. In 1933, after requests from Elkin, Love published an essay in *Oceania* on the Worora language. There were to be a number of exchanges with Elkin on linguistic matters. For example, in April 1936, Elkin wrote to Love indicating that he wanted to include his short article on the Worora language in a special edition of *Oceania* on Australian linguistics. He asked if Love could provide an outline of the grammar and include a few native texts. He added, in the same letter, that ‘the Taylors’, who later preceded Love to Ernabella, were at the University of Sydney for some anthropological lectures: ‘hardly enough to be of much value but still they provide some insight into the social organization and viewpoint of primitive peoples.

1985). Love also published articles on various subjects, including Aboriginal mythology, totemism and religion, as well as cave and rock-paintings, in journals such as *The Bible in the World* and the journals of the Royal Societies of South Australia and Western Australia.


32 Biskup, *Not slaves not citizens*, p. 127, quoting *Papers of the Department of the North-West*, *N. WT.* 242/1927

33 JRB Love, "Worora - an Australian Language with Papuan and Melanesian affinities: also some notes on Wunambal and Narynyin", *Oceania* 3 (1933).

34 The article was subsequently published in *Oceania* where Elkin had succeeded Raymond Firth as editor from March of 1933.

35 Love, "PRG 214, Series 1, correspondence": item 67: Elkin to Love, 1 Apr 1936. Rev. Harry Taylor, after his ordination in 1936, was appointed by the Presbyterian Board of Missions to assist Love at Kunmunya as a missionary. Taylor and his wife attended the preparatory lectures on anthropology at the University of Sydney to which Elkin refers here and arrived at Kunmunya Mission Station at the end of July, 1936. Rev. Taylor was to be the first Superintendent at Ernabella from 1937-1939. Love became Superintendent of Ernabella in 1941.

36 See, for example, items 57, 62, 87, 94, 113 in ibid. Note also in a letter to the Editor of *Oceania* in 1935, (published in *Oceania* 6 (1935) pp. 107-108: the editor was Elkin who significantly edited the original letter sent to *Oceania* (see Love, "Series 1": item 31) significantly (see below) Love referred again to the practice of ‘pre-natal infanticide’ which he claimed was ‘common, almost universal, practice among women of this tribe.’ He pointed to the very small proportion of children at that time at Kunmunya (23 under 12 years old as against 332 people in the tribe) and that this threatened the tribe with extinction. He indicated that the practice of infanticide was deplored by missionaries and the people were being urged to ‘save the children’ to save the tribe. These observations were made in the context of a ‘story’ of two women who ‘announce their
let the customs be observed

None of this prevented Love from apparently taking issue with some points Elkin had made in an article in *Oceania* in 1935. Elkin had argued that the loss of the central aspects of Aboriginal totemic and ceremonial life was irreparable, and quickly led to Aborigines dying out. Elkin added (in an ‘Additional Note on Missions’) that because missions attacked these fundamental aspects of native culture, they had in some places contributed to this process. However, Love insisted that, contrary to Elkin’s view that missions were choking off the old customs, such as kinship rules and avoidance, his own view was: ‘By all means let them be observed.’ Love maintained his conviction that a mission may ‘build on a foundation, prepared of God, from the fuller revelation of Himself through His Son.’ In fact, this was exactly Elkin’s point: missionaries should attempt a sympathetic understanding of ‘native beliefs and rites’. It is apparent (to us, if not yet to Love) that Elkin and Love were coming to share a similar approach to missionary work among the Aborigines. Their general views were almost identical. Elkin’s 1934 statement that ‘all members of a ‘higher’ and trustee race are concerned with the task of raising primitive races in the cultural scale’ could have been written by Love. Both had doubts about the ‘equality’ of pregnancy, appear pregnant and yet do not deliver. A Medical Officer in Broome finally on inspection declared that an ‘intense desire for children’ had enlarged their abdomens through dilation of the bowel with gas. Love’s comment was that this was a ‘most interesting glimpse of Aboriginal psychology.’ It could not be doubted, he explained, that each women had practiced infanticide (in utero) but late in life, they had ‘conceived’ a desire for children. Love attributed this late maturing aspiration in his original letter to *Oceania* to ‘missionary speaking’. Love’s attributions of the intense desire for pregnancies to the efforts of the missionary (presumably himself), which he makes twice in his original letter, were (interestingly) excised by the Editor.

38 Ibid., pp. 145-146.
39 JRB Love, "Series 20: Drafts of published articles, reviews, miscellaneous notes on Worora language and people, 1934-38": item 5 in *Papers of JRB Love: PRG 214* (State Library of South Australia: Adelaide). It is not clear whether this ‘draft review’ of Elkin’s article was ever published. Nevertheless, it is still useful for clarification of Love’s developing ideas. Love in this review asks the question that if ‘a tribe is doomed because the old rites can no longer be performed, and the people have lost the will to live’, as he interprets Elkin to be saying, why, on his Mission, ‘when the rites can be performed, and when there is nothing to prevent performance, the women are destroying almost all the children in utero’. Love does not canvass the possible reasons for this; but it may be one clue as to why Love was later so implacable on the issue of removal of children.
40 Elkin, "Civilized Aborigines and Native Culture", p. 146.
Aborigines compared to whites.42 Yet both were convinced, at least by the middle of the 1930s, that the crucial task of the missionary was as far as possible to integrate the Christian faith into the existing indigenous order rather than impose it after sweeping that order away.43

becoming an expert

JRB Love, through his growing reputation as a progressive anthropologist-missionary, was gaining access to the world of the accumulation and distribution of ‘expert’ knowledge about ‘primitive tribes’. He had begun to collaborate with museums in Australia and in the UK, passing on aspects and artefacts of indigenous material culture to these metropolitan collectors of knowledge. For example, in the early thirties, he provided a film of ‘Australian natives’ to the British Museum, with a compendium of ‘scientific’ notes, and followed it up with a Worora double raft in 1935 along with a collection of tools, including spear-heads and implements for making spearheads, and stone tomahawks.44 However, isolated as he was on a mission station in the Kimberleys, Love needed a conduit and a mediator to facilitate his access to

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42 In fact, even in 1929, an educated, progressive, Christian humanitarian such as AP Elkin could still write in terms similar to the 1915 and the 1936 Love: ‘The fundamental unity of human races...does not mean that all races are biologically equal with respect to all their powers...the Australian Aborigines and the African negroes are human and have their powers, but they are not necessarily equal to the white or yellow races, especially as regards those traits which are most important for the development of advanced culture’: AP Elkin, "The practical value of anthropology", The Morpeth Review 1 (1929): 33-44, pp. 34-35: cited in Russell McGregor, "The concept of primitivity in the early anthropological writings of A.P. Elkin", Aboriginal History 17:2 (1993): 95-104, p. 99. Even in 1932, Elkin pointed to the ‘physiological fact’ that the Aboriginal brain was on average twenty percent smaller than ‘ours’: it was, said Elkin, ‘a handicap in the brain machinery’ with obvious consequences for the question of adaptation to a civilization dreamed up by those ‘whose brain capacity is so much higher’: AP Elkin, "Cultural and racial clash in Australia", The Morpeth Review (1932): 35-45. p. 38, cited in McGregor, "Early anthropological writings of A.P. Elkin", pp. 99-100. Yet contra: Henry Reynolds quotes Elkin as saying in 1934 to a Sydney audience that Aborigines ‘seem to be our equal in intelligence’: Reynolds, This whispering in our hearts (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998), p. 234, himself citing The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 Aug 1934.


44 Love, "PRG 214, Series 1, correspondence": see item 59, which notes that ‘this collection of Worora artefacts has been made by permission of the Chief Protector of Aborigines, Perth, WA’. Love was asked by a number of other organisations for artefacts and implements, including a request, for example, from the Curator of the Cranmer Ethnographical Museum, Kent on 17 January 1935 for ‘up to six skulls’, offering 20 shillings a skull or 30 shillings if complete with jaw: ‘you’re doing important work with natives possibly doomed to extinction in a comparatively short time’: ibid.: item 32. Whether Love responded to this request is unclear. Love also periodically sent botanic material to Australian museum: for example, a letter to Love from the WA State Botanist on 29 January 1932 acknowledging gifts of botanical specimens, grasses, a silky
nodes of power and knowledge in the metropolitan centres. During the 1930s, this role was filled by HR Balfour, a member both of the Melbourne Establishment (judging by the number of Cabinet Ministers he knew) and of the Presbyterian Board of Missions. Balfour seems to have acted as an intermediary and collaborator with Love on a number of matters, including the transfer of artefacts to museums and provider of news regarding missionary, church and 'native' matters. He kept Love up to date, for example, with the activities of people interested in Aboriginal affairs such as Charles Duguid and TGH Strehlow. He also interacted with anthropologists on Love's part as well as his own. An example of their communication is Balfour's letter to Love of 17 May 1935. He mentions that Professor Wood Jones and he discussed 'illnesses of the native', includingVD and yaws; comments that he has arranged for Minister Paterson to meet with 'young Strehlow'; and notes that Duguid gave a 'telling' address on the position of Aborigines in Central Australia; 'it was certainly very sad', Balfour commented on Duguid's revelations, a Committee had been set up 'to keep the ball rolling', and to facilitate this, Balfour had arranged 'to get it in the papers'. This was the beginning of Charles Duguid's campaign to establish a Mission in Central Australia, in which Love would become increasingly implicated. By such means, the isolated Love was kept abreast of the discourse of men that mattered in the church and in the country.

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oak and a hibiscus collection: ibid., item 32. Also see item 33: a letter from the Entomologist, the National Museum, Melbourne on ant species submitted by Love for identification.  
45 For example, Balfour wrote in January 1935 that he was having 'a good time at the Science Congress' (probably the ANZAAS Congress) and had attended most of the sessions of the Anthropology groups. He told Love he had shown 'the cine film of the native industries...I only gave a short [talk?] but pointed out how you were able to let the men keep their age-old rites and yet become Christians. The film was highly spoken of': ibid., item 51: Balfour to Love, 30 Jan 1935.  
46 Professor Frederick Wood Jones, physical anthropologist and Professor of Anatomy, Adelaide University, 1919-1926, and Professor of Anatomy, Melbourne University, 1930-1938, part of the first group of scientists and experts – biologist, pathologists, anthropologists – to make Central Australian Aborigines a special and controversial object of study: see Anderson, The Cultivation of Whiteness. It was Love's reputation as a scholarly and progressive missionary that gave him comfortable entry to this world, so that, for example, when he was about to take up his Ernabella superintendency in 1940-41, he conducted 'leisurely discussions' with 'the Adelaide academics' as an important part of his preparation for the task ahead.  
47 Thomas Paterson, Minister of the Commonwealth Department of the Interior, 1934-1937, with responsibilities for Commonwealth Aboriginal Affairs, and a (lay) elder of the Presbyterian Church.  
49 Duguid had become the first lay Moderator of the South Australian Presbyterian Church in early 1935 and was now busy gathering support for his campaign to establish a mission station in Central Australia. Melbourne, where Balfour heard his address in May 1935, was a prime target of this campaign, being the locale of the Board of Missions.

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to see with the eye of his savage people

In 1936, as we have seen, Love published *Stone-Age Bushmen of Today: Life and Adventure among a Tribe of Savages in North-Western Australia*. The title and subtitle immediately place the book in the framework of evolutionary and racial thinking of the time.\(^{50}\) The 'savages' are primitives caught in amber, representations of what Europeans once were, back in the Stone Age. As Tom Griffiths has observed: 'The stone age' was the term most used to characterise Aboriginal culture in the first half of the 20thC. It was a powerful metaphor of primitiveness.\(^{51}\) The photographs in the book represent the Worora as an industrious but primitive people, spinning string, climbing trees for honey, making spearheads; as exotic and savage, men with emu plumes in their hair; as capable, the lugger with black seamen, the double raft; and as spiritual, believing in child spirits. Love presents himself as 'an expert' on 'blackfellows' and as a 'bushman': 'It is often said that good stock country is poor 'blackfellow country', and vice versa. There is a good deal of truth in this saying.'\(^{52}\) Love was saying: the land had been taken, it could not now be given back, and if it turned out that the white men could live on the plains and the blacks in the hills, so much the better. Again, there appears to be a strong separatist strain in Love's thinking. Some part of Love thought that different races ought to live apart, that this was the natural order of things, the way things were.

He describes the 'hordes' (using it in the anthropological sense) camped at the Kimberley Mission, the old men with their wives; the young men without wives, few children. One man stood out: to Love, he had an 'evil eye' and disturbed the missionary: Though he was but a naked old blackfellow and I a white man, supposed to have some education, he could look me in the face and make me feel quite queer.\(^{53}\) Sensing his hostility, Love searches for a reason: 'Probably he sensed in the white man a newcomer with authority that would eclipse his own.'

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\(^{50}\) In a 2001 article, Russell McGregor refers to Love's book as 'unfortunately titled': McGregor, "From Old Testament to New", see n. 27 on p. 45. This may be so, but it does accurately reflect Love's conservative evolutionist approach to the anthropology of the Aborigines.


\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 31.
In this he was perfectly correct. Yet Love wishes to preserve the authority of the elders: he had ‘small admiration’ for the type of missionary who would ‘break down the authority of the old men.’ But, while anxious to conserve the discipline and good order in the tribe, and eager to work in co-operation with the elders of the tribe, ‘the missionary, with the Gospel of Christianity, must inevitably come into conflict with some institutions of savagery.’ Then in a classic statement of his ‘enlightened gradualism’, Love states: ‘I believe that we should be willing to go slowly, letting in a better light, that will, of its own power, in time drive out the darkness of an evil tradition.’ But he was prepared for conflict, when that was necessary: ‘There arise, however, occasions when not all the missionary’s willingness to see with the eye of his savage people can tolerate a frank and unmitigated evil. In these cases the war is on.

Love’s respect and admiration of the local language is evident in his book, as is his careful search of Worora, through his indigenous assistants, for the appropriate translations for key biblical words and concepts such as cross, sin, the Beginning and the End, God the Father. At times, Love finds the translation into the vernacular improves the English version: as the Worora phrase ‘to have one’s ears’ means to be wise, the verse ‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear’ was buttressed with a ‘splendid’ secondary meaning. It was ironic that, given his impressive credentials in the indigenization of the Christian faith at Kunmunya, later at Ernabella, Love was to be accused of not sufficiently privileging the local language.

**rites akin to the most sacred observances of the Christian faith**

The most significant part of *Stone-Age Bushmen of Today* and one that has justly won Love a reputation for breaking with orthodox missionary discourse comes towards the end of the book. Love writes of some of ‘the most remarkable rites that I have witnessed’ when the Worora men gave a welcoming ceremony to a party of strangers from another tribes, attracted, according to Love, by the fame

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54 Ibid., p. 32.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
57 Ibid., p. 50.
of the Mission. The gravitational pull of mission sites for neighbouring or travelling Aborigines was very powerful. Love describes the ceremony:

When all the visitors had been washed, the Worora men took water and held it to the lips of each visitor in turn. The visitors bowed their heads and drank from the drinking cup held in front of them...None touched the vessel with his hand, but bowed his head and drank from the vessel held by his host. After all had drunk, food was brought, broken, and passed round by the Worora to their guests. None of the Worora men themselves ate, but they all stood behind their visitors and watched them eat, handing food to every man, asking one another, ‘Has this man eaten?’ till all the strangers had done so.58

Once the impressive formalities of hospitality had ended, ‘the tension slackened’ and a final burst of singing ‘brought to a close the day of greatest nervous tension that I have witnessed.’ 59 Love reflected:

As I looked at these rites, the amazing realization flashed upon me that here, among one of the most primitive tribes of some of the most primitive savages on earth, I had been witnessing rites akin to the most sacred observances of the Christian faith. I had been witnessing, in all their primitiveness and crudeness of administration, the rites of the Laying-on of hands, of Baptism, and of a sacred meal that could without irreverence be called a Communion. When our Lord instituted the Last Supper he gave us no new observance, but took an age-old rite, sublimated it and gave it a new content. The sacred rite of baptism, as a ceremonial lustration with a deeper meaning than that of a mere outward cleansing; and the laying-on of hands, as a symbol of the communicating of spiritual power; all were here, practised in the spirit of the deepest reverence and awe by naked savages in north-western Australia.60

Love’s sensitive observances of these indigenous rites, and their implications for the discourse and praxis of missionary ventures, have been seen, with some justice, as symbolising the entry point of liberal, progressive missiology into white-black relationships in 20th century Australia.61 We should be clear, nonetheless, about what Love was saying. It was not a suggestion regarding the possibilities of syncretism, of reconciling and combining two different frames of religious thought.62 When a few years later Love spoke to Pastor Albrecht of

58 Ibid., pp. 218-219.
59 Ibid., p. 219.
60 Ibid.
61 See the comments of Harris, Biskup, Broome and McGregor discussed above in chapter 2.
62 Ulrich Berner, "The Notion of Syncretism in Historical and/or Empirical Research", Historical Reflections
these things, Albrecht was horrified by the spectre of syncretism that he divined was the trajectory of Love’s insights. Instead, Love was commenting on the types of mentalities and modes of spiritual thought behind what he called ‘primitive and crude’ rites that could be peculiarly responsive to Christianity, in God’s good time. He had ‘discovered’ Aboriginal spirituality for himself, and, he must have felt, promising affinities between an alien and hitherto almost impenetrable religion and his own.

inevitably to become white

From 1935, JRB Love was increasingly interested and implicated in Charles Duguid’s campaign within and without the Presbyterian Church to establish a Mission in Central Australia. This involvement inevitably exposed the complexities of his thinking on Aborigines to a wider and more critical audience. We will examine this involvement in some detail in the remainder of this thesis. But an instructive prelude to the next venture of his life and discourse was an exchange of views over ‘the half-caste problem’ with TGH Strehlow on the eve of Love’s transfer to Ernabella. In 1937 Love had forgone part of his furlough to conduct a surveillance tour of the Ernabella region in far north-west South Australia with HR Balfour and his brother, Dr LR Balfour. The ‘young Strehlow’ of HR Balfour’s news-bearing letters to Kunmunya had become, in 1936, the first patrol officer for the Department of Native Affairs in the Northern Territory. Strehlow had been asked officially to comment on the establishment of Ernabella, and had written to Love over what he saw as the most serious and important disagreement between them: the ‘half-caste problem’. Strehlow found it impossible to agree with Love’s view, as he paraphrased it, that ‘the future of the half-caste is inevitably to become white, whether through marriage

27 (Fall 2001): 499-509.
63 See below, chapter 8.
64 Strehlow was twelve years old when his father Carl, the great missionary figure of the early Hermannsburg, died in 1922. He was to retain intimate lifetime connections to the Mission, its missionaries and Aboriginal inhabitants, through his patrol work and through his research and writing as a leading anthropologist and ‘renowned European authority’ on the Arrernte people: see now Barry Hill’s brilliant biography, Broken Song: TGH Strehlow and Aboriginal Possession (Sydney: Knopf, 2002).
65 A position recommended by the Cleland Report after the inquiry into the killing of an Aboriginal man at Ayers Rock [as it was then] by Constable William McKinnon in 1934; see Hill, Broken Song, pp. 231-237.
66 Love, “PRG 214, Series 1, correspondence”: item 83: Strehlow to Love, letter Jan 1938 (postmarked Jay Creek, via Alice Springs, CA).
or through prostitution.’ Why not encourage marriage among half-castes? he asked Love. Strehlow turned to his Hermannsburg experience, and the effect of what he called a ‘plain Mission education’ upon half-castes. There was never any effort at Hermannsburg, claimed Strehlow, ‘to force those few half-castes who live there to segregate themselves from the native community.’ He was bitterly critical of institutions where half-castes were segregated and all too often turned out into ‘apish imitations of poor quality whites’. Scientific breeding, ‘advocated as usual by impractical office-chair Chief Protectors and old musty Professors’, meant, in practice, that ‘the half-caste women must be abandoned wholesale to low whites.’ Strehlow’s final riposte was: And whom are the half-caste men to marry?67

We have no record of Love’s response to ‘young Strehlow’s’ powerful questions on hybridity. He may have met Strehlow at Hermannsburg in 1913 on his first ‘grand pilgrimage’ into Central Australia. Strehlow would have been four years old, ‘young’ indeed. Love may not have appreciated an alternative argument to his being put so cogently and incisively by the young patrol officer. He may not have appreciated being put in the company of armchair Protectors and musty Professors. He was, after all, a man with his own strong and stubborn views. But the emergence of a powerful counter argument on the sensitive issues of hybridity from a man using Christian and missionary imperatives from Central Australia, a man rapidly becoming an ‘expert’ himself, must have given him pause as he began to take an even closer interest in church mission developments in the Centre. How would he meet the challenge of a new mission? How would his particular brand of missiology merge with the new, ‘radical’ vision of Duguid? And how would Love deal with being caught in the cross fire between the discourse of a militant humanitarianism on the march for the Aboriginal cause and that of the entrenched, white pilgrim culture of John Flynn’s Australian Inland Mission?

67 Ibid.
an out-of-the-way-intellectual

By the late 1930s, JRB Love was, in Warwick Anderson’s phrase, an ‘out-of-the-way intellectual’ who had lived for most of his adult life in remote places. Yet he had been to war, to university and theological college and had retained an interest in and made a contribution to the discourses on race, civilization, and the Aborigines. What sort of nation was Love imagining by the end of the 1930s and to what extent did it include ‘Aborigines’? Who were the ‘Aborigines’? Was there a place for full-bloods, apart from being marooned in segregated reserves in ever-decreasing numbers? And were the the hybrid ‘half-castes’ merely destined to disappear ‘in the white blood stream’?

JRB Love seems to have shared the common Australian article of faith of this time in ‘whiteness’ as a dominant racial type. This belief, however, even allied to an assertive nationalism historically defined and emotionally charged by Federation and the Great War, was essentially insecure. The obsessions and anxieties with miscegenation in Australia during the 1920s and 30s, when

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68 Anderson’s term to describe some of the Australian doctors, scientists, and anthropologists whose views he examines in his book *The Cultivation of Whiteness*. The notion relates to their ‘removed’ status from the metropolis that mattered (London) in the late colonial era of the late 19thC/early 20thC: see Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 3. Love at Kummunya and Ernabella was then twice removed from centres of power and influence. This perhaps accounts for the occasional contradictions in his thinking, not being subject to the refining process of intellectual friction in the cities of the nations. On the other hand, the confusions, contradictions, and circumlocutions of much racial thinking of the time - perhaps of any time - also afflicted others in different intellectual circumstances: see McGregor's critique of AP Elkin's earlier racial thought ('his arguments are notable more for their confusedness than for their clarity') in McGregor, "Early anthropological writings of A.P. Elkin": 95-104., esp. p. 99. It could be argued that this sort of 'confusedness' came with the territory of racial thought and racial science, which have provided a history of ideas, or discourses, characterised, amongst other features, by irrationality, illogicality and emotionalism: see, for Australia, Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, and Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*; also generally, John Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), and George W. Fredrickson, *A Comparative Study of American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

69 It is curious to note with Love, as with so many of the ‘out-of-the-way intellectuals’, that his notions of the ‘civilized white man’ does not appear to have been much disturbed by the atrocities and horrors of the Great War of the ‘civilized’ countries. It seems Love went to war, won his medals, and came home and rarely or only selectively used the experience as a referent. However, it is possible that his experience of war in some way drove him to a lifetime of service to Aboriginal people, that in some way it heightened a sense of responsibility and obligation towards them. He was born a son of the cloth, and was interested in Aborigines and missionary activity prior to the war, so his career choice does not come as a surprise; however, there are significant changes in attitude and language towards Aborigines after the war and the completion of his university and theological studies.

significant interest in scientific studies of the capacities of ‘hybrids’ began, were complex and multi-layered. At a point when the white race in Australia was represented as having ‘achieved a triumphant form in Australia’, part-Aborigines provided a most unsettling problematic; thus the efforts to urge the absorption of hybrid Australians into White Australia, to breed out the black.\textsuperscript{71} Scientists such as JB Cleland assured a nation anxious about race degeneration that absorption would not ‘introduce a low type of mentality’.\textsuperscript{72} Love spoke in 1930 of ‘losing the half-caste in the stream of white blood’ and yet even the early Love had seemed to question whether this biological absorption could be done ‘honourably’, and that, if done, it could attract the shame of extinction.\textsuperscript{73} To Strehlow, however, by the late thirties, it was clear that Love’s view was that the future of the ‘half-caste’ was inevitably to become white. It is indeed hard to see Love disagreeing in 1937 with the (in)famous resolution of the Aboriginal Welfare Conference that ‘the destiny of the natives of aboriginal origin, but not of the full-blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth’.\textsuperscript{74}

\textbf{(more than) a trace of the Other}

Love seems convinced, by 1936, of the superiority of his own civilization and the primitivity and savagery of the Aborigines, despite his sympathetic portrayal of ‘his’ Wororas in \textit{Stone-Age Bushmen}. The vision of that book, following Moderate Presbyterian missiological imperatives, was to ‘raise’ and ‘uplift’ savage Aborigines through industry and education, through ‘settled modernisation’ and

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 6. See especially McGregor, \textit{Imagined Destinies}, particularly chapter 4, ‘Civilisation by Blood’.
\textsuperscript{72} Cited in ibid., p. 205.
\textsuperscript{73} Love does not clearly address questions relating to the process of this biological absorption. It was a matter of much debate in early 20\textsuperscript{th} C Australia and views ran from highly coercive mechanisms (involving removals and regulations) to much less coercive stratagems. While Love favoured removal from camps, his reservations on whether any process would be ‘honourable’ suggests he may be situated at the ‘less coercive’ end of the spectrum of views on this matter.
\textsuperscript{74} Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities, Government Printer, Canberra, 1937, p. 21: cited in McGregor, \textit{Imagined Destinies}, p. 178. ‘The half-caste problem’ produced a variety of responses, beyond a simple assimilation/non-assimilation dichotomy. One of the more bizarre, and one which gives some context to Love’s convolutions on the subject, was the response of the 1937 Australian National Missionary Conference which objected to assimilation on the grounds that overseas experience warned against ‘an unrestrained policy of inter-marriage’ and that ‘half-castes’ were better ‘uplifted’ in ‘self-contained communities’ segregated from both full-blood Aborigines and white: \textit{Imagined Destinies}, p. 176.
the ‘soft’ diffusion of Christianity. His views were formed not so much through Evangelical and fundamentalist perspectives, common to many missionaries of the 19th and early 20th centuries, that focused on the innate sinfulness of men, saw pagan practices as the work of Satan, and possessed an evangelical urgency to stamp them out, but rather through an evolutionary framework that saw these societies as ‘primitive’ yet ‘functional’, as earlier stages of civilization, redeemable over time through patience and precepts. There is the occasional paean to indigenous intelligence, but, more often, Love’s representations of Aborigines focuses on an extreme range of physical and cultural differences between ‘whites’ and ‘blacks’ with an emphasis on cannibalism, infanticide, and the betrothal of young girls to old men. The ‘blacks’ are represented as very different, Other, from another Time. Love’s strong sense of racial solidarity with ‘whites’ tended to exaggerate the ‘traces of the other’ in the Aborigines. To Love, they were savages, but unlike other colonial actors who depicted the Aborigine as irredeemably ‘savage’, to the missionaries the natives were ‘saveable savages’, not beyond redemption. Salvation, however, was an ambiguous notion. How were they to be ‘saved’? And who were to be saved? If the ‘imagined destiny’ of half-castes was to become white, that only left the full-bloods. While Love’s categories may not have been as clear as Olive Pink’s, there is little doubt that the logic of his racial discourse led ineluctably to the conclusion that the ‘Aborigines’ he was attempting to save were full-blood Aboriginal people.

**a gesture of reparation**

Three discourses seem to have coalesced in Love’s thinking by the late 1930s: one, the Christian articulation of the unity of mankind under the Christian God allied to the Great Commission to preach the gospel to all nations via a slow and

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75 See the delineation of Moderate Presbyterianism, the religious and missionary tradition in which Love (and Duguid for that matter) seems most comfortable, in Stanley, ed., *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*. Also, in relation to the various strands that have shaped British (and thus, indirectly, Australian) Protestant missionary enterprise, see Andrew Porter, “Church History, History of Christianity, Religious History: Some Reflections on British Missionary Enterprise since the late Eighteenth Century”, *Church History* 71 (Sept 2002): 555-584, esp. pp. 583-584. Porter uses the phrase ‘settled modernisation’ to characterise the sort of ‘soft’ or progressive diffusion of Christianity through the use of church and plough, schools and hospitals, that Love represented.


patient process of settled modernisation; two, the discourse of ‘race’, civilization, and ‘whiteness’, an evolutionary logic that put the white race and European civilization at the apogee of human history and development, much higher than primitive blacks; and three, a discourse of responsibility, of obligation, requiring a ‘gesture of reparation’ towards the Other to discharge a debt incurred by a history that could not be erased or reversed, but which threatened the survival of the savages.78

Tom Griffiths has argued trenchantly that the 1930s were a watershed in Australian public opinion about Aborigines as opposing ideas regarding indigenous people were brought into ‘sharpest proximity’ and when, for example, while racism became even more entrenched, it was powerfully challenged by a coalition of activists, humanitarians and anthropologists.79 One of the more interesting things about Love is that these sorts of opposed discourses were brought into similar proximity in his own thinking. In some ways, his body of thought is one template for the intellectual battlefield on which various discourses competed for dominance. At no point is the record wholly free of ambiguity and ambivalence. The ethics and discourses of conquest and development clash and merge in Love’s thought with those of reparation, responsibility, and redemption. Love himself had written in 1930:

We rejoice to see the wilderness blossoming as the rose, we are proud of the national type of white Australian that has been developed; but we see with sorrow and compassion the passing of the Aboriginal and we are concerned for his fate... We are [also] concerned for the honour of our people among the nations of the world in our treatment of this native race, and we are anxious, as members of the Church of Christ, to deal honourably and wisely with the Aboriginal.80

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78 A ‘gesture of reparation’: a splendid phrase which carries some of the ironies and ambivalences in the attempt to repay a Levinasian debt to the Other ‘that can never be repaid’. Anthony Hassall uses these words in relation to the old missionary character Heriot and his mission station in his reading of Randolph Stow’s To the Islands: see Anthony J. Hassall, Strange Country: A Study of Randolph Stow (St Lucia: UQP, 1986). p. 32. A similar ‘gesture’ is apparent in Love’s thinking. For example, Maisie McKenzie gives his response to an article in a church paper that questioned the value of missions, given their high expense. Love’s retort was that ‘the mission is worth every penny’ and in a characteristic sally, added: ‘I am proud to be your representative in helping to pay some of our national debt to the Aborigines’: McKenzie, The Road to Mowanjum, p. 98.

79 Griffiths, Hunters and Collectors, p. 83.

80 Cited in McKenzie, The Road to Mowanjum, p. 260, from an article Love had written in 1930.
Much that was characteristic of J.R.B. Love, and indeed of most of his contemporaries, is contained in these words; the pride in the ‘white race’ and the particular configuration of that race, the Lamarckian ‘type’ that had rapidly evolved in the antipodes, the white Australian; the discourses of honour and decency of national conduct; the loftiness apparent in ‘honour’ and ‘this native race’ which, again, evokes Schweitzer’s ‘older brother’ dictum. Yet something in Love understood, in some ways against the grain of his own powerful instincts for imperialism and ‘whiteness’, the fundamental and moral nature of the obligations conferred on Europeans by the original sin of dispossession. In the end, too, it was more than just an understanding. He took it, and to his great credit, as a call to action. For a man enmeshed as he was in the discourses of empire, of race and white civilization, of blood and soil, of church and conversion, JRB Love by the end of the 1930s was making an effort, as were men like Albrecht and Duguid in their way, ‘to deal honourably and wisely with the Aboriginal’.

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82 For contrast, see an argument regarding 19thC Presbyterian missionaries in North America as paternalistic, supremely ethnocentric, who wrote of ‘Indian’ people as depraved, ignorant, mired in heathen darkness, yet used equalitarian language regarding their natives and were not (it is argued) racist: Michael C. Coleman, “Not Race, But Grace: Presbyterian Missionaries and American Indians”, *The Journal of American History* 67 (1980): 41-60. While Love did use ‘equalitarian language’, I suggest here that he was himself at least partly ‘mired’ in racial and racist discourses of the time, as was John Flynn: see below, chapter 6.
CHAPTER FOUR: ‘Bad Conscience and the Inexorable’¹: Charles Duguid, the Presbyterian Church, the strange Narrative of Scottish money, and the Establishment of Ernabella Mission

The resonances of Levinas’ expressive title ripple through these next three chapters, if not through the thesis. ‘Bad consciences’ and the ‘inexorable’ were ever present in this narrative of the contestation of the mission site. Charles Duguid’s campaign for a Mission for Aborigines in South Australia, and his exposure of what he saw as the dishonourable misappropriation of funds originally intended for the ‘education and evangelisation’ of Aboriginal people was implacable; as he said, he would pursue the campaign within the Church or, if unable to persuade it, then outside the Church.² This was a strategy that JRB Love thought ‘unsound’: however critical he was of opposing views regarding Aboriginal people, a withdrawal from the Church, for Love, would have been unthinkable: he was both of the cloth, and a son of the cloth.³ An ‘inexorable’ quality, however, existed in Love as well. His support for Duguid in the contest over Ernabella was probably crucial since his reputation by the mid to late 1930s within the Presbyterian Church was high: the exemplary missionary. Nevertheless, he remained his own man, retaining links to all parts of the Church, never cutting off relations entirely with the opposition as did the combative humanitarian, Duguid.

¹ Emmanuel Levinas, "Bad Conscience and the Inexorable", in Face to Face with Levinas, ed. Richard A. Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 35-40. The inset photograph is the front cover of Charles Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines (Adelaide: Rigby, 1972). Duguid’s autobiography reignited the controversy regarding the AIM’s treatment of Aboriginal people (and John Flynn’s attitude towards them) that had begun in the 1930s: see chapter 2.
³ Charles Duguid was elected Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia in 1935 (see below). Moderators in the Australian States held office for one year. Love’s comment that Duguid’s views were unbecoming of a former Moderator of the Church is in Presbyterian Church of Australia, "Board of Missions correspondence: ML, MSS 1893 Add-on 1173/MLK box 2502/Folder 4/1937", (Mitchell Library: Sydney): Love to Matthews, 23 Nov 1937.
John Flynn plays a more shadowy role in these chapters. His cadres or surrogates in South Australia in the Australian Inland Mission (AIM) ‘Movement’ or ‘Family’ – it had become almost a sect or cult within (and, in a sense, outside) the Church, with its own revered, almost infallible Leader or Father – are the ones who mostly do battle with Duguid.4 But Flynn too was inexorable in his determination to create, maintain and develop the AIM for the benefit of the white people of Australia. There was, and still is, a debate about the extent to which Aboriginal people were excluded from Flynn’s imagining of the Australian community.5 For now, we note that Duguid at least was convinced from about 1934 onwards that Flynn’s attitude, and that of his organization, towards Aborigines was both ‘inhumane and unchristian’.6 Central to the Duguid narrative was the allegation that Flynn had warned him in 1934 that he was ‘wasting his time among so many damned dirty niggers.’7 In return, Flynn was

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4 The AIM became in many ways a sort of independent, almost secular body nominally within the Presbyterian Church but relatively autonomous in relation to its structure, its ‘content’ (the ‘Padres’ rarely gave Christian services or preached), and its propaganda and fund-raising activities. For the characterisation of the AIM as a ‘Family’, see McPheat, John Flynn: Apostle, p. 212. See also John Flynn Papers: National Library of Australia: MS 3288 (Canberra).


6 Duguid, "Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to Perkins (copy), 2 Oct 1934.

7 Quoted in Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines, p. 100. It was this comment in Duguid’s book that initiated the ‘furor’ of 1972: see chapter 2 above. Two points here: it is true that we only have Duguid’s word for this comment, but it has the ring of truth about it, because we know that Flynn privately spoke disparagingly of Aborigines. We have two impeccable witnesses to this ‘fact’: Howard Zelling and FW Albrecht. Duguid was certainly prone to hyperbole, and could be vituperative, but he was not, I think, a liar. Secondly, Brigid Hains in her recent book on Mawson and Flynn dismisses Duguid’s charge as being ‘nearly forty years after the event’: see Hains, The Ice and the Inland, pp. 125-126 (but see also Hains, "Inland Flynn": 31-34.). But within the Church, Duguid’s charge was well known at the time: he was not a quiet or reserved man. He even relayed the story in a letter to the head of the national Church Moderator-General MacKenzie in 1939: Duguid, "Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to MacKenzie, 25 Feb 1939. In relation to Zelling, we have his statement in the Advertiser (6 Sep 1972) that: ‘Whatever Flynn might have said on public platforms, he left no one in doubt in private conversations that his views were: (a) that the Aborigines were dying out and (b) they were lazy, shiftless good-for-nothings’. Albrecht, in a letter to Duguid, in 1971 wrote: ‘I knew only too well that Flynn had little time for Aborigines; in our talks he often told me that their outlook in life personally and as future citizens, was hopeless. He never pressed this view but made statements.’ But Albrecht also felt grateful to the AIM for ‘countless occasions’ when ‘a helpless Aborigine was picked up and taken to hospital, to return cured and well’. He considered that God used Flynn as a tool: ‘if Flynn had intended the Aerial Medical Service in the first place for white settlers, God had had His plans for the Aborigines, so that in real fact very many more Aborigines than white people, old and young, benefited from this service’: F.W. Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection: AA662", (South Australian Museum Archives, Adelaide): Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 28 Mar 1971.
said to have told the Secretary of the Board of Missions in 1936 that ‘(Duguid) should have had his head chopped off years ago’. Such were the polemics of Presbyterians. And one senses, even with the combative Duguid, some reluctance to take on Flynn directly and publicly, so powerful was Flynn of the Inland’s reputation by the 1930s, both within and outside the Church. Much of the contestation takes place in letters and reports, and at arms removed, over a pot of Scottish money invested with considerably more symbolic meaning than its mere value, even in Scot coinage. But a contest, over the terms of the discourse and direction of the Church regarding Aboriginal people as well as the more pragmatic matter of its treasury, does take place in the thirties and early forties, and Duguid, Love and Flynn are inextricably involved in that contest. That trial of strength, and the interaction and collision of discourses, is the narrative of these next three chapters.

**a magnificent obsession**

Dr. Charles Duguid was a man who loomed large in the small universe of the South Australian Presbyterian church of the 20th century. As we observed of Love, there are yet only ‘glimpses’ of him in the wider literature. A curious example of how little is known or understood of him is found in Nancy Cato’s well-known book on the 19th century missionary Daniel Maloga. In the exordium of her book, Cato quotes Duguid, but unfortunately calls our protagonist ‘Charles Duguid ‘of the Australian Inland Mission’’. Duguid’s opposition to Flynn was the great feud of his life, part of his Manichean view of existence. At one point in the early thirties, in fact, the combative humanitarian was a member of the South Australian Executive Council of the AIM, although it

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9 Hains, *The Ice and the Inland*.
10 The ‘glimpses’ are increasing in number. Reynolds, for example, refers to him as a ‘leading humanitarian’ in Reynolds, *This whispering in our hearts*, p. 234. John Harris in *One Blood* mentions Duguid in connection with his account of ‘the shameful story’ of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest, which we are about to examine; he also calls Duguid ‘that great supporter of Aboriginal progress’; and Duguid is of course associated with the establishment of Ernabella: Harris, *One Blood*, pp. 373, 638, 856. Although McPheat does not mention Duguid in the first biography of Flynn, Max Griffiths in a later work on Flynn refers to Duguid as ‘probably Flynn’s most outspoken and trenchant critic’: Max Griffiths, *The Silent Heart: Flynn of the Inland* (Kenthurst, N.S.W.: Kangaroo Press, 1993), p. 165.
is possible this was a tactical move on Duguid’s part, to shore up a position from
which he could fire off his excoriating sallies. However, he resigned in 1936
over the organisation’s attitude towards Aboriginal people, continued to
interrogate it fiercely on this matter, and to link him to the AIM, even by innocent
mistake, is clearly to distort his positioning in the history of his times.

Duguid was born in Scotland in 1884 into a family of teachers and doctors,
pillars of the Presbyterian Church and possessed of social consciences. The
young Duguid distinguished himself academically at Glasgow University and
became a surgeon. He migrated to Australia in 1912, the same year that John
Flynn established the AIM. At first he practiced in country Victoria, in the
Wimmera district not far from Moliagul where Flynn was born, but moved to
Adelaide in 1914. He served as a Medical Officer in the Middle East in the Great
War. Duguid later proved to be an inveterate joiner of organisations in South
Australia, a President of the English Speaking Union, an active member of
Legacy, associated with the Scottish clubs of Adelaide, founder of the Aboriginal
Protection League, member of the Association for Protection of Native Races, as

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12 The minutes of the AIM Executive (SA) show that on 10 February 1933, Flynn provided information on
the proposed ‘Medical Service’ of the AIM. He recommended also that a report be sent to AIM Head Office
Sydney ‘that Dr Duguid considers the time is ripe to form an Aerial Medical Service Advisory Board in
Adelaide’. This recommendation was adopted and three months later, on 16 May, the Executive resolved to
invite Dr Duguid to join the Executive. On 28 August 1933, the Aerial Medical Service Advisory Committee
was set up in SA with Duguid as Convenor: see AIM Papers (part of the Papers of the SA Presbyterian
Church held in SA Mortlock Library), AIM Executive Minutes (SA), SRG123/14, SRG123/14/1 (2
volumes). The suggestion that Duguid saw a position on the AIM Executive as part of a political strategy is
conjecture on my part; he did in fact have to be invited on to the Executive, he did not invite himself,
although it seems he was prominent in suggesting an Advisory Board for the newly emerging AMS (later to
be known as the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS)); and as a medical man, Flynn may well have been
grateful for his assistance. Also, the events that formed part of the etiology of Duguid’s disillusionment with
Flynn and the AIM did not precede, but followed, his initial involvement with the organization. Yet it is still
difficult to ignore the suspicion that, as well informed as Duguid usually was, he would not have heard the
dogs barking over the AIM and Flynn’s attitude towards Aboriginal people, and thus have had some intuition
that he might have to take a stand against the AIM. He may well have felt then that that stand would be more
effective coming from an member – or at least an ex-member of the movement. A minor indication
suggestive of this is that, after joining the AIM Executive (SA), Duguid (admittedly a busy man) attended
only 6 of the 21 meetings prior to his resignation from the Executive in July of 1936. In any case, it is a
matter of interest that in another aspect of the interlocking nature of the lives and discourses of our principals
in this study, Duguid and Flynn, of all people, began their association as colleagues. It adds further piquancy
to the point made below that the most bitter disagreements are often between those who have shared a similar
‘rhetoric’ or discourse: see chapter 6.

13 His father, for example, had been involved with a mission to the poor in Glasgow.
well as serving at various times on nearly all the main committees of the South Australian Church. He was also one of Adelaide’s leading surgeons.14

Duguid’s first visit to Central Australia took place in 1934 amid general anger at the treatment of Aboriginal people in the notorious Caledon Bay or ‘peace expedition’ affair on the Arnhem Land coast, in which the application of European justice to indigenous people received national publicity and notoriety.15 The visit, with its further revelations of European mistreatment of Aboriginal people, engendered in Duguid a fierce commitment to assist their cause that lasted the rest of his long life: his magnificent obsession. Two significant issues for the Adelaide doctor emerged from the tour and its aftermath. Duguid found the antipathy to Aborigines as endemic in his own church as elsewhere: the attitudes of the AIM, as evidenced by Flynn’s alleged remark, shocked him and fuelled his later attempts to confine the influence of Flynn’s organisation.16 Secondly, Duguid met a small number of people who had some concern for Aboriginal people. Among these were two missionaries, Ernest Kramer and FW Albrecht. Duguid saw at close hand the Swiss faith missionary Kramer’s application of a simple, itinerant, evangelical ministry to indigenous people,

14 Sources for Duguid’s biographical details include: Presbyterian Banner (Editor: Mr. WJ Angus), Jan 1935 (Vol. XL., No.1); note that the Presbyterian Banner was the official organ of the Church in SA from 1901-1946; Scrimgeour, Some Scots Were Here; Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines; Charles Duguid, No dying race (Adelaide: Rigby (Seal Books), 1978 (first pub. 1963)).
15 This affair was a complicated and tragic matter that began when Aborigines on the Arnhem Land coast killed five Japanese fishermen. When a police party went to investigate, a policeman was killed. To calm the hysteria and forestall a punitive police expedition, Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries arranged to send a peaceful expedition into the area to persuade the killers to give themselves up. This they did, after believing the Aboriginal version of events, which was that sexual assaults on Aboriginal women had provoked the killings. The missionaries believed the Aboriginal people would get a fair trial. Patently, they did not, although after a second trial, two were acquitted. The third, Dagiar (called Takiar in Duguid’s brief account: see Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines, pp. 94-95) was sentenced to death by the notorious Judge Wells. There was a public outcry. The appeal went to the High Court, where the conviction was quashed. Dagiar was released from Darwin Gaol, but soon disappeared and was never seen again. John Harris notes ‘a persistent belief among Aboriginal people is that he was killed by the police’: Harris, One Blood, p. 750. Duguid himself wrote that ‘I have little doubt as to how he met his death’: Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines, p. 95. See Harris, One Blood, pp. 737-751; also Mickey Dewar, The ‘Black War’ in Arnhem Land: Missionaries and the Yolngu 1908-1940 (Canberra: North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University, 1992 (reprinted 1995)). The whole affair made Duguid, according to his autobiography, sufficiently angry to ‘clench his teeth’ (p. 94). He clenched his teeth for the rest of his long and productive life.
16See Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines, chapter 10, and especially p. 100. The ‘Padre’ referred to there could only have been Kingsley Partridge, Padre of the Central Patrol, SA and NT, 1931-1952; the ‘Director’ was Flynn.
backed only at long distance by the Aborigines’ Friends’ Association (AFA). Duguid met Albrecht for the first time when he was asked by the Commonwealth Medical Officer in Alice Springs during his 1934 visit to investigate an outbreak of tuberculosis at Hermannsburg. This led to a long and fruitful partnership between the two men which began with a suggestion from Albrecht that, if Duguid wanted to do something for Aboriginal people ‘before station-life overtakes them’, then he should visit the Musgrave Ranges and the Pitjantjatjara people in far North-West South Australia: ‘nobody’s quite sure what’s happening there’.\textsuperscript{17} The ‘question’ Love had posed on his visionary map of Australia was about to be answered.

\textbf{a cry in our ears respecting aborigines}

On his return from his visit, Duguid energetically took up the cause of the Central Australian Aborigines on a range of issues. He wrote to Minister Paterson about rations for those Aborigines who were not sick or aged or infirm (the criteria for rations) but who could get neither work nor rations.\textsuperscript{18} He was also concerned that conditions under pastoral leases reserving to Aboriginals rights of access to waterholes and natural fauna were impossible of fulfillment.\textsuperscript{19} In addition, the AIM was in his sights. Duguid had written forcefully to JA Perkins, Paterson’s predecessor as Minister, about the need for a hospital for Aborigines in Alice Springs:\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{quote}
The AIM Hostel [in Alice] is not suitable for more than giving social service to the white station people. Flynn, too, definitely told me it was not intended for ‘the hobo white, the half-caste or the nigger.’ I, a member of the executive of the AIM in Adelaide, am ashamed of the attitude of John Flynn and of Partridge, the missioner of the AIM for Central Australia.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 104.
\textsuperscript{18} T. Paterson, Commonwealth Minister of the Interior, 9 Nov 1934-29 Nov 1937. To inform himself in relation to rations, Duguid got a copy of the 1934 ‘Instructions for Issuers of Stores’ (applicable to the Commonwealth-administered NT) which directed that rations were only to be given to the sick, old, infirm and orphan children. All healthy, able bodied Aborigines were to be encouraged to provide for their own wants, although ‘occasional supplies’ may be given where there was reason to believe they were ‘in want’ and unable to obtain employment or procure their natural food: Duguid, “Series 1: correspondence”: 1934 Instructions from Chief Protector of Aborigines for Central Australia: ‘Instructions for Issuers of Stores’ (copy).
\textsuperscript{19} Duguid, “Series 1: correspondence”: Duguid to Paterson, n.d., probably late 1934, after his return from his Alice Springs visit.
\textsuperscript{20} JA Perkins, Minister of the Interior, 13 Oct 1932-12 Oct 1934.
towards the native problem. It is not human let alone Christian, and I not only tackled Flynn but brought the matter before the executive of the AIM.21

Duguid was busy finding facts, accumulating information, building a case. A request from the AIM for reimbursement of the cost of treatment of two Aboriginal boys at Birdsville was repeatedly criticized.22 He embarrassed the Federal Government and the bureaucracy by asking persistently for details on how much the Federal Government actually spent on Aboriginal people, and comparing the figures with expenditure on whites.23

In early 1935, for the first time in Australia, a lay elder of the Presbyterian Church, Charles Duguid, was ‘elevated’ to the Moderatorial Chair of a State Presbyterian Church. A leading Presbyterian minister, the Rev. David Chapman, had conceived the idea of appointing a leading layman instead of a minister to the leadership position.24 Chapman’s progressive initiative proved ironic as Duguid immediately used the prestige of his position to move against Chapman’s great cause, the AIM, during his campaign for ‘a Medical Mission to the Aborigines in Far NW SA’. The ceremonial set pieces of conservative religious organizations tend to privilege protocol, pomposity and style over substance. The SA Presbyterian Church was little different. Each Moderator began his term with an address to the Assembly of the Church, usually on some relatively inoffensive subject. The subject of the indigenous people of the country had not been mentioned since the address of the Rev. Edward Rorke who in 1891, while calling in his address for the ‘land to be possessed’ and an agent or missionary ‘to

21 Duguid, "Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to Perkins (copy), 2 Oct 1934.
22 Ibid., Hey to Chief Protector of Aborigines, SA; Duguid to Simpson (copy), 23 May 1935.
23 Ibid., Brown to Duguid, 2 Nov 1934; 13 Dec 1934. The Secretary of the Department of the Interior, HC Brown, was reduced to embarrassing generalities in his responses to Duguid: ‘There is no actual Grant but a considerable sum is expended for the benefit of Aborigines’; ‘it is difficult to ascertain the actual total cost of Commonwealth expenditure on Aborigines in the Northern Territory’ etc. The Secretary finally stitched together some figures for food, clothing, blankets, salaries of staff, including 5 Govt Medical Officers, the Chief Protector and other Protectors (nearly all mounted constables).
24 Papers of Presbyterian Church of South Australia, "Minutes of Proceedings of the South Australian State Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia (Blue Books)", (Mortlock Library: Adelaide): 1948, obituary of Rev. David Chapman.
minister to the scattered Presbyterians', had also heard 'a cry in our ears from Queensland and our own Northern Territory respecting the aborigines'.

**A Physician to the Whole Confederacy**

Duguid's Address was a powerful attack on white Australian society and its treatment of Aboriginal people. He singled out employment conditions with poor wages and forced labour; the inequitable application of rationing, where able bodied but unemployed men were ineligible; the permeability of supposedly 'inviolable' Aboriginal reserves when something valuable to whites was found on the land; and the paucity of education efforts. Looking back on the history of the white man in Australia, Duguid argued that 'no real and sustained attempt has been made by the Government of the ruling race to understand the native or to help these people to understand us.'

He excoriated the systems of health and justice for indigenous people in Australia, and observed that contact with whites was usually deleterious for Aborigines: 'the only hope is to get them away...as far as possible from contact with white men.' To mark the approaching centenary celebrations of the beginnings of South Australia, Duguid proposed a scheme to establish a Presbyterian Medical Mission in the vicinity of the Musgrave Ranges, the area that both Albrecht and Love had already marked on their 'maps' of salvation. The characterization of the Mission as 'medical' gave it credibility, as did the combative humanitarian himself, being a 'medical man'. The proposed mission fitted a typical Presbyterian model for missions that had historically focused on education, industrial training and medical assistance. In Australia, and for Duguid in particular, an underlying rationale for the new welfare, biomedical and educative 'model' of mission was the well-documented failure of 19th century missions that had generally confined their efforts to attempting to save Aboriginal souls with little understanding of their culture or beliefs. To help fund his 'scheme' Duguid offered to give £100 for three years 'towards the salary of an approved Christian Medical Missionary, who had anthropological

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25 See ibid., Moderator's Address: 1891.
26 *Presbyterian Banner: The Organ of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia*, 1901-1946: vol. 40, no. 4, p. 8, in the Papers of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia (Mortlock Library: Adelaide).
28 See generally Broome, *Aboriginal Australians*, and Harris, *One Blood*. 

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training.' Duguid was cleverly cultivating the respected discourses of medicine and anthropology to reinforce the status of his project.

Duguid now charged the Church with a 'special moral responsibility' to the Aborigines of South Australia because, he alleged, a 'bequest' or 'gift' to the Presbyterian Church made in the 19th C by a Scottish woman, Mrs. Henrietta Smith, for 'the education and evangelisation of the aborigines of South Australia' had been used instead 'to start the Australian Inland Mission'. That mission, Duguid said, 'is, and always has been, for the white pioneer population; never at any time in the interests of the natives.' A Christian obligation now rested on the church to divert the money, still being utilized by the AIM, to its original purpose. That purpose was profound, and Duguid towards the end of his Address appealed to deep historical and religious roots in his listeners:

[I doubt] whether anything more alien to the spirit of Christ exists than the authorized and permitted treatment of the native of Australia by us white people. It is the bounden duty of the Christian Church so to rouse the people and keep them roused that our Government will be forced to treat the Aborigines as human beings. There was a time in the history of the Scottish Church when her Assembly was a more democratic and a more powerful body than the Parliament of the Nation. It is time something of the kind happened in Australia.

An interested onlooker at the new Moderator's induction was FW Albrecht: 'You will have noticed me in the church that evening. I had intended going up to meet you afterwards. However, there were many others around you who had first claim.' Albrecht told Duguid that his raising of the 'Aboriginal question' was 'a seed sown, and the fruit will come in time.' He offered 'every assistance' in establishing 'a Mission Station in the Musgraves'.

The editorial in the December 1935 issue of the South Australian Church newspaper the *Presbyterian Banner* praised the nomination of Duguid as Moderator, a man, it said, 'with a fine history of devotion to our Church, both

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29 *Presbyterian Banner*: vol. 40, no. 4, p. 10.
30 Ibid.
31 Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 28 Mar 1935.

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here and in the Homeland'. It stated portentously that Vadianus, the man who presided over the great Council of Berne in the disputation that had inaugurated the Reformation, was also a layman and a medical man whom Zwingli had called 'a physician for both body and soul to the whole Confederacy'. Duguid now began to apply himself with passion to the Confederacy of his Church, where the State Churches were parochial and niggardly in their contributions to the national Church and its missions. In 1935-36, he travelled extensively in advocacy of his Mission to a number of the State Assemblies as well as the national General Assembly in Sydney. He was not assured of success.

**to awaken the conscience of the Church**

The Smith of Dunesk Gift became a battleground of the campaign to establish and maintain Ernabella. It came to represent, to a degree greater than its monetary value, a symbol and marker of the discourses of Presbyterians regarding Aborigines. With resources scarce in the later 1930s and 40s, after the Depression and in the context of war, the Smith of Dunesk funds became a significant point of division for the local Church. From the time that Duguid used it as the frontispiece of his Moderatorial Address, there was little doubt as to his interpretation: the history of the Gift was a example of the exploitation of the Aborigines. Presbyterian white people had taken something that did not properly belong to them and misused it for their own benefit and purposes. The AIM and

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32 *Presbyterian Banner*: vol. 40, no. 12. It may be noted that the December 1935 issue of the *Presbyterian Banner* gives an interesting insight into the mentality of the parochial, small-town, bourgeois and respectably religious Adelaide of the thirties. Interspersed between articles on the AIM, Too Tired to go to Church?, missions to lepers, Presbyterian history (the Union in 1865) and the current Licensed Victuallers' Bill in Parliament (which extended 6pm closing time: 'the most daring and shameless attack upon temperance reform in this State's history'), are advertisements for Kelvinator refrigerators and MacRobertsons Chocolates, undertakers, cars (Chrysler Plymouth 'Leader in the Low Price Field'), 'Bidomak' (which 'corrects the cause of nerve problems'), and Berger's Paints ('Keep on keeping on').


34 It should be noted, however, that the Depression had made it more difficult to maintain levels of contributions.

35 Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines*, p. 116. HR Balfour heard a Duguid address in Victoria in May 1935 and relayed the information to the exemplary missionary in the remote Kimberleys, JRB Love; see chapter 3 above, n. 49.

36 Other terms besides 'gift', such as 'bequest' and 'fund', were also used during the controversy over the monies. In fact, technically it was not a 'bequest', which at law is a gift of personal property by will. Mrs. Smith's transfer of property to the Free Church of Scotland was by deed of gift and was executed and came into force a number of years before her death.
Flynn had ended up with possession of the stolen property and it was incumbent on them to return it to its rightful owners.

It is not so much my objective here to find out the whole 'truth' behind the Smith of Dunesk Fund, even if that were possible, but rather to look at the 'historiography' of it, to catch the sort of marker it became, particularly for South Australian Presbyterians. Howard Zelling noted during the Flynn 'furore' in 1972:

It was left to Dr Duguid to awaken the conscience of the Church on the maltreatment and neglect of Aborigines. He drew attention to the fact that the Smith of Dunesk Trust was intended by Mrs. Smith to benefit Aborigines and the income was not being so applied. He met with opposition, not to mention, vituperation, for his pains. Flynn was Moderator-General during that controversy and he certainly did not use the weight of his high office to help Dr. Duguid's struggle to get justice for Aborigines.37

On the other hand, publications of the AIM referred to 'the devout lady' in Scotland who was thinking of the 'destitute religious condition of the outback settlers' of South Australia'.38 Some misinformation came from the pen of Ion Idriess, who wrote the best-selling *Flynn of the Inland* in 1932.39 Although the Author's Note disarmingly states that 'this book is not a history; but it is a true story', Idriess's fictional account of the Scottish lad who perished in the Centre and the overseas mother who left her mite to found a Mission to help other mothers' sons took root in Presbyterian and AIM narratives.40 In 1938, even after the 'true' story began to emerge, the Victorian Presbyterian paper *The Messenger* elaborated a fanciful story of a shrewd Scottish female investor in the Wakefield Scheme in colonial South Australia whose son migrated to inspect the land.41 In 1948, in a letter to the Adelaide *Advertiser*, the Rev John McLelland,

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40 Ibid., p. 22.
41 The saga is relayed in Griffiths, *The Silent Heart*, pp. 115-117. There is no evidence that Mrs. Smith had anything to do with the Wakefield Scheme, or had a son who came out to inspect the land, and who died in the Outback. Rather, it was her dream of helping the Aborigines of South Australia with her monies that had 'died', although they were resurrected by the early 1940s. The troubling aspect of Griffith's account (he was a former Superintendent of the AIM) is that he seems to swallow *The Messenger* 'story' whole, even in 1993,
the Assembly Historian and Archivist, noted wryly that 'so much misinformation on the subject is now available that it is doubtful whether truth will ever overtake error.' In an equally sober assessment in 1986, Robert Scrimgeour, in his history of the Presbyterian church in South Australia, commented: The Smith of Dunesk story is one that does not reflect credit on the Free Church of Scotland nor on the Presbyterian Church in South Australia. Throughout its history the bequest has been accompanied by frustration, discontent, and controversy. It is also a narrative of intrigue, deception, and cupidity.

the vicissitudes of the gift

Since Marcel Mauss wrote his seminal essay on ‘the gift’ in 1923, anthropologists have been wrestling with ‘the vicissitudes of the gift’ in ‘archaic’ societies. One reading of Mauss sees the gift as part of a system of exchange in non-monetary communities that included three legal obligations; the obligations to give, to receive, and to return the gift in kind. Another sees the primary feature of the gift as the identification of the gift with the spirit of the donor. This part of Mauss’s typology of the gift was derived from Maori potlatch systems where objects were infused with hau, or spirits, and it was because of the hau of the gift that the recipient was obliged to return it to the original giver. ‘Gifts’ could be, then, ‘entangled objects’ in a complex system of economic exchange, mutual obligations and ‘spiritual’ relationships between ‘archaic’ actors. In Western capitalist societies of contract and coin, the gift, while theoretically ‘freely’ given, without apparent obligations, remained subject to various social dynamics and expectations of reciprocity that undermined the notion of the ‘pure’ gift. While

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42 Letter to the Editor, The Advertiser, SA, 18 Feb 1948; also see Papers of Presbyterian Church of South Australia, “SRG123/377, Rev John McLelland, SA Assembly Historian and Archivist, correspondence re historical and legal matters”, (Mortlock Library: Adelaide).
43 Scrimgeour, Some Scots Were Here, p. 106; see also pp. 106-118.
46 See Nicholas Thomas, Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991) who, among other delineations of the colonial entanglements with Pacific Islanders, examines the permutations of the anthropological ‘gift’ through to ‘commodity’.
such societies often found it necessary to set up intricate legal frameworks to
govern the passage of the 'free and pure' gift from one person or entity to
another, the sense of the 'spirit' or hau of the giver behind the gift, even apart
from or despite the legal letter of the Deed, remained strong. Mrs. Smith's hau
blew insistently down Presbyterian corridors of power in the 1930s and 1940s.

believing they will not lose sight of the welfare of the aborigines

It is undisputed that in 1839 Mrs. Henrietta Smith, a wealthy widow in Scotland,
formed an intention to buy land in the new colony of South Australia and utilize
moneys from the lease of the land to assist the Aborigines of the colony. The
land however was not purchased until the early 1850s.47 At around this time,
she received advice that the Aborigines of South Australia were dying out and
consequently, when she conveyed the land to the Free Church of Scotland in
1853, the deed of gift only committed the annual income of the property to be
applied 'to promoting the cause of the Gospel in South Australia'.48 Along with
the deed, however, a letter from Mrs. Smith to the Colonial Committee of the
Church in Scotland, the trustees of the gift, indicated her original intentions had
been, and remained, that the proceeds 'be entirely devoted to the evangelisation
and education of the Aborigines of South Australia'.49 While she had been
persuaded that circumstances had changed, she had conveyed the property to
the church 'trusting and believing that they will not lose sight of the welfare of
the Natives for whom it was first intended, along with their other pious objects in
South Australia.50 Some limited assistance was given to Aboriginal causes in the
colony during the next 40 years or so:51 George Taplin's Mission at Point McLeay
benefited, and in 1861, it was decided to pay £50 annually to the Aborigines’

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47 Six parcels of land of 80 acres each were purchased in 1851-1852; see Scrimgeour, Some Scots Were Here, p. 107. Note that Mrs. Smith's 'intention' was formed only three years after the formation of the colony of South Australia, which means the history of the moneys (which were still extant in some form as late as the 1970s, as far as can be determined) is almost as long as the (European) history of the Colony and State itself.

48 It is not clear who in South Australia gave her this 'advice' that, while not altogether without some foundation (given the rapid depopulation of the Aborigines around Adelaide in the early years of the Colony), was clearly given from ulterior (and improper) motives, i.e. to divert monies going to Aborigines.

49 Quoted in Scrimgeour, Some Scots Were Here, p. 107.

50 Ibid., p. 107.

51 In 1859, the Church in SA, through its lawyers, was given power of attorney over the funds.
Friends' Association (AFA). The annual payment out of the Smith of Dunesk moneys to the AFA continued, increasing to £100 (pa) until 1890, when the AFA asked for the grant to be increased. Instead, they were told it would be withdrawn. As it eventuated, the support was quickly phased out.

52 Quoted in Scrimgeour, *Some Scots Were Here*, p. 108.

53 Ibid.

54 As indicated, there were some initial attempts to persuade the South Australian Church to acceded to the donor's wishes. For example, a letter of 8 May 1871 from Peter Hope of the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland to Rev James Henderson, Clerk of Presbytery of Adelaide: 'Since I last wrote regarding the 'Smith Fund', intimating the cordial concurrence of the Colonial Committee in the suggestions of the Presbytery of Adelaide with respect to the disposal of said fund, we have had considerable correspondence with Mrs. Smith on the subject. She is extremely anxious that the whole of the Fund should be devoted to the Aborigines in SA, and especially to the Mission at Point McLeay, and though the original Deed which invests the trust in the Colonial Committee states that the Fund is 'for the support of the gospel in South Australia', the Committee have thought it right to defer to her wishes. She is a very old lady...and feels very keenly on the subject...Have the goodness to lay this communication before your Presbytery' (Hope's italics); see Papers of Presbyterian Church of South Australia, "SRG123/278 Assembly Historian and Archivist (J McLellan) - papers relating to Smith of Dunesk Mission", (Morlock Library: Adelaide). After a bout of letter writing attempting to get the colonists to adhere to Mrs. Smith's wishes, the Colonial Committee thought it had an agreement to divide the money between the Point Pearce and Point McLeay Missions. The South Australian Church simply did nothing, except increase the AFA allocation to £100, and in fact everyone (except the lawyers, who continued to send the annual amount to the AFA) seemed to forget about the matter of the six properties until 1889, when the Colonial Committee asked for information on the division of the money between the Missions. Rev William Main, a leading churchman in the South Australian Presbytery, handled the matter shrewdly if dubiously, apparently persuading the Scottish Church that the 'Aboriginal Friends Society' (sic) was so well financed by the Government and religious subscriptions that the £100 grant should be withdrawn, as it was (phased out over five years, ending in 1896), and that the money should be spent on financing the 'church extension work' among the settlers in the pioneering North as an 'object' under the Gift; see Papers of the Presbyterian Church of SA, "SRG123/278".

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The church in South Australia wanted to establish a mission in the northern reaches of the colony among isolated Scottish settlers 'far from ordinances': 'church extension work' in the Presbyterian terminology. The rediscovery of a relatively large cache of money was too great a temptation. It was known, as the 1893 minutes of the General Assembly noted, that the money was intended 'for the forwarding of Christ's cause in South Australia, keeping in view the interests of the aborigines in this colony'. Discretionary powers needed to be requested from the Colonial Committee of the 'Home Church', still the trustee of the property and proceeds, to allow the local church to disburse the funds as it wished. The Committee was advised by letter that increasing population in the north meant that it would be 'most desirable for your Church to allow this Assembly an almost uncontrolled discretion' in the church extension work. As far as the Aborigines were concerned, the Scottish Church was assured that 'they have a just claim on our sympathy and aid; and it is earnestly hoped that you will put it in our power to help them, should it seem expedient to do so."

After this letter was sent, its author, Rev. William Main, was appointed Moderator and in his 1894 Address noted, that despite the 'lack of pecuniary means', the Church was hopeful that 'we shall have a fund at our disposal which will enable us to provide for the spiritual needs of our scattered people in the northern portions of this province': no mention now of Aborigines to the home flock. These hopes were fulfilled when the Scottish Church provided the necessary authority to pursue the 'church extension work', and even the dry minutes of the 1895 Blue Books seem to glow with pleasure as they find it 'impossible to refrain from rendering thanks to God for His great goodness in placing such a fund at our disposal for the extension of His Kingdom in this land in which we live."
An appeal was sent out to the Presbyterian churches in the

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56 £2263 capital accumulated plus annual rents in 1890: according to one publication, the 'cache' would have been equivalent to about $200,000 in 1993 dollars: George Wilson, The Flying Doctor Story: an authorised history of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Sydney: Cyan Press, 1993), p. 26.
57 Presbyterian Church, "Blue Books": 1893, Minutes, p. 8.
58 Ibid., 1894, Minutes, copy of letter from WF Main to Colonial Committee (sent Nov 1893).
59 Ibid., 1895, Minutes, p. 13.
colony in 1895 which codified the new ‘understanding’ or mythology of the Church regarding the Gift:

In the year 1858 the late Mrs. Smith, of Dunesk, Scotland, purchased lands in this Province, which she entrusted to the Free Church of Scotland, “for the spread of the Gospel in SA”. The rents of this property, and an accumulated fund, have now been handed over to the Presbyterian Church of this Colony for the purposes of the Bequest, with a view to meeting the spiritual needs of settlers in outlying districts.  

So was born the Smith of Dunesk Mission, undertaken initially by the Reverend Robert Mitchell, working out of Beltana, travelling by horse and buggy from station to station, an outback, lonely ministry of prayers, worship (with a portable organ), and the distribution of literature and good works. According to a letter of Mitchell’s to the Scottish Committee, he was deeply interested in the scattered population of the Colony, and he was shrewd enough to add: ‘not excepting the much neglected Aborigines’. It may be, as Scrimgeour suggests, that Mitchell and his successors ministered ‘sometimes to Afghans and Aborigines’.  

If so, they are ‘much neglected’ in the considerable volume of the minutes of the Smith of Dunesk Committee and its reports to the General Assembly, filled with stories of travel adventures, shearers, services (marriages, funerals), the good men and women of the inland along with ‘the careless, godless, vicious, and drunk’. And always the accounting, the capital balance of the Smith of Dunesk Fund and the annual income from the rents, and how it was spent, and how much was left. Nothing of Afghans or Aborigines. Perhaps they were included among the godless and vicious.

**acquiesce in the appointment to a wider sphere**

In 1898, Mitchell became Convenor of the Smith of Dunesk Committee in Adelaide and kept a fatherly eye on the line of ‘missioners’ who succeeded him ‘in the field’. One of these, Rev. Frank Rolland, conceived the idea of stationing a nursing sister in the Mission area at Oodnadatta where in 1907 a Sister was

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60 See in Papers of Presbyterian Church of SA, "SRG123/278": a finely printed 1 page notice dated Adelaide, October, 1895, headed ‘Presbyterian Church of South Australia’, and under that, ‘Smith of Dunesk Mission. By William F Main, Convenor’.

appointed. A travelling missionary, and a nursing sister, bringing spiritual and physical health to the white Inland: it was a model that interested the minister who was appointed to the Smith of Dunesk Mission in 1911, John Flynn. Within two years, the Australian Inland Mission was born, out of the womb, as it were, of the Smith of Dunesk Mission.

Flynn had already become interested in ‘the Bush’ in Victoria, conducting two Shearers’ Missions and producing a popular booklet The Bushman’s Companion. In Beltana, before catching the train and boat to Darwin for his survey of the Territory, he built a medical hostel, inaugurated a quarterly paper The Outback Battler, and conducted services at Farina, Marree and Leigh Creek, where, as we know, he met the young schoolteacher, JRB Love. His vision, with his discourse, was already moving out from himself to take in panoramic and panoptical vistas:

We are running well. Let nothing hinder us. The best and the brightest, the purest and most beauteous will ever be found clustered round the Cross of Christ. Let our devotion be complete in ourselves, and let us take no rest until our privileges and blessings are shared by all our nation, and by the child nation displaced by us, yet still within our gates.

Flynn’s language is revealing here. The ‘we’ is ambiguous, and it is hard to resist the suggestion that, as well as the Church, it included himself, if unconsciously, as an engine of energetic ambition. The inexorability of ‘let nothing hinder us’ is striking. ‘Displaced’ normalizes and naturalizes the original dispossession of the ‘child race’: children, also, move aside for adults, a natural social gesture. And while they too should share in our beneficence and ‘privileges’, the twist is in the phrase ‘within our gates’, perhaps a characteristic rhetorical flourish but carrying some resonance with the notion of ‘the enemy within’, some impurity within the ‘pure and beauteous’ body politic. As he laid his plans before his

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62 Rolland was later to become, as his father William before him, Moderator of the Victorian Presbyterian Church (1937-38) and Moderator-General of the Australian Presbyterian Church (1954-57).
64 See the discussion in chapter 3, above.
church for a transformative project for the white people of the Inland, Flynn’s ambivalence towards its indigenous inhabitants was apparently deepening.

In 1912, the Smith of Dunesk Mission and its Committee in Adelaide, led by the indefatigable Robert Mitchell, was forced, as its report to the State Assembly put it, ‘to acquiesce in the General Assembly’s appointment of Rev J Flynn to a wider sphere: they had only had time to hear briefly the sound of his engine of ambition as ‘the best and the brightest’ had hummed past toward bigger and better things. Mitchell and his Committee battled on, increasingly in the shadow of a burgeoning AIM. They had to accept the transfer of the Oodnadatta hostel and staff to the new organization; they appointed a new missioner, Bruce Plowman, but he too moved on in November 1913 to the AIM. In 1919, a scheme for a hospital at Beltana was revived: disquiet regarding the respective roles of the earlier, but smaller, Mission and the later, but larger, Mission was quickly resolved with Flynn’s politic suggestion that the AIM finance the hospital, to be called ‘The Mitchell Home’, while the Smith of Dunesk Committee acted as agents for the management of the hospital. In 1921, with its funds still flowing, the Committee was able to buy a car for the missioner, amid hopes that ‘a new day of prosperity will dawn’.

**neglecting the ‘much neglected’ Aborigines**

A proposal in 1922 to transfer the Smith of Dunesk Mission to the AIM was deemed ‘undesirable at present’. However, one year later, after the ‘painful experience’ of an unsuccessful 14-month search for a missioner, the Committee approved ‘an Overture to the AIM’ for ‘temporary cooperation’ between the two organizations. From 1930 there were continuing suggestions the AIM would take over the Beltana district. Arrangements for this were completed in 1933 when the AIM’s Southern Patrol ‘padre’ took over ‘patrol work’ in the old Smith of

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67 Ibid., 1914, Report of Smith of Dunesk Committee, pp. 16-17.
68 Ibid., 1919, Report of Smith of Dunesk Committee, p. 46.
69 Ibid., April 1922 State Assembly, Report of Smith of Dunesk Committee.
70 Ibid., 1923, Report of Smith of Dunesk Committee, pp. 48-49; the cooperation was decidedly small-scale; the AIM was to have access to the Beltana Bomb, the missioner’s car.
71 In the meantime, the long-term Convenor of the Committee, and founder of the Smith of Dunesk Mission, Mitchell, died in 1929.
Dunesk geographical area around Beltana. All the proceeds of the Smith of Dunesk fund were now to be devoted to the work of the AIM.\textsuperscript{72} The local AIM Council was further integrated into the Assembly after David Chapman’s successful motion ‘that the AIM Council be made a Special Committee of this Assembly’.\textsuperscript{73} An Assembly historian eulogized the ending of the Smith of Dunesk Mission:

With this transfer, so passed from the South Australian Church, after a trusteeship of nearly 40 yrs, the Smith of Dunesk Mission, a designation now merely of historical significance, but nevertheless a worthy project which deserves the placing on permanent record of a noble attempt to serve its day and generation. It was a unique and sustained mission possessing (within the technological limits of its day) all the elements of the greater AIM which absorbed it in the year 1933.\textsuperscript{74}

Fine words, and there was a nobility about the sacrifices and determination of the Smith of Dunesk missioners. But, as with its successor, it was a mission almost exclusively to white people. It neglected the ‘much neglected’ Aborigines, and made no effort to minister to them, since at no time did it ‘seem expedient to do so’. It was founded and funded on deception, misappropriation and a deliberate refusal to follow the express wishes of the benefactor for the benefit of the Aborigines of South Australia.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 1931, Report of Smith of Dunesk Committee: see also Scrimgeour, Some Scots Were Here, p. 115. The Minutes of the full AIM Board of 1 March 1932 make the expectation clear that ‘shortly, the Smith of Dunesk Committee will make available to the AIM the nett revenues accruing from its properties’. The Board included, apart from Superintendent Flynn, the Reverends HC Matthews (later to be the Secretary of the Board of Missions and the principal point of contact with the Board for both Duguid and Love regarding Ernabella during the 1930s and 1940s) and D Chapman, and Dr G Simpson: Papers of Presbyterian Church of SA, "SRG 123/360 - AIM Papers - Minutes of the AIM Board and Executive (Sydney)" (Mortlock Library: Adelaide): Minutes of 1 Mar 1932. In a later meeting of the Executive on 31 May 1932, Flynn spoke of the trials of the Depression, which had made it difficult to maintain the organization’s services, but emphasized that ‘we had kept our flags flying throughout our vast territory’. In October of that year, he indicated some impatience with the process of merging the two organizations, saying it had gone on so long it had become ‘stale’, but was obviously keen to complete the process and was ‘anticipating’ the revenue from the SA source at £224. He hoped then that the ‘SA section of the AIM Family [would] march forward with us’: see ibid., Minutes of 31 May and 25 October of 1932.

\textsuperscript{73} Presbyterian Church, "Blue Books": 1931, Minute 35.

\textsuperscript{74} JM McLelland, a historian and archivist of the SA Church: see Papers of Presbyterian Church of SA, "SRG123/278".

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lift your eyes to the hills

So by 1935, at the ascension of Charles Duguid to the Moderatorship of his Church, the AIM, which had been partly developed from the model of the Smith of Dunesk Mission, had swallowed up the parent organization, taking along with it the car, the hospital, and the money.\textsuperscript{75} It was the money that now became the point of focus. It was hardly enough to be worth fighting over (although not inconsiderable at the time) but it came to represent the boundary between two opposing sides, two different discourses, one that privileged the white settler culture, the other that conceived an obligation to the indigenous peoples for past and present wrongs.

Immediately after his Address, the new Moderator got down to the business of securing the Smith monies for ‘the education and evangelisation of the Aborigines’ of Ernabella. The 1935 Blue Book duly notes: ‘Having called the Rev D Chapman to the Chair, Dr, Duguid introduced the subject of the will of Mrs. Smith of Dunesk.’ It was resolved that the Committee of the Smith of Dunesk Mission be instructed to investigate fully the matter of ‘the terms of the will’ of Mrs. Smith of Dunesk and her accompanying letter, and to report to the next Assembly.\textsuperscript{76} The Moderator was also officially thanked for his offer of a monetary contribution towards the salary of ‘an approved Christian medical missionary, who has had anthropological training’, and a Committee was appointed ‘to investigate the possibilities of the Medical Mission scheme’. The Report for that year of the Smith of Dunesk Committee, still in existence, extolled the work of the ‘new’ Southern Patrol of the AIM: the padre has ‘travelled over many miles of country through sand and rivers, taking to isolated settlers and their families a touch of sympathy and interest from the home base. In men’s huts, in woolsheds, in Managers’ homes, on the roadside, at little mining communities, he has brought home the truths of practical Christianity to everyone.’\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{75} There is an argument that Flynn was already thinking of an organisation along AIM lines prior to moving to Beltana. This may have well have been the case but the Smith of Dunesk model of the ‘lone missioner’ or ‘padre’ as he became known, especially after the Great War, with his car, and his literature, passing out goodwill, good nature, spiritual and medical help (with the Sister and Hostel attached) is too coincidental for it not to have had some shaping impact on Flynn: see McPheat, \textit{John Flynn: Apostle}, esp. chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{76} Presbyterian Church, "Blue Books": 1935, Minute 85.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 1935, Report of Smith of Dunesk Committee.
The Board of Missions in Melbourne, acting on behalf of the national church, reacted cautiously to Duguid’s proposal; they appreciated his ‘generous’ offer and set up a special committee to investigate the possibility of establishing such a Mission and Medical Patrol but would remind that committee of ‘the present obligations of the Presbyterian Church of Australia for missionary service to Aborigines’. HC Matthews, the Secretary of the Board, and, until 1946, the principal contact with the Board for Duguid and Love, explained the Board’s caution: it wanted to increase wages to missionaries, it needed a teacher and a nurse in North Queensland, money was short, the States’ contributions were ‘meagre’. Despite the Board’s hesitancy, Matthews did not himself think that the Presbyterian Church was doing all it should for Aborigines, and he indicated his support for Duguid by stating his hope that the Scheme would go through ‘triumphantly’. He noted that the ‘information on the Smith of Dunesk benefaction’ in Duguid’s Address ‘was a revelation to all of us’, and commented: ‘A fair proportion of that money should be used annually for the service of the Aborigines in some way or other. I cannot see how the AIM or the Smith of Dunesk Mission can continue to use it solely for the ‘other objects’.

Duguid was contemptuous of the Board’s cautious stance and his response to Matthews incandescently angry: ‘For God’s sake, the Church’s sake and the sake of the Aborigines, lift up your eyes unto the hills. Have we lost all faith, all adventure, all daring for Christ?’ He was impatient: ‘The urgent point is that Rome is burning.’ Matthews had advised him of the necessity to go through the protocols of the Church, to get approval from the SA State Assembly, then the national General Assembly, which was not scheduled to meet until September 1936. An impatient Duguid threatened to go outside the Church if necessary: ‘I am afraid that I shall not wait until September 1936 for permission to go on...I made it clear in the South Australian Assembly that my offer was conditional; if these conditions are not met, I would go on with the work outside the

78 Passed 15 April 1935, copy in Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence", Resolution of Executive of the Board of Missions, 16 April 1935.
79 Ibid., Matthews to Duguid, 16 April 1935.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid., Duguid to Matthews (copy), n.d. but internal evidence suggests about 19 Apr 1935.
Presbyterian Church.' He then brought in Love as an ally in the matter of the Scottish moneys: 'Love certainly knew of what I said...so it was widely known among those interested in the Aborigines, if your Board was in ignorance.'

But, despite the initial asperity, Duguid and the Board, through Matthews, began to work together towards meeting Duguid's objectives. After Matthews advised Duguid of proposed representations to the Federal Government 'asking for unification of control of the Aborigines, the inviolability of their reserves, and a complete medical survey', Duguid was himself now cautionary. He had met with Minister Paterson recently; a Scot and a Presbyterian, he was a charming man, Duguid relayed to the Board, but without actual contact with the native problem: 'I am afraid he will be guided almost entirely by his permanent officers and they are not sympathetic to radical change'. Still, he wrote hopefully to Paterson, asking him to look at his Address and proposal, and pledging that 'what influence and energy is mine will be given in the service of these unfortunate people'. He added, continuing the attack begun in the Address: 'You, like myself, are a Presbyterian. It was my experience [in visits to the Interior] to find the native more contemned by John Flynn and Kingsley Partridge than by any policeman, administrator, station owner or manager whom I met'.

**an attitude of complete contempt towards the native**

In the context of the growing hostility between Duguid and the AIM, a brief and candid 1935 exchange between a leading AIM figure and the combative humanitarian is an example of a civil collision of differing discourses on Aborigines. Dr George Simpson, a long time associate of Flynn's on the AIM, gently chided Duguid on the impression he had given in his Address that the Aerial Medical Service (AMS) had never rendered service to Aborigines. On the

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82 Ibid. Matthews' response in turn takes Duguid up on his call to lift his eyes to the hills, but also confirms a point Duguid made in his letter about State parochialism (the Confederacy strikes!): 'we in Victoria' at any rate, pleads Matthews, have 'walked by faith' and 'looked to the hills' regarding missionary work in Victoria 'lest any man should speak unadvisedly about the missionary work in Victoria.' He does wish Duguid 'God-speed in what you are doing': ibid., Matthews to Duguid, 2 May 1935.

83 B. Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to Matthews, 11 May 1935 (copy). As mentioned above, Paterson was Minister of the Interior from November 1934 to November 1937.

84 Ibid., Duguid to Paterson, 23 May 1935 (copy).

85 The AAS was the predecessor to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).
contrary, Simpson claimed that ‘...dozens of trips have been made to Aborigines.’ Duguid thanked Simpson for his letter: ‘the first really friendly gesture I have received at the hands of anyone connected with the AIM since I have sponsored the cause of the natives.’ He insisted that he was not ‘against the AIM’; he had stressed their ‘magnificent achievements in the outback’ but he was opposed to the present attitude of the AIM towards natives as expressed by Flynn and Partridge. Simpson was also wrong to say that ‘the AIM has always treated all men, black or white’. Duguid had not found this to be correct. Again he appealed to Love, without mentioning him: “Nothing has been so hard to bear on the part of the missionaries to the natives as the attitude of the AIM to the native’: so said to me a seasoned Presbyterian missionary to the native.’ Then a final plea: ‘Will you now please try to alter the attitude of complete contempt towards the native so general in the AIM in the field?’ In the end, Duguid and Simpson agreed to disagree on the matter of the AIM’s care of Aborigines. Simpson provided some statistics that he felt proved the AMS ‘does a very great service to aborigines’. His observations of the AIM in practice were that their attitude was ‘very sound and reasonable’: sick Aborigines always received the necessary treatment (‘I myself treated a number’); they were not always given beds in hospital but ‘I always thought they were better treated in their camps under natural conditions’. Simpson also added that he thought that ‘the half-caste problem’ was the greatest problem in the Centre: ‘I think the AIM gets at the root of the difficulty. By making the Inland safe for white women, as it does, the AIM offers a practical solution which other missions cannot.’ This exchange between two well-intentioned men, committed to their respective causes, shows the tendency of differing discourses to hold their proponents fast in their separate discourse streams.

86 Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Simpson to Duguid, 10 May 1935.
87 Ibid., Duguid to Simpson, 21 May 1936 (copy).
88 Ibid.
89 Records were sketchy, Simpson admitted, but he felt he was able to establish 3 air trips (for Aborigines) in 1932, 4 in 1933, and 8 in 1934: Ibid., Simpson to Duguid, 26 May 1935. Duguid’s specific reaction to these figures is unavailable but it seems fair to assume they did not convince him.
90 In reference to ‘other missions’: Simpson gathered from published remarks of Duguid that ‘Hermannsburg was doing useful work now’; he was glad to hear that as ‘I was not much impressed when I visited there in 1927.’ He regarded ‘the outbreak of scurvy at Hermannsburg and an epidemic of whooping cough’ as very serious arguments against mission enterprise.’ He add, though, that he was ‘behind’ Duguid in his ‘doing something’: ibid., Simpson to Duguid, 26 May 1936.

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the Master who demands absolute truth

Duguid, in the meantime, was using his authority as Moderator to build his case that the AIM was neglecting the care of Aborigines in the Centre. He wrote to the AIM Hostels at Oodnadatta, Innamincka and Beltana requesting comprehensive information on Aboriginal patients treated at the institutions. He received a variety of data from the Sisters at the Hostels, as well as a collated list from his nemesis and Convenor of the AIM Council, Rev David Chapman. This exercise eventually led to bad blood between Duguid and Chapman after Duguid, alerted later to problems with the figures from Beltana, discerned that the figures he had been given referred to ‘treatments’ and not ‘patients’. This ‘distortion’ of the figures may or may not have been deliberate; but Duguid angrily demanded public retractions. Chapman replied that he regretted the tone of Duguid’s letter and he had merely quoted what the Sisters had supplied: ‘Seeing it is a Common work for the Master in which we are all engaged, your stand is to be regretted.’ Duguid’s response can be gathered from the draft notes he made on the back of the Chapman response: ‘Sorry that tone was regretted. Actually I have never written a letter with more sadness. Accept your statement. But you now know that the figures you quoted were not of patients but of treatments. Should say this publicly now. You speak of the Master. It is love for that Master which demands absolute truth. And a wrong impression left with a public meeting does not seem to me to be in that category.’ Chapman replied eventually that he had no objection to Duguid stating the figures he had but there was little purpose in making a statement at all unless correct figures could be supplied.

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91 Ibid., Chapman to Duguid, 14 Oct 1935: the data provided by Chapman, queried (initially) by Duguid in one respect, showed in relation to Aboriginals that overall they had provided 10.4% of ‘total patients’ treated at AIM hostels in the previous year.
92 Ibid., Sister Trevelion [?] [Beltana] to Chapman, 21 Nov 1935: re ‘your letter re no. of Abs and half-castes treated’: ‘I’m in total ignorance of it. I can find no records in the books of any full-bloods treated so I am sending the form back.’ Duguid somehow got a copy of this letter, alerting him to the fact that the figures might be ‘rubbery’.
93 The ‘official’ data for, for example, Beltana now changed from 11 Aboriginal ‘patients’ (actually treatments) out of 445 overall ‘patients’ (treatments) to 2 Aboriginal patients out of 150 overall: perhaps not a significant difference statistically, but giving a different ‘look’ to the figures from the perspective of care of Aborigines.
94 Ibid., Chapman to Duguid, 13 Aug 1936.
95 Ibid., Chapman to Duguid, 20 Aug 1936.
the encroaching white man

Duguid, as Convenor of the Special Committee on the Medical Mission to the Aborigines set up by the 1935 State Assembly, had made another foray into the Centre in June 1935, this time to the far North-West of South Australia by car, with R.M. Williams as guide. Albrecht had written again, with some useful advice on travelling in the Outback. Albrecht intended to join Duguid on this journey into the Musgraves, and had received the permission of his Board to do so:

As you know from the map, it is quite out of the way...but the question is of such importance for the Natives of the Interior that I feel I would not do my duty if I missed this chance of bringing their cause under the notice of those who are interested and can do much for them.

In the event, Albrecht was unable to join the expedition but he had already done much to 'bring the cause' of the Musgrave Aborigines to Duguid's notice. So, on this journey to the Centre, some one thousand miles from Adelaide, at Ernabella station, in the valleys and escarpments of the Musgrave Ranges, Duguid met the Pitjantjatjara people, in whose land he would found a Mission to ease their passage into modernity, and where, over fifty years later, his ashes would be buried. Ernabella was then a small sheep station, with some horses and camels, a lonely white outpost for 'doggers' making money from the sale of dingo scalps, often procured cheaply from Aborigines, to the Government.

Duguid quickly saw its potential as a mission site: a haven for indigenous people leading

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96 Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines, p. 109. This was the same RM Williams who later became well known for his line of 'outback' clothes and boots. Duguid calls him 'Reg Williams'. In 1942, RM Williams was on the SA Presbyterian Church's Special Committee for the Aboriginal Mission at Ernabella, alongside Duguid, Rev. S. Martin, and Howard Zelling: see Presbyterian Church, 'Blue Books': 1942, Minute 66. This Committee was to become known as 'the Adelaide Committee' and during JRB Love's administration of Ernabella came to play a more interventionist role in the Mission's affairs which Love found uncomfortable: see esp. chapter 11 below.

97 Ibid., Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 24 Apr 1935.

98 Ibid., Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 11 May 1935.

99 Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines, p. 110; for the early history of Ernabella, see Winifred Hilliard, The People In Between (Adelaide: Seal Books, Rigby, 1976 (first published 1968)); interestingly, the anthropologist Olive Pink had visited Ernabella, as Elkin had, in the years before it became a Mission site. Pink had gone there in 1930. According to Julie Marcus' account, she purchased tjurungas, secret ceremonial objects, for the first time at the Ernabella site; she had immediate misgivings about the process, concerned at the possible cultural consequences of their devaluation and loss. She was disturbed later by the Hermannsburg practice of selling them to tourists and this 'cavalier attitude to Aboriginal religious beliefs' of Pastor Albrecht was apparently one reason for her well-known antipathy to missionaries: see Marcus, The indomitable Miss Pink: a life in anthropology (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001) pp. 48-49.
traditional lives ‘in their own country’, relatively ‘uncontaminated’ as yet by white contact and the Mission Station acting as a buffer state between the Aborigines and ‘the encroaching white man’. In October 1935 Duguid had reported to the Board of Missions. As a result of his report and the challenge of his Moderatorial Address, the Board decided to sponsor the formation of the Medical Mission, and to recommend it to the General Assembly of Australia when it met in September in 1936. At the State Assembly in March 1936, Duguid, no longer Moderator, won the approval of the Assembly to recommend the Mission to the General Assembly as the Church’s effort to mark the Centenary of the State. He also managed to wrest a concession from the Smith of Dunesk Committee that:

It was the intention of Mrs. Smith of Dunesk that the Aborigines of South Australia should benefit from her gift, and therefore recommends that at least part of the revenue from the Gift be devoted to the education and evangelisation of the Aborigines of SA, provided that: (1) the particular mission providing such benefits be approved of by the Assembly; and (2) approval be granted by the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland.

The qualified nature of this recommendation, with its concession to Mrs. Smith’s real intentions but its refusal to nominate how much of the revenue would go to the new Mission, suggests a compromise, probably due to the equal balance of forces on the membership of the Committee. Duguid had made progress, but the fight was hardly over.

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100 See Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines*, p. 115. While these quotes are from Duguid looking back nearly forty years in his 1972 autobiography, they are used partly to demonstrate the persistence of some missionary discourses, for this is exactly the kind of language used by missionaries and even anthropologists in the 1930s. Albrecht, for example, at this time is writing to Duguid in similar terms: ‘I am now quite convinced that on these lines is to be found the solution of the problem here in the interior. Reserves, organized on these lines, counteracting the influence of civilization, will mean that the Myalls are retained in their respective districts: and there may develop on natural lines thus minimising the clash to such an extent that it will not be fatal as in the past’: Albrecht, “Burns-Albrecht Collection”: Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 25 Jul 1935.

101 In May 1936 Duguid received official reconfirmation that the Board would support his proposal: ‘Re assurance that the Board of Mission...is going to the General Assembly in Sydney in September to sponsor this Scheme as well as the ‘urgent necessity’ of a medical survey of the area and in its mission work provide for medical supervision of the Aborigines and white people in contact with them. The Board is recommending the inauguration of the Mission’: Duguid, “Duguid: Series 1: correspondence”: Matthews to Duguid, 22 May 1936.


104 The membership of the Committee was crucial. At this stage in 1935-36, it comprised 6 members, finely balanced at 3 pro-Duguid members, and 3 pro-AIM members (including the Convenor).
CHAPTER FIVE: ‘Bad Taste and the Execrable’: continuing the Narrative of Charles Duguid, the Presbyterian Church, Scottish money, and the Establishment of Ernabella Mission

Duguid was receiving support from some quarters. The missionaries he had met in the Centre had not forgotten him. While Albrecht had offered unstinting endorsement, Ernest Kramer, the itinerant and intrepid missionary to the Aborigines of Central Australia since 1912, wrote to Duguid in his Swiss English:

You champion a Cause in which I failed. However you know what held me Bound, the Lord is my Witness. I longed for the Best in every Man, regardless of Color or Creed, but I did not Excell to move the Border Land of Australia to new possibilities as you have done.

Unfortunately for Kramer, he had also sent Duguid a copy of a letter he had written to Rev JA Barber of the AIM in which he said he had appreciated instances of cooperation by AIM nurses in dealing with acute sicknesses among full-blood Aborigines. Kramer’s implication that he was satisfied with the AIM’s treatment of Aborigines led to a sharp reprimand from Duguid, if Kramer’s reply to him is an indication. The missionary wrote that he was ‘deeply grieved if I have given misunderstanding.’ In looking back over ‘my many occasions of disappointments’ regarding the official policy of the AIM, he could in fact recall

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1 The phrase is one used by Duguid in a letter to the Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in 1937 regarding alleged remarks made by John Flynn of Aboriginal people: see n. 51 below. The inset photograph is from the Duguid Papers, National Library of Australia. It shows Dr. Duguid on one of his numerous patrols into Central Australia.
2 Although an independent ‘faith’ missionary, Kramer had strong links to the Aborigines’ Friends’ Association (AFA) as a ‘agent’ for the organization: see the Kramer Papers, South Australian Museum. The AFA, the body which in the 1890s had had its annual grant from the Smith Fund choked off by the church, had also written to Duguid in support: Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": AFA (Rev. John Sexton) to Duguid, n.d., probably May 1935.
3 Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Kramer to Duguid, 2 Jun 1936.
4 Ibid., Kramer to Rev. JA Barber (copy to Duguid), n.d., probably May-June 1936.
only two instances when the AIM had ‘cooperated’ with him to help Aborigines. He did not blame Flynn: ‘I personally recall the time when Rev John Flynn’s heart was moved to consider the possibility of a Special Ward for the Aborigines at the Back of the Alice Springs Hostel – during the time of its Completion – but the Public feeling in Alice Springs was so hot against it – that he had to abandon the idea.’ Duguid, hardly mollified, went hard at Kramer, trying to drag from him an agreement to use his second letter against the AIM:

Otherwise it simply means that you are prepared to see the native and myself sacrificed in the interests of the AIM...you must give me a free hand to prove my contention that at Alice Springs the native and half-caste are not admitted to the Hostel.

Suitably chastised, Kramer replied that ‘I am pleased for you to use the detail Information in anyway you see nesseccary (sic)’, and added, stoically, that ‘Certain goodwill [has been] extended to me as a Missionary on Suffrage, for many Years defending a people for whom there was no Voice to plead for many days.’

Despite the bruising encounter, Kramer saw in Duguid an eloquent and combative Voice to plead for the Aborigines of the Centre.

**taking the blacks’ money**

Another significant supporter was JRB Love. The exemplary missionary at Kunmunya had evidently caught up with news of events at the State Assembly. He was ‘delighted’ about developments in the Smith of Dunesk matter:

I have been sore about this taking of blacks’ money to help the whites, who were never in so dire need, ever since I was interested in the blacks; but my small voice went nowhere with effect. I am very glad that you have taken steps to right this wrong. Mind, the AIM is, I think, one of the greatest forces for good in our branch of the Church.

Love made ‘a small contribution’ toward the Medical Mission and wished he

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5 Ibid., Kramer to Duguid, 12 Jul 1936.
6 Ibid., Duguid to Kramer (copy), 16 Jul 1936.
7 Ibid., Kramer to Duguid, 18 Jul 1936.
8 Ibid., Love to Duguid, 20 Apr 1936.
could ‘give enough to be some real help’:9

I always wanted to go up there myself; but got placed here and in North Queensland, and now feel that my life work is here, where I have acquired some of the language. I am too old to try and learn a new aboriginal language.10

the humane treatment of weak and backward races

Duguid’s Moderatorial Address had put forward his proposal for a Mission in broad terms only. The Board of Missions indicated that they would want to see a more comprehensive assessment of likely costs, revenue, and areas of support. Duguid set about producing such a detailed paper.11 ‘The Australian Aborigines’ is revealing as to the way he thought about Aboriginal people. It began with a citation that can stand as a summary of Duguid’s humanitarian stance: ‘The humane treatment of weak and backward races must everywhere be a special responsibility of the Christian conscience.’12 Duguid related the narrative of the female missionary patient who in the early 1930s had ‘fired [him] with a human interest in the aborigines‘: ‘she troubled my conscience and awakened my sense of responsibility’.13 His subsequent investigation of ‘the Aboriginal problem’ had led him to the conclusion that the Aborigines had been ‘happy and healthy until the white man came’. The ‘signal mistake’ made was not to ‘seek their cooperation’: instead ‘we took it for granted they or we must go, and so the wholesale shootings and poisonings began’. Yet here we have, said Duguid, ‘the most interesting man on earth, without whom the full development of the interior cannot take place.’ Christians had, argued Duguid, as Love had before him, a special obligation to the Aborigines of Australia, and yet only one Church had established a mission in the interior: the German Lutherans: ‘It is a slur on the British race that we in Australia have stood by and seen this people perish and a

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9 Love’s wish to ‘give enough to be of real help’ took substantive shape when he offered to spend his furlough in 1937 conducting a reconnaissance of Ermabella and its environs for the Board of Missions: see below, this chapter.
10 Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Love to Duguid, 20 Apr 1936.
12 Cited in ibid. (Duguid), p. 98 (from a publication of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society).
13 Ibid., p. 99.
denial of the Christ that we, who call ourselves Christian, have not raised our voices in united protest to say that these things shall not be.\textsuperscript{14}

Duguid's vision was of 'an amazing field for missionary enterprise right in our midst'. There were myriad problems, he warned: 'no medical man north of Hawker, in an area of 280, 000 square miles'; the dangerous autonomy and expansion of the cattle stations ('From now on no white man should be allowed by any Government to take up land which is the property of a native tribe...the bullocks have gone on increasing at the expense of the lives of our native people'); the doggers who entered the 'inviolable' Reserves and exploited the natives for their scalps and their women; the rapid 'detrabalisation' of the Musgrave people who were 'bartering their most sacred ceremonial objects for the now much sought after flour, tea and sugar.'\textsuperscript{15} The 'only hope' for the Aborigines in the Great Australian Reserve was a Christian Mission in the Musgrave Ranges.

Duguid outlined what his Mission would do for the natives: it would provide a 'spiritual prop', education and training for the changed circumstances created by European settlement, and medical care. Duguid was still insistent that medical attention was needed, 'the methods of their own medicine men being of the crudest...[yet] here again one must walk warily, and with a deep sympathy and understanding.'\textsuperscript{16} The Mission would have other benefits, claimed Duguid. It would ensure the inviolability of the Great Central Aboriginal Reserve, 'keeping the natives in and the whites out'. It would also control the 'drift' of natives towards the Telegraph line and white centres of population, and eliminate the 'dogging' problem and 'the exploitation of the native women'. Under his Scheme, also, half-castes would be 'rescued' for education at institutions such as 'Quorn'\textsuperscript{17} where 'useful work' was being done.\textsuperscript{18} Duguid estimated costs of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 101.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., pp. 101-102.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 103.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Colebrook Children's Home (United Aboriginal Mission (UAM) home for 'half-caste' children), situated from 1927 at Quorn, SA.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence", Duguid to Hudd (copy), n.d., probably sent after the September meeting of the GAA, which resulted in final approval for inauguration of the Scheme, pending finance and purchase of the lease. Note that this discourse of 'rescue' and half-castes being 'sent in' for
\end{itemize}

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establishment of the Mission at about £3600, not including the price to be paid for the lease, and an annual expenditure/revenue balance sheet that left an estimated nett annual cost of £225, the revenue coming from ‘stock increase and wool’. Duguid’s yearly ‘cost’ worked out at a figure approximate to monies accruing from a good year’s rental from the Smith of Dunesk properties!

they are calling out for help

Duguid’s statement was a multilayered narrative which garnered racial and national pride (‘no British Church...’), economic motives (need indigenous labour for full development), Christian conscience (‘can we allow this to happen...’), anthropological curiosity (‘this most interesting people...’), missionary enterprise (‘an amazing field before us...’), pity (‘a weak and backward race...’), and guilt (‘and then the white man came...’), to build a powerful argument for his Mission. The core of his statement was, however, his progressive missiology: ‘the missionaries learning the language of the native and getting to understand their side of the clash of culture as well as ours’. In fact, it was a missiology strikingly similar to Love’s model of ‘enlightened gradualism’:

It is worse than useless to attempt to civilize and Christianize them [the Aborigines] in one fell swoop. Jesus must be lived among them before they can understand what Jesus is, and the best of their own culture must be retained. But when they have seen and experienced the best that the new civilization brings them they will desire it. We must be content to wait till then. The process will be slow in most cases but it is worthwhile. Up to date it has never been tried by any British Christian Church in the inland.19

Duguid’s discourse, however, more than Love’s, was essentially humanitarian and secular, not evangelical or even especially religious. His Gospel was the gospel of Social Justice, helping the ‘weak and backward’: the salvation he offered was not so much that of souls as salvation from death and disease, and exploitation by ‘dishonourable’ whites. But he was not, in the technical sense, a

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missionary, and so the Board turned to the experienced and exemplary missionary Love to comment on the feasibility of Duguid’s detailed proposal. He did so by letter in July 1936. He was enthusiastic about the proposal and the location: ‘To go there [to the Centre] was the dream of my youth.’ The condition of the Aborigines there ‘calls out for help’ and ‘who better to give it than the Presbyterian Church?’ Love was confident the Mission would succeed: ‘When we establish a mission, we rarely abandon it…it is the best hope for the Aborigines, we shall not desert them.’ In reference to the Smith Fund, he confirmed Duguid’s reading of his opinion, and added a characteristic touch: ‘I believe I am right in saying that the original intention of Mrs. Henrietta Smith was to have the Gospel preached to the natives of South Australia. Is it too late to hope that the name of ‘Smith of Dunesk’, made honourable by the benefactress and such workers as Mitchell, Rolland, Baldwin, Flynn, Plowman and others…labouring among the whites, may yet be found for a fine work for the blacks of South Australia?’ Love did query some of Duguid’s estimates of the financial cost of establishing and maintaining the Mission, thinking him too sanguine in hoping to get Government subsidization for the costs of a schoolteacher, rations for workers, medical supplies, and clothing: ‘Nothing like that from the Government of WA.’ He thought the financial problem of the mission would in the end be ‘the problem of the central desert’: the land was not good and would not produce returns, ‘that is why it is still unoccupied’. He concluded: ‘None of our missions is, ever has been, or is probably ever likely to be, self-supporting. We must do the work, if it costs money…’

soon ‘that problem will be solved’

While Love’s support was crucial, Duguid did not rest. The Rev. David Munro had succeeded Duguid as Moderator and to gain further support for Ernabella in the South Australian Church, Duguid invited Munro to accompany him on a

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20 Duguid’s statement must have been extant before the 1936 General Assembly, as Love seems to have had an abbreviated copy in 1935; see Love, "PRG 214, Series 1, correspondence": item 70.
21 Ibid., Item 69: Love to Matthews, from Kunnumya, 13 July 1936.
22 Ibid., Item 69: Love to Matthews, from Kunnumya, 13 July 1936.
23 The Mission was, in fact, able to secure these ‘subsidiaries’.
'fact-finding' visit to the Centre in 1936. The *Presbyterian Banner* told the story in its inimitable way in its regular column, Moderator's Movements:

The Moderator accompanied Dr. Charles Duguid to the centre of Australia, by car to Quorn, then train to Alice Springs... For the next few weeks the Moderator and Dr. Duguid travelled hundreds of miles west of Alice Springs, riding camels provided by Pastor Albrecht of Hermannsburg. Contact was made with many bush natives, who were found kindly and friendly. There is much to be said about them and for them. Later, in the church at the station, the Doctor and Moderator joined in worship with the natives there, as they had also with those beyond the camel-pads in the bush.\(^{25}\)

In fact, the 'kindly and friendly' Aborigines, the Pintubi and Ngalia living around the Haasts Bluff area, in the Territory, 200 miles west of Alice Springs, had been savagely dispossessed of their land through the establishment of white pastoral leaseholdings.\(^{26}\) Albrecht and Duguid began a campaign to 'save the country' for the Aborigines.\(^{27}\) After nearly ten years as superintendent at Hermannsburg, Albrecht agreed with Duguid on two principal strategies in relation to remote Aborigines in the Centre: one, to keep them away from the overland telegraph line and centres of white activity; and two, to keep them as much as possible in 'their own country', unencumbered by white pastoral enterprises. In April of 1935, he wrote to Duguid:

> It makes my heart ache thinking there are hundreds of Natives from the still unoccupied areas going down to the line, to Ooldea and other places, only to find their grave. I am sure that tide could be checked...The present idea of the Government is that these Natives should continue living alongside with the bullocks, which is simply ridiculous.\(^{28}\)

Both Albrecht and Duguid remained anxious about the possibility of the Government granting pastoral leases in the 'unoccupied' areas. Albrecht remembered when the 'poor Ngalia' had been pushed out of their land:

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\(^{25}\) *Presbyterian "Banner":* vol. 41, no. 8, p. 4.

\(^{26}\) See Marcus, *The indomitable Miss Pink*, pp. 52-55.

\(^{27}\) I am not suggesting they were the only people involved in this campaign. Olive Pink, the 'indomitable' anthropologist, was concerned, as was the Association for the Protection of Native Races. Julie Marcus, however, in her book on Pink confirms that 'the proposal to reserve Haasts Bluff and Pikilyi to the Aboriginal people originated with Pastor Albrecht': ibid., p. 55.

\(^{28}\) FW Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 24 Apr 1935.
so now the poor Ngalia who have lived as long as can be remembered in their old myths, near their Pikilli Water hole\textsuperscript{29}, they are scattered everywhere. Their home district does not belong to them any longer...family life is interfered with... and soon 'that problem will be solved.'\textsuperscript{30}

have we a moral right to dispossess the native?

Albrecht articulated to the authorities a powerful, subversive view on dispossession, one predicated on an acceptance, with the dispossession, of an absolute obligation to support and feed, a view analogous to Love's discourse on moral obligation,\textsuperscript{31} but based on an argument that threatened to undermine the colonial premises of development and compensatory rations:

It is a well-known fact that natives and stock cannot be kept together, and the Natives are therefore pushed off the run immediately the country is stocked. On the other hand, there is no intention of replacing to the Natives what they are losing through being dispossessed. And if we wanted to keep them, it would cost many times the revenue of the whole district, as we are experiencing here at the Mission every year. Then, if there is no intention of fully recompensing these Natives, have we a moral right to interfere and take away their means of livelihood? Giving some rations to the aged and invalids cannot be considered even in this respect, as it never aims at maintaining the whole tribe who is facing extinction.\textsuperscript{32}

Albrecht had put these awkward matters to Minister for the Interior Paterson on his visit to Hermannsburg in April 1935, as well as later, and also to the Administration in Darwin.\textsuperscript{33} But he believed the campaign needed 'more energy and pushing power' and so he looked forward, with characteristic humility, to

\textsuperscript{29} Called 'Picilli Springs' by Duguid (he also calls the people of that country the 'Gnalias'): Charles Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1972), p. 117. Julie Marcus, in her fine work on the anthropologist and defender of Aborigines Olive Pink, spells the waterhole 'Pikilyi' and refers to the Ngariya people: Marcus, *The indomitable Miss Pink*: see (for example) p. 53. The European name for the specific area was Vaughan Springs.

\textsuperscript{30} Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 11 May 1935.

\textsuperscript{31} See above, chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{32} Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Deputy Administrator, 28 Jan 1937. While this articulation of Albrecht's position was made in 1937, he had used it previously, both to the Minister (see next footnote) and in the letter to Duguid of 11 May 1935. We also note here Albrecht's concern with the survival of the indigenous collective ('the tribe') which rationing did not always encompass: see n. 22, chapter 1 above, where I discuss this concern of the Central Australian missionaries. It indicates that their discourse of saving bodies and feeding the hungry was more sophisticated and thoughtful that a simple Christian humanitarian desire to 'aid their neighbour' although it was this as well. Albrecht here is thinking clearly in terms of the economic survival and development of the larger indigenous grouping faced with powerful pastoralist interests, and how that could be morally justified.

\textsuperscript{33} See ibid., Albrecht to Minister for Interior (copy), 14 Aug 1935.
Duguid’s next visit: ‘These Natives here need spokesmen with a better and stronger voice than I have.’ But he offered, in a later letter, his words, if they were useful: ‘you can use anything I write here about the Natives in any way you see fit.’

As such a spokesman, and with an increasing commitment to ‘saving’ the indigenous people of the Centre, Duguid continued to correspond with the Minister. He wrote on 28 July 1936, after the visit to Central Australia, urging the Minister not to allow pastoralists in to the Haast Bluff area: ‘this is the sort of land they’ll want’. His language was Albrechtian: ‘No bush country can rear bullocks and natives at the same time and so far the bullocks have won.’ In 1936, Duguid raised the radical proposition, for the times, of returning the Davenport Ranges to the Ngalia people. He asked the Minister how much it would cost to give the land back ‘to its old owners’; he was sure he could raise the money. As a parting thrust, he added: ‘May I ask you not to allow any white man to take up the Haast Bluff country...’ Paterson’s curt reply was only that Duguid’s suggestions would ‘receive careful consideration’. Never one to be deterred by bureaucratic machinations, the combative humanitarian three months later warned the Minister that unless an Aboriginal Reserve was proclaimed at Haasts Bluff, the native people there would be ‘scattered for ever’. Duguid’s vision was one of creating a buffer for the natives until they were ready for ‘white civilisation’: ‘I am happy as the years go on to help to develop the Inland Aborigines to meet the clash which is inevitable’. He asked if there was any word on the Davenport Ranges matter, pressing: ‘Can the Ngalia people be saved?’ ‘Saving’, to evangelical missionaries, would always carry the gloss of redemption from sin, Christ’s saving Grace, saving from the agonies of Hell. To Duguid, this sort of salvation appears almost irrelevant. It was a saving of indigenous peoples from what he saw as a sort of hell on earth in which he, and increasingly, even the Lutheran Albrecht, were more interested. Duguid

34 Ibid., Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 25 Jul 1935.
35 Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to Paterson (copy), 28 Jul 1936.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., Paterson to Duguid, 4 Aug 1936.
38 Ibid., Duguid to Paterson (copy), 26 Oct 1936.
remained convinced that his Medical Mission would be the salvation of the Aborigines of the Musgrave Ranges.

with much regret

There was more tension between Duguid and the AIM when he resigned from the South Australian AIM Committee on the ground that he had made unsuccessful ‘representations to the Rev John Flynn’ regarding the policy of the AIM on Aborigines.\textsuperscript{39} The AIM Committee Convenor, Rev. RC Racklyeft, responded by accepting the resignation ‘with much regret’, and added, shrewdly, that Duguid would now have more time to devote to his work for Aborigines under ‘the Foreign Mission Department of the Church, under which our Aborigine work is carried on.’\textsuperscript{40} This answer was intended to disarm since it contained the orthodox defence of the AIM to criticism of their exclusive focus on white people, which was that a separate Department of the Church, the Board of Missions, had responsibility for Aborigines; the AIM was simply another Department of the Church, with a different objective, the care and safety of whites in the Outback. The argument, according to the AIM, was simply a misunderstanding about the responsibilities of different instrumentalities of the one and the same Church. Duguid refused to be disarmed. He saw the division on Aborigines between the ‘AIM men’ such as Flynn, Partridge, Chapman, and himself and other ‘friends of the Aborigines’ as not so much an administrative or structural matter as a fundamental difference in thinking about Australia’s indigenous people; or, it could be said, he saw the departmental structure of the church as an administrative convenience behind which people who felt either contempt or indifference towards indigenous Australians could hide. This reading in some sense obscured the similarities between Flynn and Duguid. They shared a discourse of responsibility. The objects of that responsibility were, however, very different. To Duguid, it did not appear that ‘our Aborigine work’ was contained at all within the political or moral universe of John Flynn and the AIM, and it was this that perplexed and outraged him. So he replied sharply to Racklyeft that he did not think the reason for his resignation could have been

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., Duguid to Convenor, AIM Committee, 7 Jul 1936.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., Convenor, AIM Committee, to Duguid, n.d., but probably as soon after Duguid’s letter of 7 Jul 1936 as possible!

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misunderstood: 'Lack of time and lack of interest did not enter into it. I resigned solely because of Christian principle.' Duguid was continuing to burn his bridges with 'the other side'.

a declaration of civil war

And the AIM had to work out what to do with this loose cannon. The AIM leadership, including Flynn, had hitherto adopted a policy of studied indifference to Duguid’s sallies but eventually it went on the offensive. In late 1936 Duguid had given an interview to the Victorian Presbyterian Church paper, The Messenger, in which he had escalated his criticism of the AIM’s attitude to Aborigines, being quoted as saying that: 'If Jesus were alive in Central Australia, He could not be admitted to our hostel because of the darker colour of his skin. This was a potent charge against a Christian organization. The AIM brought considerable pressure to bear on the editor of The Messenger. Both amused and menaced by the experience, John Cormone wrote to Duguid:

The AIM Board rang me and threatened another ‘civil war’ stating that ‘Cain was to be raised etc etc’. I was to be brought before the Assembly; the Moderator-General was to ‘restrain’ me. And all this because I allowed an article by Dr Duguid to be published in the Messenger – allowed also the AIM to be criticised. Apparently it is not done! So I suppose at the May Assembly I’ll be torn to pieces. You had better be on hand to stitch me up. I may even need hemstitching.

The Moderator-General, Rev. John MacKenzie, also wrote to all parties, urging restraint. Duguid’s reply was notable for his lack of restraint. He began immediately with a personal attack on Flynn: ‘...the swearing and the rough ways of the Rev John Flynn do not meet with the approval that he seems to think they do....Even the so-called rough people of the bush like a padre to be a padre’. Duguid now referred to the 1936 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, which had in fact been an important stage in the slow ‘birth’ of his Mission with the Assembly agreeing conditionally that the Mission be inaugurated. To the AIM

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41 Ibid., Duguid to Convenor, AIM Committee, 6 Aug 1936.
42 The Messenger, Presbyterian Church of Victoria publication, 25 December 1936, cited in Griffiths, The Silent Heart, p. 111; see also Griffiths, pp 110-113 for one interpretation of 'The Messenger' controversy.
43 Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Cormone to Duguid, 26 Jan 1937.
44 For example, ibid., MacKenzie to Duguid, 3 Feb 1937.
counter-charge that the matters now being raised by Duguid should have been raised at the last Assembly, Duguid claimed that the AIM had stopped him doing so. As well, Flynn confused the Assembly with half truths...[he] did everything in his power to stop the Mission I am sponsoring.46 Duguid also alleged that Flynn had said to HC Matthews, referring to Duguid: ‘His head should have been chopped off years ago’.47 Duguid charged that Flynn posed as a friend to the native: he recalled to MacKenzie ‘the dramatic scene at the Assembly’:

Flynn came down from the platform to the floor, with his back to the Chair, and addressed me over 6 or 8 benches: ‘I hope Dr Duguid is willing to co-operate with me in the necessary work that remains to be done for the natives in the Inland.’ You may recall my rising in my seat, looking you [MacKenzie had been the Chair] full in the face and saying, ‘Dr Duguid is prepared to co-operate with Mr Flynn in anything he may do for the native - (pause) - out of his heart love.’ The gentleman sitting beside me asked why I added ‘out of his heart love’. ‘Because’ I said ‘Mr Flynn has never at any time done anything for the native out of his heart love’.48

Duguid also related to the Moderator-General stories he had been told of Flynn telling a service at the Methodist Church in Alice Springs that when an attempt was made to have ‘niggers’ treated at the Hostel, he had stopped it: ‘We don’t want niggers at the Alice Springs Hostel’.49 There was also an alleged incident at the Oodnadatta Hostel when Flynn had said that he could ‘smell blackfellow’ after a ‘native’ had recently been there. Duguid continued:

These and other remarks of equal bad taste and execrable Christianity are resented by some people in SA...Alf Traeger50 first told me of the

46 Ibid.
47 Duguid states in Doctor and the Aborigines that Matthews had told him ‘that John Flynn was doing all he could to prevent it’: see Duguid, Doctor and the Aborigines, p. 120. Here, in the letter to the Moderator-General, it is put as his own opinion. Whether Matthews did tell him this, or whether he only relayed the acerbic line about chopping Duguid’s head off, and Duguid confused, or collated the two, years later is open to conjecture. The ‘chopping head’ remark is likely to be accurate, as MacKenzie presumably could have checked it with the proximate Matthews.
49 Duguid subsequently wrote to MacKenzie and Matthews on this incident: for example, he told Matthews that he had the name and address of the man who related the story of the Methodist service; he also proffered the name of the Methodist home missionary who ‘may be unwilling at first but in the end will tell you a good deal about Flynn’s attitude toward natives’: ibid., Duguid to Matthews (copy), 23 Feb 1937; see also letter to MacKenzie (dated same day).
50 Alf Traeger, Adelaide engineer who worked with Flynn on devising radio wireless networks for the outback. Traeger was an inherent part of the iconography of the AIM and Duguid must have known he was cutting close to the bone to introduce him as a witness against Flynn. But that is the last we hear of Traeger from Duguid, although, as with his use of Matthews as a witness, it is more likely than not to have some
seriousness of the padre’s attitude to the native, but I didn’t believe it till I saw for myself.\textsuperscript{51}

As he had done more than once, the combative humanitarian claimed the exemplary missionary as a witness:

\textit{JRB Love told me (on his last furlough) the hardest thing he and others serving the native on behalf of the Presbyterian Church had to put up with was the attitude of AIM to the native.}\textsuperscript{52}

Some notes that Duguid scribbled down at this time show his state of mind: ‘I have said my say. Others must do what they like. If the Presbyterian Church decides to back an unrepentant AIM I shall step aside and go elsewhere.’\textsuperscript{53}

Duguid himself was unrepentant and continued to repeat his charges against Flynn.

We may make some tentative conclusions about these charges. On the evidence, there is a case for them.\textsuperscript{54} There does seem to have been some organised attempt at the 1936 General Assembly to obstruct the establishment of the Mission, which Flynn first supports while subsequently moving a bland motion about

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\textsuperscript{51} ibid., Duguid to MacKenzie (copy), 5 Jun 1939 (copy). We know that Matthews advised Duguid that it was not possible for him to raise matters critical of Flynn with the Moderator-General: see below, n. 6, chapter 6.
\textsuperscript{52} ibid., Duguid to MacKenzie (copy), 11 Feb 1937.
\textsuperscript{53} ibid., notes dated 12 and 13 Feb 1937.
\textsuperscript{54} The Minutes of the 1936 Assembly show that Duguid moved an early amendment ‘That until such time as the Federal Government builds a Public Hospital at Alice Springs the A.I.M. Hostel admit or treat anyone in medical need irrespective of colour.’ DD Munro, Duguid’s successor as Moderator of the South Australian Church, and his companion, with Albrecht, on the 1936 trek to the Centre, seconded the amendment. The Minutes then record that Duguid withdrew his amendment, intimating ‘after consultation with the Rev. John Flynn’ that he would later give notice of a substantive motion.\textsuperscript{54} The ‘he’ is ambiguous: was Duguid intending a later motion? Or had they agreed on Flynn doing so, which in fact he did, the later motion depriving the first of its point and power? This was understandable from Flynn, as the motion was a critical one, but Duguid's motives in withdrawing are less clear. Later Rev. HC Matthews moved ‘the Deliverance’ for the Board of Missions, clause 9 of which ‘resolved to inaugurate a Mission amongst the aborigines in the Northern part of South Australia’. An amendment was moved which would have required the consent of the majority of the State Assemblies to the Mission, which if successful would have resulted in delaying, if not defeating, the venture. According to Duguid, Flynn spoke in support of the amendment but ‘a senior Presbyterian minister from Queensland’ (unnamed) who said he was ‘puzzled’ by the opposition to the venture, and called on the withdrawal of the amendment apparently turned the tide. It was withdrawn. At this point, according to the Minutes, Flynn, despite having just supported an amendment designed to delay, perhaps fatally, a mission to Central Australian aborigines, moved ‘that the Board be authorised to take appropriate steps towards ensuring adequate care of aborigines in Central Australia’: see Presbyterian Church, "Proceedings, GAA, 1936", pp. 63-64; also Duguid, \textit{Doctor and the Aborigines}, pp. 120-121.
adequate care for Aborigines in Central Australia.\textsuperscript{55} Why Duguid withdrew an earlier motion critical of discriminatory practices at the AIM Hostel in Alice Springs is not clear; perhaps he was promised support for the later, more substantive motion of the inauguration of the Mission, perhaps he was advised the motion would lose, unless moved by Flynn in a less 'offensive', more diplomatic form. Flynn’s derogatory remark about Duguid probably reflects an irritation with Duguid’s activism regarding Aborigines. Duguid’s attacks on the AIM, Flynn’s creation, and indeed his remarks about Flynn, littered about his writings, letters and, doubtless, his conversations, and perhaps his personal manner, abrasive and judgemental, were not likely to endear him to Flynn. But while personality differences must have played their part, what essentially seems to have divided Charles Duguid and John Flynn were their diverging discourses on Aboriginal people: Duguid with his humanitarian concerns for a ‘weak and backward’ race ill-treated by rapacious Europeans, Flynn believing (privately) that they were ‘hopeless’ and irrelevant to the nation’s future, which he saw as dependent on a strong, developed, populated White Inland.\textsuperscript{56}

the Church is challenged by the Native question

During this period, Pastor Albrecht continued to offer Duguid valuable support. He too, he confided to the Adelaide doctor, had had his differences with Church colleagues who thought ‘it was a foolish thing to do to waste time and money on Aboriginals.’ Such a view was deplorable, Albrecht wrote: ‘I believe if the church is challenged anywhere at all, it is with regard to the Natives of this country, therefore, the proposal to establish a Mission Station in or near the Musgraves has my wholehearted support.’\textsuperscript{57} Duguid also retained Love’s full support. The Kunmunya missionary contacted Duguid and the Board in late 1936, offering his services to the Board regarding Ernabella to help prepare the ground for the new

\textsuperscript{55} Brigid Hains, generally supportive of Flynn, cites a Duguid supporter (unnamed) as describing Flynn at the 1936 Assembly as ‘the devil incarnate’ for his ability to argue for increased Aboriginal missions, while at the same time undermining Duguid’s own work at Ernabella: see Hains, "Inland Flynn", p. 33.

\textsuperscript{56} See Haines, The Ice and the Inland; also Flynn, “Flynn Papers, NLA”; see also the discussion towards the end of chapter 6, below.

\textsuperscript{57} Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 29 Nov 1935. Albrecht also suggested humbly that Presbyterian missionaries could come to Hermannsburg to learn about ‘our’ experience: ‘[they] could benefit by mistakes we have made in the past’.

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venture, and ‘rejoicing that things are going ahead’.\textsuperscript{58} Love was forthright on the Scottish money issue and the AIM: he was ‘disappointed’ that John Flynn was hostile to the Mission. He understood, he said, the chief reason: ‘dislike of losing the ‘Smith of Dunesk’ money’. Love was sure, however, that the forfeiture would be just: ‘If Mrs Smith’s gift was intended for the Aborigines, the cause of Christ would no longer prosper if it is withheld from them for the noble mission of the AIM to the whites.’ He was critical of the \textit{modus operandi} of the AIM:

I have an uneasy feeling that our AIM Ministers tend to follow the lead of the station people in this attitude to the blacks, rather than give the lead. While quite seeing how [hard?] it would be for them to travel from station [to station] if hostile, I wish they would all in all show a bit more courage on this matter; and [earn?] more respect for the AIM as well as justice for the blacks.\textsuperscript{59}

He also indicated that he was giving serious thought to the intellectual preparations he deemed necessary for the success of the new Mission:

I would like to meet the Adelaide anthropologists. They and we are I think both anxious to do good for the black...But to say ‘let them alone’ is a wicked falsehood, for even the least practical anthropologist must know that no primitive race in the world is now being let alone, and in Australia, if white contact is not speedily made for good, it is fast being made for evil...Perhaps we and the anthropologists suspect each other too much. They think we wish to break down tribal organization – with the result of exterminating the tribe. \textbf{We suspect they} want to keep a museum of interesting data for their collection, without regard to the welfare of the souls and bodies of men. We should pull together for the common good of Aborigines.\textsuperscript{60}

Both Love and Duguid wished to incorporate, as far as possible, the discourse and discipline of anthropology with their missiology. It is apparent from Duguid’s statements that he wished to attach the public reputation of anthropology as a ‘disinterested’ and ‘expert’ discourse on Aborigines to his

\textsuperscript{58} Duguid, “Duguid: Series I: correspondence”: Love to Board (copy to Duguid), n.d., probably late Nov 1936. On news of the conditional approval given to the Mission at the 1936 Assembly, Love had also sent a telegram to Duguid from Broome: ‘Delighted Musgrave Scheme approved stop speed the plough Love’: ibid.: Love to Duguid (cable) (date indecipherable, probably Sep-Oct 1936).
\textsuperscript{59} ibid., Love to Duguid (copy to BM/AFA), n.d., probably late Nov 1936.
\textsuperscript{60} ibid., (Love’s underlining).
venture.61 Love himself was to comment that the ‘new’ missionary at Ernabella had to be both an anthropologist and a linguist ‘if he was to do any good’.62 In November 1936, Love advised the Board of Mission that he was honoured by suggestions that he could help establish the new Mission, and would be ‘proud’ to go to the Interior ‘wherein lay my youthful dreams’.63 However, he did not wish to leave Kunmunya permanently and lose the work he had done on the language; in another ten years he hoped ‘to have planted the Gospel in Worora.’ But Love offered ‘most gladly’ to give a year to Ernabella. The experienced missionary began to plan already: it was best to start in winter (‘I lived in North SA for 3 yrs, know the heat’) and the first essentials were a shelter, a well, a garden, and a dispensary.64

we must go quietly if we are to get Ernabella

The path for Duguid’s Mission had opened up after the conditional approval of the Scheme by the General Assembly in Sydney in 1936.65 On the strength of this ‘triumph’, Duguid appealed for assistance from the SA Government.66 He had no compunction in doing so as it was his opinion that the Mission would be doing the work the Government ought to be doing.67 The SA Cabinet duly approved a subsidy of £1000 on a pound-for-pound basis.68 On receipt of

61 For example, see ibid., Duguid to Webster, 15 Jun 1939. Duguid’s and Love’s ‘anthropologists’ almost certainly included people such as Cleland and Frederic Wood Jones who were not strictly anthropologists (as we would now define them) but, in their cases, professors of anatomy (although note Warwick Anderson refers to Wood Jones as a ‘physical anthropologist’ in his The Cultivation of Whiteness, p. 135). However the term was more elastic then than it is now, with subsequent increasing professionalization and specialization. Love himself was considered by Presbyterian circles as an eminent ‘anthropologist’ although he may not have possessed that status in the academic world.


63 Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Love to BM/AFA (copy to Duguid), 27 Nov 1936.

64 Ibid., Love to BM/AFA (copy to Duguid), 27 Nov 1936. Love was also keen to make arrangements for his sons’ education at Scotch College SA. He also acknowledged gratefully that ‘the Wireless set (from AIM) has arrived [at the Mission].’

65 Approval was conditional on both the purchase of suitable land and the cooperation of State Government.


67 Matthews shared this view as well: ‘After all, the work we are to undertake is their responsibility [the Government’s] and in reality we are doing it for them’: ibid., Matthews to Duguid, 19 Dec 1936.

68 Ibid., Hudd to Matthews (Board), (copy to Duguid), 18 Nov 1936: that is, if the Church raised £1000 towards the cost of the Mission, the Government would match it. Note also that when the Board of Missions wrote later to Hudd, after the £1000 had been collected by the Church, and claiming the £1000 offered by the State Government on that basis (and incidentally and enterprisingly asking for more!), it (the Board) soft-pedalled diplomatically on issues Duguid had argued forcefully. For example, Duguid had said about the Reserve: ‘natives in, whites out, we’ll control the dogging problem’. The Board subsequently did not
promise of money from this source, plans proceeded to purchase land in the Musgraves. Matthews on behalf of the Board reminded Duguid of the 'need to secure Ferguson's property (Ernabella)' as soon as possible.\(^6\) Optimism was breaking out everywhere, along with paranoia. Duguid pleaded with Matthews: 'may I ask you not to divulge any information to Partridge? We must go quietly if we are to get Ernabella.'\(^7\) Matthews' response on this point was rapid: 'We have not, of course, said anything to Partridge or to any of the AIM Representatives, and we have made the matter quite vague in our Minutes, lest they should get into the hands of any of them before we have got where we want to get.'\(^8\)

Negotiations to buy the lease at Ernabella were still under way at the end of the year as Duguid was preparing to return to the United Kingdom for a year in 1937.\(^9\) In 1935 he had begun to correspond with Dr J. MacDonald Webster, Convenor of the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, about the Smith of Dunesk money, seeking the support of the Committee in his attempts to redirect the flow of the revenue to the missionary work for Aborigines. Duguid was keenly aware of the continuing sensitivity of Australians of his generation to opinion in England, as well as the possible tactical importance of the Colonial Committee's continuing legal trusteeship of the Smith of Dunesk gift.\(^10\)

\(^{10}\) Humanitarians such as Duguid and Mary Bennett were at pains both to bring matters of interest to the notice of the British public, and to threaten to do so as often as was (tactically) useful in Australia: generally, see Reynolds, *Frontier: Aborigines, settlers and land*, pp 88-89. It was not, of course, merely a matter of tactics. Duguid and Bennett and others of their generation, of course, still felt a tremendous affinity with the Mother Country; Duguid had been born in Scotland and it was, in a real sense, 'Home' to him. An appeal to 'Home' seemed natural as well as useful.

\(^{11}\) Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines*, pp. 126-127; Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to Webster (Secretary, Colonial Committee, Free Church of Scotland), 1 Dec 1936 (copy); ibid., Duguid to Webster 27 May 1935.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., Matthew to Duguid, 20 Nov 1936.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., Duguid to Matthew (copy), 25 Nov 1936. Kingsley Partridge was the AIM Padre of the 'Central Patrol' in Central Australia.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., Matthew to Duguid, 1 Dec 1936. Ferguson, the holder of the lease on Ernabella, was holding out for £5000. At this point (late 1936) the Board had offered him £3500 in cash (the Board did not want to be saddled with interest payments on a loan) plus the possibility of the Government waiving money he owed to it; see ibid., Ferguson to McIntosh, 4 Dec 1936. In regard to the visit 'home', as he called it, Duguid was looking forward to the voyage ('I've had had little leisure in past 10 years') but, in addition to updating himself on surgical developments, he was also intending to put a case for the Aborigines to the Scottish General Assembly in 1937: see Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines*, pp. 126-127; Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to Webster (Secretary, Colonial Committee, Free Church of Scotland), 1 Dec 1936 (copy).
Both Matthews and Duguid considered it fortuitous for the new Mission for the exemplary missionary of the Presbyterian Church to support it so enthusiastically and they agreed that, during Duguid’s absence, Love would undertake an inspection and survey of the new mission site in 1937, preparatory to the commissioning of the first Superintendent. Duguid particularly was grateful, and offered to put his home at Love’s disposal during his absence. Matthews felt that ‘Love’s presence is going to be of tremendous value to us next year’ although he cautioned Duguid that Love’s long experience on impetuous missionary sites made him a most careful and pessimistic missionary entrepreneur: ‘He (and us) are accustomed to the meagre provision the Church has always made for its work among the Aborigines.’

‘Albrecht’s people’: these are the people you are going to kill

Even in the middle of his preparations for leaving for the United Kingdom, Duguid remained vigilant in the Aboriginal cause, and not only for Ernabella. His association with Albrecht on the 1936 visit had interested him in ‘Albrecht’s people’ and when the Hermannsburg missionary wrote urgently in January 1937 to advise that the Haast Bluff block near Hermannsburg had been acquired by a pastoralist to stock with sheep (‘this will mean the death of 200 Natives...History in Central Australia will once more repeat itself in its most dreadful aspects’) Duguid wrote immediately to Minister Paterson. On receipt of the news, he told Paterson forcefully, he felt sad, then ‘a surge of resentment’: ‘Albrecht has successfully kept these fine natives away from station country for six years. I have a real love in my heart for these people...To turn over their vegetable foodstuffs to sheep, and to water the sheep at their few soaks and wells is, in my mind, nothing short of a crime.’ He expressed the hope that the Minister would ‘stop the decimation of these two tribes’, but made clear his determination to

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75 Ibid. The Board had had a number of months to digest Love’s July 1936 response to Duguid’s more detailed proposal of the Mission which, as we have seen, is enthusiastic about the venture, while dubious about some of Duguid’s financial projections.
76 Albrecht, “Burns-Albrecht Collection”: Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 29 Jan 1937; see also ibid., Albrecht to Deputy Administrator, NT (copy), 28 Jan 1937.
77 Duguid referred to them as the ‘Pintobi’ [Pintubi] and the ‘Gnatias’ [Ngalia]. The Ngalia have been seen variously as a separate people or ‘tribe’, or as part of another, broader grouping, such as the Luritja: see David Horton, ed., Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australians: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History,
prevent it: 'If, on the other hand, the Government has determined to make the
native people in the Haast Bluff country suffer, I shall leave no stone unturned
here and at home to sheet home the crime.'

Duguid began coordinating a
campaign to 'save' the Haast Bluff people. The Association for the Protection of
Native Races, for example, was asked to publicise the matter: the 'matter of the
Pintobi and Gnalia being sacrificed must be fought to the death and every
publicity given to the matter. Will you at once communicate with Paterson?'

Duguid subsequently met with the Minister. Laying out on a table the
photographs of the Aboriginal people he had taken on the 1936 trip, he told
Paterson bluntly: 'these are the people you are going to kill.' Due at least in part
to the powerful campaign conducted by Duguid and Albrecht, the
Commonwealth Government cancelled pastoral licences in the area and
subsequently, in 1940, Haasts Bluff was created an Aboriginal Reserve.

Albrecht wrote to the combative humanitarian in admiration: 'You have had to
fight for every step taken, but it has not been in vain'.

**the purchase of Ernabella**

In 1937, with Duguid 'home' in Scotland, the Ernabella saga continued. In May,
as Love began his first visit to Ernabella, the Board of Missions purchased the
Ernabella site, a property of about 500 square miles, a 'well-watered sheep
station' situated 275 miles north-west of Oodnadatta, with a mail and stores
service once each five weeks from Oodnadatta. Its western boundary lay 20

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1994).

78 Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to Paterson (copy), 8 Feb 1937. The reference to
'home' is to the United Kingdom.

79 Ibid., Duguid to Morley (copy), 15 Feb 1937; Duguid adds that he has not brought the matter to the notice
of Sexton (Secretary, AFA) 'as it is hardly worthwhile leaning on him' but was bringing it before the
Aboriginal Protection League. Note that Duguid could be politic and discrete when necessary. He asks
Morley that the Association not publicize 'for the present' a photograph of a native in chains 'as the SA Govt
are cooperating fully with us and they may resent us bringing up the matter (which I told them of 18 months
ago).'

80 See Tim Rowse, *White flour, white power*, p. 86.


82 See Presbyterian Church, "Proceedings, GAA, 1939": pp. 135-136. In the end, it had to pay the 'bedrock
price' the possessor of the lease wanted: £5000. Note a letter (undated) sent by Love to the editor of the
*Banner*, published in the February 1938 issue, but probably written around October or November the
previous year. The letter was an appeal for donations from Presbyterians to help pay for the Mission site.
The site had been purchased for £5000, but only £3500 had been put down, with the balance due in April of
1938. According to Love, £1400 was 'in the bank' but £1000 of this was a loan without interest. Support
miles from the eastern boundary of the Great Australian Reserve.\textsuperscript{83} This corridor remained available to pastoralists or doggers for purchase, and it was the constant fear of the early Ernabella missionaries, and their sponsors in the South, that this strip of three blocks of land would be sold off and result in the ‘contamination by whites’ they so dreaded.\textsuperscript{84}

Even with Duguid overseas, however, divisions in the South Australian Church emerged again at the 1937 SA State Assembly when the Smith of Dunesk Committee brought down its Report. The Committee recommended that a grant of £20 be paid to the proposed mission to the Aborigines in satisfaction of the resolution of the previous year that ‘a part’ of the Smith revenue would go to Ernabella.\textsuperscript{85} An application had been made by the ‘Ernabella Mission’ Committee for half the proceeds of the 1936 Smith of Dunesk income to be dedicated to the mission.\textsuperscript{86} However, it was now moved as an amendment that the amount be £50 instead of £20, with the pro-Mission forces being persuaded that getting half of the Smith income was, at this stage, not possible.\textsuperscript{87} The amendment was lost.\textsuperscript{88} So in 1937, while ‘the proposed Mission’ received £20 from the SA State Assembly, the capital of the Smith Fund lay at £2170 and the rental income (£234 in 1937) was transferred, as it was each year, to the AIM.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{82}been limited, wrote Love, to a very small number ‘of our Church folk’, and he invited those ‘who believe the Church can help Aborigines and are proud the Church has taken this step’ to help: Presbyterian "Banner": vol. 43, no. 2 (Feb 1938), p. 24.
\textsuperscript{83} According to Love’s 1937 report, it was 20 miles from Ernabella to the border of the ‘buffer’ area, and 40 miles from Ernabella to the border of the Reserve: Presbyterian Church, "Proceedings, GAA, 1939": Love, 1937 Report, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{84} This fear emerges initially in Love’s Report after his first visit to Ernabella. The first sentence of that report read: ‘I greatly regret that this Mission is not within, nor adjoining, the aborigines’ reserve’: ibid., pp. 137. However, the Board of Missions prefaced the publication of Love’s Report in the Blue Book of 1939 by specifically drawing attention to this sentence and noting that the Pastoral Board of South Australia had decided in the interim not to renew the leases of the properties lying between Ernabella and the great Central Reserve. Thus, in the Board’s view, ‘Ernabella becomes the property adjoining the Reserve, and thus occupies the position of being the buffer state between the Reserve and the settlers to the [east]’: ibid., pp. 136. This was, in fact, putting the very best light possible on the situation, and the blocks remained unalienated but potentially available for purchase.
\textsuperscript{85} Presbyterian Church, "Blue Books": 1937, Minutes, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 1937: Report of the Committee for the Medical Mission to the Aborigines, p. 35. The net Smith of Dunesk income for 1936 was £254; see ibid., 1937: Financial Statement of Smith of Dunesk Committee.
\textsuperscript{87} Moved by S. Martin and seconded by D. Munro.
\textsuperscript{88} From this decision Rev. S. Martin dissented, and asked that his dissent and its explanation be recorded in the Minutes. Five other members of the Assembly also asked for their dissent to be recorded. Dissent in this formal sense was rare in Presbyterian ‘parliaments’ indicating the strength of feeling the issue engendered.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 1937: Report of Smith of Dunesk Committee, Financial Statement.
how can you shoot these simple, confiding people

Meanwhile, Love was now on reconnaissance on camel at Ernabella.\textsuperscript{90} He spent nearly two months inspecting the mission site and environs for suitability. Love noted that all the country between Oodnadatta and the Reserve was now leased for pastoral purposes, so European intrusion into the area was well advanced. The missionaries had cause for concern. Also worrying was the presence of doggers: 'their tracks are everywhere.' Love recommended that Ernabella should not be a receiving depot for scalps from whites; instead full value should be paid to natives for scalps, removing the economic advantage of dogging for whites.

Love found 'these wild blacks', the Pitjantjatjara, 'an attractive people, very simple and unsophisticated'.\textsuperscript{91} Love's remarks were derived from a common European view that 'blacks' with more white contact, thus more 'sophisticated', became 'cheeky' and harder to 'control': the 'cheeky Abo' was a stereotype of Central Australian settler phraseology and occasionally reiterated in missionary discourse. In his Report, possibly with the 'cheeky' Aborigines in mind, Love made a curious remark, which seems anachronistic at first: 'How could any sane man shoot one of these simple, confiding people?'\textsuperscript{92} But Love was invoking a particular past. The heritage of violence in Central Australia, the white men he had seen in 1912 nervously fingering their guns at rumours and shadows, must still have been in the back of Love's mind. It had, after all, only been ten years since the Coniston massacre of 1928.

\textsuperscript{90} Love made two trips to Ernabella in 1937. The first visit, from 24 May to 16 July, with HR Balfour and Dr. Lewis Balfour, saw Love making preliminary contact with the indigenous people in the area, and inspecting the site itself and its environs. The second visit, from 16 August to the beginning of November, was to establish the Mission itself and await the arrival of the first missionaries, Rev. Harry Taylor and his wife. The material on his visits which are used here and in the next chapter in particular are derived from three sources: (a) an official Report which he enclosed in a July 1937 letter to HC Matthews (Board of Missions): see Love, "PRG 214, Series 1, general correspondence": item 82, Love to Matthews, 16 Jul 1937. It is noted below in this chapter that a sanitised version of this Report (without criticisms of the AIM that were in the original 'letter') was both sent out to the Australian churches for perusal as well as published in the 1939 Proceedings of the General Assembly of Australia: see Presbyterian Church, "Proceedings, GAA, 1939", pp. 136-142; (b) other letters to Matthews; and (c) his diary of the two visits: J. R. B. Love, "Series 21: Diary of a Visit to Ernabella to establish a Presbyterian Mission: 24 May-24 Oct 1937. 102pp.", in Papers of J. R. B. Love: PRG 214 (State Library of South Australia: Adelaide).

\textsuperscript{91} Love, "PRG 214, Series 1, general correspondence": Item 82: Love to Matthews (copy), 16 Jul 1937.

Although Love advised a regular patrol from Ernabella through the Reserve, he now did not believe the 'Medical Missionary' model, beloved of Presbyterians, was appropriate for Ernabella. The people, Love decided, were generally healthy, and there was not enough work for a doctor, who would 'go to seed' in his profession. It was partly a measure of Love's reputation, as well as a lack of resources, that this advice led to the ideal of a Medical Mission, which Duguid had so enthusiastically espoused, being quietly abandoned by the Board. So with the exemplary voice of experience Love enumerated the 'immediate needs' of Ernabella: a suitable Superintendent and wife, with two interests only: 'the Kingdom of God, and the welfare of the aborigines'; a stockman for the sheep, horses and camels; a dispensary, hospital, staff accommodation, dormitories (cottages), and later, school and church. Love was optimistic. The venture had received support from the Government of SA, and the Mission had been assured of the 'hearty cooperation' of the Hermannsburg Mission through Pastor Albrecht, and that of the Patrol Officer, TGH Strehlow. The Report's concluding remarks combined optimism, compassion, and tolerance alongside a characteristic anxiety concerning hybridity:

I have condemned nobody. The black people need our help, there will be half-castes as long as there are black women in Australia, and these most unhappy people need our help more than all; the white men, living hard and isolated lives away out in this country, need our help too. I have found every section ready to be friendly. While by no means countenancing wrong, I hope that this Mission will let it be definitely understood that the Church is in the field to help all, of any colour who will and can be helped, in the name of a Christ who came not to condemn, but to save.

**acquiescence in bush attitudes**

Love's 1937 Report on the new Mission had an interesting and instructive history. The publicly circulated versions of the Report excised a section from

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93 Dr. Lewis Balfour, who accompanied Love in the May-July 1937 visit to Ernabella, provided a supplementary Report to the Board which supported Love's position on a Medical Missionary at Ernabella: see ibid., pp. 142-143.


95 It was originally appended to a letter written by Love to the Board on 16 July 1937: Love, "PRG 214, Series 1, general correspondence": Item 82: Love to Matthews (copy), 16 Jul 1937. After its receipt, the Report was then published for all Presbyterians in Australia to peruse. The Blue Book for the SA State Assembly for 1938 states that the Love and Balfour Reports were sent to all congregations in Australia: see
Love's original Report that had trenchantly criticised the attitude of the AIM towards Aborigines. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Board of Missions had decided that it was neither politic nor sensible, with perhaps a Mission at stake, to fan the flames of division within the Church. The Board was not prepared to pit the exemplary missionary against the powerful and entrenched AIM at a time when the new Mission was still on shaky ground. The resistance to the mission proposal in 1936 had shaken the Board, and there were a number of shoals, not least financial ones, to be navigated safely before the Board could be confident that the Mission would be established and survive.

What had Love written? He had taken careful aim at one of Duguid's targets, the AIM Hostels:

I am shocked and distressed at the attitude of the Presbyterian Church towards the Aborigines, as evidenced by the AIM hostel at Oodnadatta. No one with long experience of life in the bush would advocate that Abs and whites should be cared for in the same ward; but the care of the Aborigines at this Hostel is far from satisfactory.96

Aborigines were accommodated at Oodnadatta in a 'disused and dilapidated motor garage'; whatever the AIM charged was too much as 'the value of the accommodation was nil':

That [the Sisters] acquiesce in the bush attitudes towards the Abs indicates that it is time the AIM arose and took the lead in, instead of following, public opinion towards the natives, and live and proclaim the AIM motto 'For Christ and the Continent.'97

Love had now lined up squarely behind Duguid in his attacks on the AIM. We may perhaps speculate on Love's motivation here.98 He never resiled from the

Presbyterian Church, "Blue Books": 1938, Report of Ernabella Mission to the Aborigines Committee. When this occurred is not clear although Duguid in the United Kingdom must have had a copy of both the unexpurgated version and the edited one (or had been advised of the existence of the two extant versions) when he wrote critically to Matthews on 28 September 1938. The Report was then later printed in the Minutes of Proceedings of the 1939 General Assembly of Australia.
96 Ibid.
97 Love, "PRG 214, Series 1, general correspondence": Item 82: Love to Matthews (copy), 16 Jul 1937.
98 It can only be speculation as Love never referred directly to this uncharacteristically 'public' attack (which was in fact kept from the public). He did write to Matthews at this time to deny that there was any friction between the Foreign Missions [Board of Missions] department of the Church and the AIM: 'there is not, whatever may have occurred between individuals.' All the same, Love admitted, 'the AIM attitude to the
criticism he had made, or from his view that, taken as a whole, the AIM was a work for the greater good of God, and Australia. It may be, however, in this case and at this time, he wished to take a stand with Duguid on the subject. His emotional and spiritual investment in Duguid's radical venture was beginning to intensify, possibly because of memories of his youthful 'grand pilgrimage'. As well, the sacrifice of much of his long awaited furlough and the chance to be with his wife in Adelaide during the birth of their third child gives some indication as to the depth of his commitment to 'the Kingdom of God and the welfare of the aborigines'. Love, despite the striations of 'whiteness' and even racism that marked his discourse, when it came to the crunch, usually came down on the side of the Aborigines.

Even the combative Duguid, in Scotland, learning of the diplomatic editorial excisions of the Board, was disappointed but understood. Writing from Scotland to Matthews in September of 1937, he commented: 'we do not quarrel with your decision but you mustn't be astonished if that leaves an effect.' The effect seemed to be to leave Duguid, even 'at home', somewhat bitter and deflated. He also felt he was hitting a brick wall with the Colonial Committee; its Convenor would later chide Duguid about attacking an organization as respected and influential as the AIM. He was even becoming a little paranoid as his efforts in Scotland were 'fouled': 'The Flynn organization is active over here.' Duguid appeared to be getting towards the end of his tether:

Phyllis [his wife] and I are tired of the cunning, of the half-truth, the smear...[a] man can't fight these imponderables. We have decided we can do no more. For the sake of the Musgrave Mission I shall remain a Presbyterian but not in the firing line. If the Presbyterian Church of Australia is going to stand for the hypocrisy that is being carried on under

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Aborigines must improve': Presbyterian Church of Australia, "Board of Missions correspondence: ML MSS 1893 Add-on 1173/MLK box 2502/Folder 4/1941", (Mitchell Library, Sydney): Love to Matthews, 16 Aug 1937. Matthews' equally conciliatory reply to Love's comment on the AIM-Foreign Missions [BM] relationship should be noted: 'We have no quarrel with the AIM. They are to meet HR Balfour and me next week (Flynn & Racklyeft). We will maintain the peace': ibid., Matthews to Love, date unclear, probably early Sep 1937.


100 Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Webster to Duguid, 7 Oct 1937.

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the AIM that is its business...I'm finished with the Church except in the native cause.101

However, when the resilient humanitarian returned to Australia in 1938, he was quickly back in harness, taking up the fight for Ernabella and against the AIM.

to watch our interests

Meanwhile his supporters had carried on his battles. Back in Adelaide after handing Ernabella over to the first Superintendent in October 1937, JRB Love attempted unsuccessfully to persuade the 1938 Assembly to divide the annual income ‘to be received from the gift of Mrs Smith of Dunesk’ in future equally between the AIM and Ernabella Mission. The Assembly once again backed the recommendation of the Smith of Dunesk Mission Report, moved by Rev. Chapman, ‘to approve payment of £50 to the Ernabella Mission to the Aborigines’.102 It should be noted that the AIM Board and Executive in Sydney (including Flynn) had been kept abreast of the situation in South Australia regarding the distribution of the Fund and had moved formally ‘That our SA members be required to watch our interests in the Assembly’.103 Concern was growing within the national AIM as to the ultimate trajectory of the distribution. The SA members were vigilant on the ‘watch’. So neither the recent inauguration of the new Mission, nor the absence of the irascible Dr. Duguid, nor the presence of the exemplary missionary, was enough yet to persuade the South Australian Assembly to accede fully to the now much publicised wishes of the long dead Mrs Smith.104 The vicissitudes of her gift continued to plague the parochial church ‘in the colonies’.

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101 Presbyterian Church of Australia, ML.MSS1893/MLK02562 (Mitchell Library): Duguid to Matthews, 28 Sep 1937.
102 Presbyterian Church, "Blue Books": 1937: see Minutes 9 and 37.
103 Presbyterian Church of South Australia, "SRG 123/360 - AIM Papers - Minutes of the AIM Board and Executive (Sydney)", (Mortlock Library: Adelaide): Minutes of Executive 23 Feb 1938 (Min. 38/70).
104 Again, the Board and Executive of the AIM were advised of the 1938 distribution of the Fund, and that Duguid had applied for half of the Funds for Ernabella. The Executive’s reaction was to ask that ‘detailed information be obtained as to the authority for the distribution of the Smith of Dunesk income so the whole matter of the continuance of the Southern Patrol can be discussed fully by the Board’: ibid., Minutes of Executive 19 Apr 1938 (Min. 38/152).
CHAPTER SIX: ‘The Usurpation of the Whole World’:
Duguid, Love and Flynn

By late 1938, Duguid was back in Australia, Ernabella Mission had now been established under the superintendency of Rev. Harry Taylor, and Love was back at Kunmunya after his visits to the Centre. Love had mailed the Banner with a brief note on his return: ‘Back home: I love the people, I love the colour and beauty of the tropical north-west, but the people are humble savages, to care for whom is our bounden duty and privilege.’ Duguid himself had thrown off his torpor, and was again firing letters off to Ministers, corresponding with all and sundry on the evils of the AIM, and keeping a close and fatherly eye on his baby Mission. Despite his apparent failure while overseas to garner the full-blooded support of the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, Duguid continued to

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1 Levinas frequently quotes a line from Pascal’s Pensees: “That is my place in the sun”. That is how the usurpation of the whole world began.” Levinas writes, in one passage: ‘Was not my ‘in the world’ or my ‘place in the sun’ and my home a usurpation of places that belong to the other man, already oppressed by me or hungry?’: Levinas, Of God Who Comes to Mind, B. Berge trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 175. The inset photograph was the front cover to a publication produced by the Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions in 1946 entitled (ironically) Foreign Missions 1946. It is said to depict an Aborigine ‘on duty as a shepherd to a flock of 800 sheep’ at Ernabella. I use it here partly as an ironic comment on the belated enthusiasm of the Presbyterian Church for the Central Australian indigenes it had ignored until Duguid brought them rudely to its attention; also as a comment on the AIM/Flynn v. Duguid fracas in the Church which in many ways was itself a debate on whether or not the Australian Aborigines were capable of taking a role as ‘fellow-citizens’ of the nation. Duguid plainly thought they were, and Flynn doubted that they were, and often gave the impression that he was indifferent to the matter: see below, this chapter.

2 We will look more closely at Love’s important ‘inspection and preparatory’ visits to Ernabella in 1937 in chapter 7, below.

3 Presbyterian Banner: vol. 43, no. 8 (August 1938), pp. 32-33.

4 For example: Harrie Green, the UAM missionary at Ooldea, told Duguid of a station owner ‘with native blood’ who had been made to stay in prison cells for accommodation during treatment at the Alice Springs AIM Hostel: Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Green to Duguid, 9 May 1938. Another letter writer, a Central Australian businessman, commented that no one he had ever talked to in the outback could recall the AIM Patrol Padre holding a service: ‘[he] never tried to converse on the things of the Spirit but would talk droughts, opals, sheep and make himself a jolly good fellow’: ibid., Wilkinson to Duguid, 10 June 1938.
work on its Convenor, J. MacDonald Webster, complaining to him that the AIM was still representing 'that Mrs. Smith left her money to start the work of AIM.'\(^5\) He was unable to find succour in this matter now even from Secretary Matthews, who had supported him from the beginning on Ernabella: 'I noted your reference to Smith of Dunesk. I must leave this to you to carry through. The Moderator General will not listen to anything about John Flynn and his Committee and therefore this matter never comes up between us.'\(^6\) Much to Duguid's fury, Flynn had become a kind of protected species both within and without the Presbyterian Church.

**expressions of surprise**

For the supporters of the AIM in the Presbyterian Church of South Australia, 1939 started with an unpleasant surprise. On 24\(^{th}\) January, Rev. David Chapman wrote to the General Secretary of the AIM, CP Hughes, with a statement and a query. 'The Church of Scotland Committee [the Colonial Committee]', Chapman stated, 'has taken the extraordinary step of selling the Smith of Dunesk properties without any reference to our Committee or Assembly.' The query was: 'One wonders why and what is behind it.'\(^7\) Perhaps what he wanted to say was who was behind it. The obvious suspect, Duguid, denied any knowledge of or involvement in the sudden sale of the properties.\(^8\)

By March, it was time again for the State Assembly, certain now to be a lively affair given the inevitable diminution of what had been regarded as something remarkably rare: an everlasting flow of Scottish money. Chapman was now

\(^5\) Ibid., Duguid to Webster (copy), 14 May 1938.
\(^6\) Ibid., Matthews to Duguid, 5 Nov 1938. The Moderator-General referred to was Rev. John MacKenzie.
\(^7\) Presbyterian Church of South Australia, "SRG/123/355 – Correspondence with General Secretary of AIM - 1939-42, 1946-47 ", in Papers of Presbyterian Church of South Australia (Mortlock Library: Adelaide): Chapman to Hughes, 24 Jan 1939.
\(^8\) Presbyterian Banner: vol. 44, no. 4 (April 1939), p. 27 (correspondence from Dr. Duguid): 'Last month, the Moderator-General, in a letter, asked if I had heard anything about the possibility of the Church of Scotland taking over control of the Smith of Dunesk Bequest, and I replied, it was news to me and that I have had no communication on the matter since in Scotland. This evening I was told by phone that the Scottish Church had sold the Smith of Dunesk properties, and I was regarded as being responsible for this. The news is a complete surprise to me. Allow me to state openly that I have never been consulted by the Church of Scotland on the matter. I have supplied to the Overseas Committee the same information I have given here...The Church of Scotland will be willing I am sure to shoulder whatever responsibility there is in the matter.'
Moderator of the State Church and John Flynn had been elected Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. In the debate on the 'deliverance' of the Report of the Smith of Dunesk Committee, Charles Duguid moved, seconded by Rev. Martin, that the Assembly approve the payment 'this year' to Ernabella Mission of three-quarters of the net annual Smith of Dunesk income. An amendment to Duguid's motion was moved, and carried, that the payment to Ernabella Mission be (merely) £75. Duguid had again been foiled, although his Mission was just beginning to share in the spoils of the Smith monies.

Moderator Chapman then moved that the Assembly express surprise at the 'precipitate action' of the Church of Scotland in selling the Smith of Dunesk properties in South Australia without advice from Australia or even notifying the SA Assembly of the intention to sell the land.9 Expressions of surprise and angry questions were sent righteously on their way to Scotland. Meanwhile, the Ernabella Mission Report to the Assembly indicated the Mission was making headway and was already regarded by the Aborigines as 'a haven of refuge' even though the work of the missionaries 'remained unremitting' with the necessaries of mission life, food and building materials having to be freighted 1000 miles from Adelaide. But Duguid, the writer of the Report, was grateful for the support the Mission had received, especially from 'anthropologists throughout Australia [who] are in strong support of the work being done at Ernabella.'10 Again, 'the anthropologists' were called in to provide an imprimatur to Duguid's creation.

In his Address, the new Moderator, Rev. Chapman, spoke of the 'untold possibilities' of the Australian nation, a continent surrounded by water, 'a race of purer blood' than any other on earth, 'a white Australia' whose 'neighbours are all coloured' and who 'need our gospel'. The Church must thus be loyal to the 'missionary vision' of the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel unto all Nations.11 Chapman's missionary vision was perhaps too

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9 Presbyterian Church, "Blue Books": 1939, Minute 60.
10 Ibid., 1939, Report of the Ernabella Committee. Duguid was thinking here of people such as Elkin, Cleland and Wood Jones, who had all signified their support for Duguid's venture.
11 Presbyterian Banner: vol. 44, no. 4 (April 1939), pp. 5-6.
broad; it looked into ‘all the world’ but neglected his own State and its original inhabitants. But he had asked some legitimate questions at the Assembly: what had happened to the AIM’s secure flow of monies from the Smith properties? Why had the properties been sold? What was going on?

some better distribution of the revenue

Part of the answer lies in a cache of letters in the files of the Smith of Dunesk Committee of the SA Church between the Colonial Committee in Scotland and the South Australian Church. The first sign that the Colonial Committee might respond to Duguid’s persistent prompting was a letter sent in October 1937 by Webster of the Scottish Committee to the Clerk of Assembly of the SA Presbyterian Church, Rev S. Martin. Webster had raised the matter of the distribution of the Smith funds, advising that his Committee had lately learned that only £20 had been allocated in the previous year ‘to the Aborigines’. He acknowledged that Duguid had raised the point again. He encouraged the Australian church, now that a ‘Scheme’ was under way for ‘work among the Aborigines’, to devise ‘some better distribution of the revenues’. This communication was inadvertently not put before the Assembly until 1939.

On 4 September 1939, well after the sale of the properties, and probably in response to the Assembly’s expressions of surprise earlier in the year, Webster wrote again to Martin informing him of the background to the decision to sell the properties: that his Committee had ‘for some years past’ been considering the whole subject of the Bequest. Mrs. Smith’s original intentions regarding the ‘education and evangelisation’ of the Aborigines of South Australia, who had in fact not died out, had to be given weight as well as the knowledge that there was

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12 Presbyterian Church of South Australia, “SRG123/331 - Smith of Dunesk Mission Committee - papers re legal and financial matters, 1921-1940”, in Papers of Presbyterian Church of South Australia (Mortlock Library: Adelaide).
14 Presbyterian Church, "Blue Books": 1939; see Minute 60 for Martin’s mea culpa for his omission, stated as an ‘inadvertence’, to put Webster’s letter before the Assembly in 1938. Probably, given that Martin had supported Duguid on the matter of Ernabella and ‘a better distribution’ of the Smith funds, his failure to produce the letter earlier was an ‘inadvertence’ as it benefited the Duguid cause to have the Scottish Committee on side.
now 'an activity among them'. 15 Webster advised that once the Committee determined that it had full legal control over the Bequest as well as a responsibility to dispose of the funds in accordance with the donor's wishes, the decision had been made to sell the properties. That had now been done. The 'price' had been £5792. The Committee had also decided that the sum from rents and interest on money from sales up to October 1939 be paid to the Moderator of the SA Church with instructions that, pro tempore, half the amount was provided to the Ernabella Mission. Webster invited suggestions from the SA Assembly before 'we draft a final new scheme' for the utilisation of the revenue from the Bequest. He concluded that he was 'deeply thankful to the SA Assembly for acting as Trustees for our Committee for so many years.' 16 Was this a whiff of lese-majesty, or a blow for justice, or both? Or perhaps simply a final loss of patience with squabbling colonials?

Chapman responded to these inconvenient events with a letter to the Colonial Committee complaining of the discourteous lack of consultation given the SA Smith of Dunesk Committee despite the fact 'that for over 40 yrs it had transacted practically all matters relating to the property.' He left the Scottish Committee in no doubt that the local Church, if consulted, would have advised against the sale of the properties, 'as they believed it more beneficial to the trust to hold them.' 17 On 2 January 1940, Webster advised Martin that the Colonial Committee was prepared to instruct its solicitor to hand over the nett proceeds of the sale of the Smith lands, the amount to be invested in Government securities on condition that the General Assembly gave a Declaration of Trust that it would deal with all income from the Smith of Dunesk funds as directed by the Colonial Committee. The Committee would in its turn give due weight to any recommendations from the SA Church as to the distribution of the income. 18 And that was where the matter rested, for the moment. The main point now was the consideration that the returns from the Fund, having been capitalized, would be reduced over time by inflation, so the resulting interest 'pot' each year would

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15 Presbyterian Church, "SRG123/331": Webster to Martin, 4 Sep 1939. Webster was referring of course to Ernabella.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., Chapman to Webster, 18 Dec 1939.
18 Ibid., Webster to Martin, 2 Jan 1940.
correspondingly diminish in value, whereas the rental value of the properties
would have tended to keep pace with inflation, and provide an amount that
would probably increase over time, in absolute, if not real terms. Yet Ernabella
suffered, too, from the same financial disadvantage. A distribution in their
favour under the old ‘rental’ scheme would have provided the new Mission with a
superior ongoing benefit. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the Colonial
Committee simply lost patience with proceedings in the ‘paradise of dissent’ and
wished to wash its hands of the matter. The whole affair, from one view, is a
fascinating vignette of the uncomfortable relationships that often existed between
the ‘home churches’ of the motherland and their progeny in the colonial and
settler society of Australia.\(^{19}\) The Scottish Church, clothed, as it continued to
remind its colonial brethren, with full legal power, had finally tipped the balance
in the Smith of Dunesk matter firmly in the direction of the pro-Ernabella forces,
with its ‘determination’ that there be a ‘better distribution’ of the monies.
Duguid’s persistent and sometimes heavy-handed attempts at lobbying the
Colonial and Continental Committee had been rewarded.

\textbf{the dread danger of race extinction}

The October 1939 \textit{Banner} carried an editorial by the new Moderator-General of
the Australian Presbyterian Church, the Right Rev. John Flynn, OBE. He began
with a statement that must have been forced by the events of the last few years:
although the AIM is a mission to white people, the sisters rendered aid to
‘aborigines and half-castes’ whenever required. Later in the same editorial he
spoke of his concerns about the ‘microscopic’ family and the lessening of race
fertility: ‘this dread danger of race extinction demands also the close attention of
those who lead in spiritual things.’ But there was hope when men and women
took up mission work or what Flynn called ‘long range evangelism.’ He paid
tribute to those who had done so. Among such lives, he added, ‘I know of none
more impressive that that of one of our own brethren, the Rev. JRB Love.’ The
Moderator-General then proceeded to give an account of the life and influence of
‘Mr. Love, of Kunmunya.’ It was men like Love, with their broad vision, who

\(^{19}\) See Hilary M. Carey, \textit{Believing in Australia: a cultural history of religions} (St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen
showed the way, said Flynn.\textsuperscript{20} Was this only a genuine tribute from Flynn, with whom Love had retained amicable relations, or was it also a politic way of keeping the exemplary missionary, who was now associated with the ‘Ernabella cause’, on side?

The next issue of the \textit{Banner} contained a warm account of ‘Ernabella Night’ at the Adelaide Town Hall. It was apparently a glittering occasion. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress were present as well as the Governor and his wife. Dr Duguid, according to the Banner, gave a ‘most arresting’ lecture, and there were many ‘happy features’ about the evening:

The chairman was the Moderator-General who knows the Inland so well, and who has done so much to cast a mantle of safety over it and make possible the wider work in which Ernabella is engaged.\textsuperscript{21}

On the Mission site itself, however, there were some ‘unhappy features’. Harry Taylor had resigned in late 1939. Rumblings at Board level about his superintendency had existed for some time and these may have forced his departure.\textsuperscript{22} Mr. Ward was now Acting Superintendent, although Matthews confided to Duguid that he was ‘just a useful sheepman, an Assistant’. He thought Love would be the best appointment, although he first wanted to ‘sound out’ TGH Strehlow on the matter.\textsuperscript{23} The well-educated Patrol Officer with his Hermannsburg and Central Australian connections was much respected in Presbyterian circles.

At the State Assembly in March 1940, the distribution of the Smith monies was again, not surprisingly, on the agenda. The protocols of battle unfolded as

\begin{footnotes}
\item[20] \textit{Presbyterian Banner}: vol. 44, no. 10 (October 1939), pp. 6-9.
\item[21] Ibid., vol. 44, no. 11 (November 1939), p. 4.
\item[22] Matthews had complained to Duguid about Taylor’s lack of ability ‘at accounts’ and his ‘exaggerated sense of our ability to spend money on Ernabella’: see Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence"; Matthews to Duguid, 13 Oct 1938; 28 Nov 1938. He forwarded in derision a copy of an order of Taylor’s for ‘border collies and pipes’: ibid., Matthews to Duguid, 5 Dec 1938. For his part, Duguid continued to support Taylor. Later, in October 1939, after another visit to the Inland and his ‘epic’ trek with Albrecht and Strehlow, he refuted the claim that Taylor was a laughing stock: ‘It was the Oodnadatta Sisters who said this; probably I am a laughing stock there’. He added bitterly: ‘If the white people of Oodnadatta ever acclaim Ernabella as a fine thing, there will be something wrong at Ernabella.’ Duguid felt Taylor had the respect of the natives; while he was not an inspirational leader and did have a bad memory and no eye for detail, his medical work was good and ‘he was very fond of the natives’: ibid., Duguid to Matthews, 3 Oct 1939.
\item[23] Ibid., Matthews to Duguid, 5 Mar 1940.
\end{footnotes}
before. Supporters of Ernabella moved for three-quarters of the nett Smith income to be paid to Ernabella for 1940; however an amendment distributing the amount 50%-50% was successful. Another motion from an Ernabella supporter that the Church of Scotland be advised that all future proceeds of the Smith of Dunesk Funds be devoted to the work of the Aborigines at Ernabella was also defeated. Again, despite the powerful intervention by the Scottish Church, and despite the persistent advocacy of the Ernabella cause by Duguid, Love and others during the previous few years, the State Assembly, as a body, had to be dragged, reluctantly, towards giving the cause of the Mission to the Aborigines its full due. Soon after the end of the Assembly, Duguid had neatly described the maneuvering that led to Ernabella getting only half rather than three-quarters of the Fund: ‘when Ernabella was near the post it was jockeyed out of position.’ Duguid’s frustration at this outcome was soon countered by his optimism over the announcement of the appointment of JRB Love as Superintendent of Ernabella, to take effect from March 1941. Duguid thought this appointment ‘the greatest stroke of fortune for Ernabella’ as Love was ‘held in the highest esteem by the anthropological and missionary world.’ Another apparent ‘stoke of fortune’ for the Mission was the appointment of Duguid himself to the newly constituted Aborigines Protection Board, which would allow the combative humanitarian to exert his influence from within the administration of Aboriginal affairs for South Australia.

**a project for white settlers**

Within the womb of the AIM, however, Chapman was still recovering from the shock of the Scottish Church’s intervention into the placid world of the Smith of Dunesk Committee when the Colonial Committee suddenly stipulated a 75:25 allocation of the Smith monies in favour of Ernabella. He began a counter offensive. Chapman advised CP Hughes, the General Secretary of the AIM, that

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24 Moved by Martin, seconded by Booth: see Presbyterian Church, "Blue Books": 1940, Minute 64.
25 Ibid., 1940, Minute 101.
26 Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to Webster (copy), 19 Mar 1940
27 Ibid., Duguid to Webster (copy), 30 Sep 1940.
28 Ibid., Duguid to McIntosh (copy), 23 Jan 1940.
29 The new stipulation came in form of a radiogram sent by the Colonial Committee to the effect that the allocation of the Smith of Dunesk income be ‘equal proportions for last yr, and for current year ¼ Ernabella, and ¼ AIM’: Presbyterian "Blue Books": 1941, Report of the Smith of Dunesk Committee, p. 45.
his Committee had asked for a review of the new allocation ‘in view of all the work being done for Aborigines in SA by the AIM’; he was ‘working up some notes on this work’ and asked for ‘all possible data at your disposal.’\textsuperscript{30} He brought out his ammunition at the March State Assembly: A Statement of Services rendered to the Aborigines in SA by the AIM submitted by the Smith of Dunesk Committee.\textsuperscript{31} It was a foolhardy, if slightly ludicrous, attempt to defend the indefensible or, at the least, to prove that which the Committee was not able to prove. Chapman’s Statement was simply a restatement of the figures for 1934 for the three AIM Hostels at Beltana, Innamincka and Oodnadatta which Duguid in 1935 had shown, and Chapman had conceded, were questionable. In addition, two letters were provided in evidence, one which said very little and even apologised that ‘the statistics are not accurate’, the other from an interested party, the General Secretary of the AIM, CP Hughes, who provided some figures for 1939-1940 which were open to the same charge Duguid had made in relation to the 1935 data, namely that they did not clearly distinguish between treatments and patients. And that was all, except for Hughes to say, rather weakly and against most of the evidence:

It has always been our policy to do everything possible medically for the aboriginals and apart from this you know that the Sisters have always included the aboriginals and half-castes in their Sunday Schools.\textsuperscript{32}

Eventually, as Howard Zelling pointed out years later, even Flynn, in dismissing Dr Duguid’s powerful rebuttal to Chapman’s Statement in 1942, did so on the grounds that the charges of lack of care for Aborigines were ‘irrelevant’ as the Southern Patrol of the AIM, to which the Smith of Dunesk funds were contributed, ‘was a project primarily for the white settlers of the Far North.\textsuperscript{33}

As it was, in 1942, the SA Assembly, with its hand finally forced by the still powerful ‘Home Church’, determined that three-quarters of the Smith Funds were to be allocated to Ernabella, and one-quarter to the AIM. It was to remain

\textsuperscript{30} Presbyterian Church, "SRG123/355": Chapman to Hughes, 12 Nov 1940.
\textsuperscript{31} Presbyterian "Blue Books": 1941: Report of Smith of Dunesk Committee, pp. 46ff.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 1941: Report of Smith of Dunesk Committee, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{33} The Advertiser (SA), 6 Sep 1972.
at this allocation into the future.\textsuperscript{34} This particular battle between Duguid and Flynn, much of it fought in surrogacy, over resources and the hearts and minds of the local Presbyterian Church, was finally over. It had been a significant part of the larger battle to persuade a reluctant national church to inaugurate the new Mission in South Australia. The Smith of Dunesk Committee was discharged by the Assembly, having lived a twilight existence since the rapid expansion of the Movement created by its former Missioner, Flynn. The combative Charles Duguid, in his hour of triumph, would manage to refrain from magnanimity, methodically ticking off to the Assembly the sins of inaccuracies and deceptions of the whole discreditable story of the Smith of Dunesk Fund in South Australian Presbyterianism.\textsuperscript{35} And David Chapman chose this Assembly to announce his retirement from 20 years as Convenor of the AIM Council. His resignation letter would express his sadness ‘at the thought of severing so long an association with the work of my old class mate the Right Rev. Dr. Flynn.’\textsuperscript{36}

\textbf{this National Asset}

The AIM had been wounded slightly in the skirmish over the Scottish monies but in the larger scheme of things it moved on irresistibly, as it had since 1912, simultaneously creating and attaching itself to powerful national narratives of nation-building, Inland mateship and whiteness. The February 1942 \textit{Presbyterian Banner} eulogised the AIM as a ‘National Asset’ and its potent, if sometimes inaccurate, edicts resonated with Presbyterian congregations in time of war and change:

\begin{quote}
The AIM is definitely making a contribution to the national effort...It serves no particular class or creed. While it seeks out our own kith and kin scattered throughout the wide spaces of the Inland, it does not neglect the aborigines, Afghans and other coloured folks with whom our workers are often brought into contact...the AIM has done something to help our Commonwealth solve the problem of filling up our vast vacant spaces. In
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{34} How far into the future is unclear, although Rev Bill Edwards, the ‘last missionary’ at Ernabella before it was given back, with the Lands, to the Pitjantjatjara people in the early 1980s, thought that monies from the ‘Smith Fund’ were still being distributed to Ernabella in the late 1970s: personal communication to author, 2002.

\textsuperscript{35} Presbyterian "Blue Books": 1942: Addenda: Dr. Duguid’s Statement on the Smith of Dunesk Report, 1941.

\textsuperscript{36} Presbyterian Church of South Australia, "SRG/123/352 – AIM Council of SA – correspondence of Financial Secretary – 1939-45" in \textit{Papers of Presbyterian Church of South Australia} (Mortlock Library: Adelaide): Chapmen to Racklyeft, 29 Apr 1942.
this disordered warring world it behoves us to see that not only our
welfare but our existence as a free and independent nation depends upon
us not only holding it but diligently and wisely developing it with people of
our own British stock.\textsuperscript{37}

So at the end of this small but significant episode in parochial Presbyterianism,
where is the iconic ‘John Flynn’ left? To find him, we should start with his
historiography, the history of his history. The end of the Great Australian
Silence and the gradual incorporation, albeit contested, of Aboriginal people and
their relations with the European intruders into the history of this country has
meant that successive commentators on John Flynn have had, increasingly, to
consider his relations with indigenous Australians.\textsuperscript{38} In Ion Idriess’s book, which
spectacularly constructed the icon of Flynn of the Inland, we notice the almost
complete absence of Aboriginal people except as a sort of exotic, dangerous
savage, speaking (but not heard) in ‘guttural’ tones, and spearing cattle and
white men.\textsuperscript{39} The reverse violence is rarely, if ever, mentioned, although Idriess
notes numbers of whites wore cartridge belts, ‘for men generally go armed in the
north if travelling through ‘bad-nigger’ country’.\textsuperscript{40} The great ‘empty’ land is
emptied of its original inhabitants, or they are reduced to a form of pestilence: ‘in
places there would be blacks, poison weed, bush-fires, famine and plenty,
perhaps accident and sickness’.\textsuperscript{41} Invariably Idriess’s ‘blacks’ are disembodied,
‘othered’ creatures, just threatening sounds in the bush to ‘the padre on the
wallaby’: ‘Then came a savage sound, sudden and menacing, the song of wild
men triumphant at some primitive deed. He jumped at the sound and stood still.
Natives!...In rising and falling cadences came that savage song. There was
something of the earth ‘earthy’ in that throaty chant, a feeling in it carrying the
growl of the primitive beast.\textsuperscript{42} The faithful prospector’s dog at the padre’s side,
no ‘primitive beast’, is all that keeps him company. Such were the sort of
representations of the Aborigine in Flynn of the Inland. There is little direct
evidence as to what Flynn thought of them, although he once characterised the

\textsuperscript{38} See W.E.H Stanner, After the dreaming: black and white Australians, an anthropologist’s view (Sydney:
Australian Broadcasting Commission (Boyer Lecture), 1969).
\textsuperscript{39} Ion L. Idriess, Flynn of the inland, Classics ed. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1973 (first pub. 1932)).
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 202.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 80.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 118.
book as ‘one of the truest pictures of Australian life that has ever been penned’.

It is probable that, like many of his generation, he would have found little with which to quibble regarding the representations of Aborigines as they would likely have matched his own.

In the ‘official’ biography, Scott McPheat treats the Flynn narrative as solely having reference to white people. ‘Aborigines’ are not at all mentioned in the index, and rarely in the text other than as incidentals to the heroic story of placing hospitals, wireless technology and aviation in the ‘wide open’ space of the Inland. A metaphor for his treatment of indigenes in the book is a photograph of the padre Kingsley Partridge ‘sending a morse message on a portable pedal set while on patrol’, while next to him stand an Aboriginal man and a boy, possibly his son, naked and holding spears, watching apparently uncomprehendingly as this evolved miracle-man, totally unconcerned with their presence (as is the caption), contacts a distant (but closer) colleague: with the mulga scrub and hills of Central Australia in the background, the present (but absent) Aborigine and the technological bwana in touch with the wider civilized world. But little is revealed in McPheat’s book of Flynn’s attitudes to the Aborigines, unless one can infer something from the silence.

A small vignette, however, sheds some light on Flynn’s fierce ‘inexorability’.

When Flynn was organising forces and funding for his original visit in 1911 to the Northern Territory which, as we have seen, was to be the catalyst for the AIM, there was at one point a possibility that some of the ‘Territory fund’ may be diverted to an Aboriginal mission in Western Australia. Flynn wrote to his contact: ‘Have just jumped to the table to write NO...! Walcott Sound is started. Whatever do they think it means starting in N.T.? Hang on for all you are worth.’ Flynn’s reaction is telling: the warning bells clearly rang when his sources of finance were threatened. He went on to retain most of the responsibility of fund raising for the AIM in his own hands. Resources were

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43 Cited McPheat, John Flynn, Apostle, p. 180 from ‘Notes written on 25 November 1940. A.I.M. files’.
44 McPheat was a padre in the AIM and was commissioned by the organization to write Flynn’s biography nine years after his death in 1951.
45 McPheat, John Flynn: Apostle, facing p. 97.
46 Ibid., p. 61.
always scarce compared to the things Flynn’s relentless energy wanted to accomplish. Part of the complex of reasons why Flynn provided some resistance to the establishment of Ernabella and the attachment of the Smith of Dunesk funds to that venture, through the AIM operatives in South Australia, must have been, as JRB Love pointed out, an understandable reluctance to lose funding to which the organization had become used. But we must ask if there was more to Flynn’s seeming indifference or even hostility to a mission for Aborigines than a mere reduction in funds.

A more recent biography on Flynn, Max Griffiths’ *The Silent Heart*, provides a more comprehensive and balanced assessment of Flynn’s attitudes towards Aboriginal people.47 Griffiths is a former Superintendent of the AIM and writes of Flynn from a position of sympathy and admiration. He acknowledges, however, the strength of the charges of racism and lack of caring that Duguid brought against Flynn. If, he writes, there was a racism present in Flynn’s thinking, it was merely a reflection of the attitude of most of the Australian community, that Aborigines were a poor and primitive people who were likely to remain so, and were thus, in a sense by definition, excluded from the ‘imagined community’ of the Inland and the rest of the nation.48 Griffiths sees, however, an eventual if indirect benefit to the Aborigines of the Inland through Flynn’s work in ‘preparing the outback’ for ‘the new age for the Aboriginal people’.49

Flynn’s alleged racism has been confronted even more directly in Brigid Hains’s very recent and stimulating work on Flynn. In *The Ice and the Inland*, Hains argues the frontier has become embedded in the modern Australian imagination as a permanent fixture, a potent myth, as she says, of a nation tempered by the struggle to live in an extreme natural environment.50 She sees Mawson and Flynn, as cultural folk heroes, as central to the creation of the frontier myth. Flynn in particular attempted to draw the rest of the nation, living on the seaboard, into the life of the ‘Inland’, and the isolated and isolating lives of the

48 Ibid., pp. 166-167.
49 Ibid., p. 168.
'bush' people correspondingly into the life of the nation. The two 'heroes', she concludes, were essentially nation-builders, shaping and enhancing the 'symbiotic relationship' between the metropolis and the frontier.\textsuperscript{51}

\textbf{the questions of white and black are wholly bound up with each other}

Hains, like Griffiths, accepts Flynn's 'blind spot' in relation to the Aborigines and the racial problems of the frontier but places him somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of the racial attitudes of his day. Hains notes that Flynn resisted the urging of some friends and supporters, including JRB Love, to take up the problems of race relations in the Inland. She cites Love, in a 1914 letter to Flynn, as arguing that 'the questions of white and black are wholly bound up in each other. We cannot deal with one apart from the other'.\textsuperscript{52} But as we have seen above, Flynn and the AIM held steadfastly to the view that the Church had another department that dealt with Aborigines and their different needs, and that particular 'problem' had very little to do with them. Flynn's willing complicity in the 'effective British occupation' of the Inland and the privileging of settler interests was, Hains concedes, deeply antithetical to indigenous interests.

In a subsequent article, examining specifically the charges that Charles Duguid brought against Flynn, Hains has again provided a nuanced and sympathetic picture of a man who, while occasionally denouncing the treatment of Aboriginal people, was 'slow to do anything about it in his own institutions'.\textsuperscript{53} As both Love and Kramer suggested at the time, Flynn and the AIM had formed an alliance with a deeply racist white settler culture that left them on one side of a great divide. Nevertheless, Hains cautions against 'moralistic historical judgement' on Flynn's 'incomplete humanitarian vision'.\textsuperscript{54} It is a fair warning. A rush to judgement may be unjust.

\textbf{the 'move aside' clause}

Yet public figures are accountable for their actions and attitudes, and while it is

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., pp. 171-176.
\textsuperscript{52} Flynn Papers, NLA, Box 3, Folder 2: Love to Flynn, 9 Feb 1914, cited ibid., p. 125.
\textsuperscript{53} Brigid Hains, "Inland Flynn: Pioneer? Racist? Or product of his time?", Eureka Street (May 2003): 31-34, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 34.
important to understand the extent to which such people may be enmeshed in the implicating discourses of their time, it is open to subsequent narratives to question earlier ones from the perspective of their own discourse(s). From a perspective that posits the relationship between the European intruder/settlers and the indigenous people of this country as the country's single most important moral and social question, then and now, Flynn's failures, if that is what they were, must be counted against him. JRB Love, and even Duguid, spoke the same language as Flynn in most things, were caught in similar discourses, yet both were able to make the sympathetic leap of imagination which allowed them to accept some responsibility for people seemingly 'moved aside' by the white race's 'history' and 'discourse'. It was ironic, and perhaps tragic, that Flynn himself saw this clearly. Hains quotes him:

We Australians who, light-heartedly, for four generations, have been reading to Aborigines the 'move aside' clause, will surely be called up to render an account of our stewardship – God only know how soon.\(^55\)

Flynn's 'stewardship' of the white settlers of the Inland was superb, and has been generously acknowledged by a grateful 'white' nation. Whether that is all that needs to be said, or whether his actions and enthusiastic participation in settler discourse in fact expose him as irredeemably complicit in the colonialist expropriation and appropriation of the Inland on unjust terms – the usurpation of the whole world of the Aborigines - is a matter of judgement and hermeneutics. The 'stewardship' (itself a term resonant with colonialist paternalism and notions of racial superiority) of indigenous people was something Flynn was prepared to leave to others. The standard defences of Flynn come under a number of related rubrics: that the Presbyterian Church dealt with Aborigines through its missions and the Board of Missions, not through the AIM;\(^56\) that Flynn had enough on his plate and that he, and his organization, could not have achieved what he, or it, did without a single-minded devotion to the cause of the white settler;\(^57\) that any accommodation with the

\(^{55}\) Ibid.

\(^{56}\) This was the principal 'defence' used by the AIM itself, both against Duguid's charges and subsequent, similar charges.

\(^{57}\) A 'defence' used often by some old Centralian hands: Winifred Hilliard, author of *The People In Between*, and a long-term missionary at Erinabella, argues this (personal communication with author).
'blacks' would have resulted in the disaffection of the whites and the consequent loss of goodwill and, thus, effectiveness of the AIM;\textsuperscript{58} that by the assistance given to Aborigines, admittedly originally as out(s ide)patients and through the Royal Flying Doctor Service, was ultimately more beneficial for Aborigines than almost anything else done for them by Europeans;\textsuperscript{59} that by casting his 'mantle of safety' over the Inland, he made it possible for white women to migrate there and thus 'ease the pressure' on the benighted and abused Aboriginal women;\textsuperscript{60} that white women also tended to 'civilise and domesticate' the Centre, with eventual benefits to Aborigines.\textsuperscript{61} These are awkward defences, it should be said, a mixture of rationalization and special pleading, and varying degrees of merit.

\textbf{a national saint}

This study suggests further possible 'charges' against Flynn's already contested reputation on Aboriginal matters, that is, that by aiding and abetting attempts to resist Duguid's efforts, firstly, to attach resources clearly misappropriated to alternative, European uses, to an Aboriginal cause; and, secondly, to establish a Mission for Aborigines designed not so much to 'convert' the local Aborigines as to 'conserve' them, 'save' them as a people, as a 'tribe', as a culture, Flynn was pursuing policies directly inimical to indigenous welfare and interests. The evidence on both 'charges' is strong. It is highly unlikely that Flynn did not know the details behind the Smith of Dunask controversy or believed that since the Deed of Gift did not specify Aboriginals as recipients that that was the end of the argument. Duguid raised all these matters in his Moderator's Address, and afterwards in a number of public statements, as well as private correspondence to authorities within the Church, which pointedly made reference to the AIM's (mis)appropriation of the money. At the very least, as JRB Love said, it would have been a 'fine thing' for the AIM to have released the money willingly, and, as Howard Zelling pointed out years later, Flynn, elected as head of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in 1939, was in an excellent position to do this 'fine thing'; certainly one word from him to his South Australian cadres and all opposition to

\textsuperscript{58} Both Kramer and Love understood this 'defence' for the AIM, although Love thought the AIM should have stood up against the 'bush' discourse.

\textsuperscript{59} The 'Albrecht' defence: see below, this chapter.

\textsuperscript{60} The 'George Simpson' defence: see above, chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{61} Hains uses an argument along these lines in \textit{The Ice and the Inland}: see pp. 102-103.
the Ernabella claims to the money would have stopped. He did not do it. That Flynn also subtly resisted the establishment of Ernabella (in ways other than resisting access to the Scottish money) by his machinations at the 1936 Assembly is also probable given Duguid's claims to this effect along with some collaborative testimony.

Flynn's motivation for his actions (or sins of omission regarding indigenous Australians) is a more problematical question. Was it a concern to hoard money to which his organization had become used, or was it dislike of Duguid, or was it an indifference to the fate of the Aboriginal inhabitants of this country, despite some statements to the contrary which Hains makes the most of in her 'defence' of Flynn?\(^{62}\) Or something else? In these sorts of cases it is difficult to construct an answer that is not a complex amalgam of many factors. Whatever the case is here, it should be said that John Flynn's inaction on some matters, and his actions in other matters we have examined, in relation to Aboriginal people, must continue to leave a stain on his reputation as 'a national saint'.\(^{63}\) Indeed, it was the 'straight-out' Albrecht, on whose mission Flynn first tested his famous wireless sets, who once said of the AIM founder that 'it is wrong to surround Flynn with a sort of a halo of a saint' and that acts of discrimination by the AIM 'cast a dark shadow over Flynn and his work'.\(^{64}\) The Lutheran missionary believed, however, that Flynn was an instrument of God's purposes, 'to bring

\(^{62}\) A problem for Hains is that while she is able to cites a small number of sympathetic pronouncements by Flynn on Aborigines, they come principally from the same early issue of the Inlander, viz., 2(1), 1915: see Flynn Papers, NLA. It is almost as if Flynn said what he said, to get it on the record, so as to limit any possible attacks on his public discourse on Aborigines, then proceeded to adopt the attitude of indifference, even contempt towards them of which he was 'accused' by Duguid, principally, but also Albrecht and Zelling. This does involve some speculation and is possibly unfair to Flynn, but it is a possible interpretation in the circumstances. There is a good deal of evidence that John Flynn, as a minister, churchman, and leader of an important organisation, was a most politic and accomplished politician, capable of this sort of dissembling and subtle manipulation of the public record. Any case against this interpretation has to still account for the crucial differences between Flynn's public record (the statements Hains cites) and his private remarks and attitudes (attested by Duguid, Albrecht and Zelling). Hains also in her work has a tendency to repeat citations, as if now, which gives an impression that Flynn said more than he actually did on this subject. Not that Hains is necessarily attempting an orthodox 'defence' of Flynn: indeed she notes that in the writing of her book she was 'haunted' by Flynn's attitudes towards Aborigines. I have felt similarly at times about some of JRB Love's discourse on Aborigines. All that said, Hains's book on Flynn and Mawson is a stimulating discussion of Mawson and Flynn and the meanings of the Australian 'frontier'.

\(^{63}\) A characterization made by Hains and others: see Hains, The Ice and the Inland, p. 168.

\(^{64}\) F.W. Albrecht, "Albrecht Material," in Lutheran Archives (Adelaide, 1926-1978): 'Letter from Pastor FW Albrecht re Dr. John Flynn', n.d. (but written after the 1972 furore (see the beginning of chapter 2, above)).
some comfort and new hope into hopeless situations in the bush.\footnote{Ibid.}

How do we then balance these Presbyterians against each other, Flynn against Duguid, and Love? Beside my suggestion that John Flynn tended to see the Inland as a vast palimpsest over the inevitable erasure of whose original, indigenous inscriptions he wished to write modernity’s nation-building, domesticated, racially homogenous script, I posit these ‘missionaries’ to the Aborigines as oppositional to this erasure, indeed dedicated to their ‘salvation’. Yet in some ways one of the interesting things about the Presbyterians was not their differences so much as their similarities. It was not perhaps a coincidence that the most powerful denouncements of Flynn and the AIM were made by a fellow Presbyterian. Inga Clendinnen, in writing about disputes between 16\textsuperscript{th} century Franciscan Orders over treatment of their Mayan Indian converts, has noted that ideological conflicts are often made ‘more painful and bitter’ by being conducted, as she put it, ‘within the terms of a shared rhetoric’\footnote{Inga Clendinnen, "Disciplining the Indians: Franciscan Ideology and Missionary Violence in Sixteenth-Century Yucatan," \textit{Past and Present} 94 (Feb., 1982): 27-48, p. 28.}. Something similar was perhaps occurring in very different circumstances in the disputes and arguments of Australian Presbyterians four centuries later. That shared rhetoric, or discourse we may say, begins to break down during such conflicts, both sides feeling keenly the ‘outrageous betrayals’ of the other side. Duguid and Flynn shared belief in a Protestant Gospel of Social Justice, doing good to and for one’s fellow man, with less emphasis on an evangelical Gospel fixed and fixated on the conversion project, the urgent saving of ‘native’ or ‘settler’ souls.

Ernabella was a mission created on the imagination of a man whose vision was not evangelical but humanitarian. There is little evidence in any of Duguid’s correspondence or his published works of the evangelical desire to convert savages and save souls characteristic of most missionary activity in the last three centuries since the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening movements.\footnote{See Stanley, ed., \textit{Christian Missions and the Enlightenment.}} In this he was (ironically) similar to his great antagonist, Flynn, who throughout his
career seemed equally as indifferent to evangelical imperatives. They believed more in a 'benevolent Providence' than in a judgmental God, more in a God of Love than a God of Law; they both believed in the necessity for the development of the Inland as a necessary ingredient in nation-building, both exhibited an attachment to discourses of Protestant, British and white superiority. They parted ways on the matter of the Aborigines and, as Clendinnen suggests, it was their shared discourse that, in part, made their disagreement so disagreeable. It also sheds a large significance on the point of divergence. JRB Love steered a middle course between these two restless engines of energy and ambition, yet he too, although (occasionally) caught as was Flynn in dark and discriminatory discourses contemptuous of Aborigines, diverged, when it mattered, towards the 'men dispossessed and without food', whose whole world had been usurped by Flynn's white men.

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68 See Flynn Papers, NLA.
CHAPTER SEVEN: ‘A Politics of Hospitality’\textsuperscript{1}: Early Love at Ernabella

‘Ernabella':\textsuperscript{2} the site that was established between and around the gums and hills and creeks of that particular Interior space of the Musgrave Ranges has forever been represented now as a ‘mission site’ for white people who read about it or go there to visit or to work, and perhaps also for Aborigines, particularly Pitjantjatjara people, some of whom, as people do everywhere, look back with warmth and nostalgia at the site (sight?) of their youth. And so it was ‘established’ on a certain day in 1937, by a certain ‘Church’, ‘among’ a certain ‘tribe’ of Aborigines, with whom there was an ‘encounter’ and thus a ‘missionary enterprise’ or venture began from that day. Christianity was ‘introduced’, converts were made (eventually) and a ‘congregation’ formed.

This establishing language, lavished as it is on the beginnings of almost all missionary ventures by the mythologies of the venturers and their storytellers, tends to gloss and flow over the narrative, and by fixing it within this discourse of establishment, undermines the (hi)story of the ‘place’, its freshness, the novelty and unpredictability of the venture. This discourse may also contribute unduly to

\footnote{1 A phrase Derrida uses in his discussion of Levinas: see Jacques Derrida, \textit{Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas}, Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas trans. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997) esp. p. 18: see especially the discussion in the Introduction, above, and in the Conclusion, below. The inset photograph is a Duguid photograph from the State Library of South Australia, captioned ‘Ernabella boys at play, early 1940s’: see Mattingly and Hampton, eds., \textit{Survival in our own land}, opp. p. 141.

\footnote{2 Now that it is longer a mission site, it is called (by some) by another name: Pukatja. While in one sense, this is an appropriate indigenization of naming rights, since the ownership, if not control, of the Lands has reverted to the original custodians, it also tends to confine, also appropriately, ‘Ernabella’ to the historic and represented ‘mission site’. Pitjantjatjara people were, of course, not the only people to have been young at the ‘mission site’: children of missionaries also were, of whom I was one. It is a possible, and legitimate, critique of this thesis that its theme of hospitality (from both ‘sides’ of the \textit{karu}) reflects the author’s background. This may well be true: it is impossible to separate oneself fully from one’s particular and peculiar ‘context’. But if it is so, it has been more an unconscious or subconscious process than anything more deliberate, and if the evidence had been more in another direction, I would, I hope, have written a different thesis. But then perhaps I have only ‘seen’ the evidence I wanted to see.

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the rupturing of the continuity of the site with the many pasts inhering in that place and moment in time, the pasts of the singular people who had lived there and who were living there when the 'establishment' occurred. And the establishing discourse was and is also inextricably mixed with both missionary and settler discourses of the time, which agree in certain respects with each other, that it was the whites did the encountering, the introducing and the converting, that is, the 'establishing', as whites do. The Other remained passive.

So this Interior place, Ernabella, has become, therefore, under the influence of this 'establishing' language, an interior space littered with preconstructed notions and concepts, a discourse which threatens continually to 'make sense' of all that happened on the site before we can attempt to make another sense of it here, in this work. It tends to assume an indigenous audience, for example, that has materialized out of the blue, as it were, for the 'establishment' of the mission, as if an imperious if not imperial and ethnocentric click of the fingers must have inaugurated the mission. This assumption clearly undermines and underplays the local indigenous response without which 'the mission' would not exist at all or would soon cease to exist. While this response is not a focus of the present study, the qualified and limited nature of our focus, which is necessarily only part of the missionary encounter, remains evident. All this is not a suggestion that we can now see the history of the mission site and the arguments about Aborigines that frame it, washed completely free of the accretions of 'establishing' discourses and other discourses of the time. After all, we are enmeshed in the discourses of our own time, which themselves have continuities and affinities, as well as discontinuities, with these discourses of the past.

We are also captured by the assumptions of predictability. We know what happened in the past; we conclude it was bound to happen. This is linked to the understandable but mistaken notion that simply because one thing happens after another, the first event was necessarily a cause of the second event. When we look back at any 'history', and know how it turned out, we are tempted to think, because this happened, that happened. Yet at the beginning, or at least the story's beginning, which is not really the beginning, simply a beginning, no
one knew what would happen, neither the indigenous people nor the missionaries. The only ‘map’ they had is the pictures they had built up, through scraps of anecdotes, rumours, half-truths and experiences, of the Other, the Aborigine, the Missionary. The first great superintendent of the Ernabella Mission, JRB Love, half-glimpsed this existential character of the colonial encounter on the mission site, although he saw it through a characteristic gauze of exoticism and savagery. In a letter to the Board of Missions just before he set off to Ernabella as its leader, he wrote:

It is not possible for a man just to step into the midst of the life of a tribe so lately removed from savagery; but every man must win his position for himself. And it shows... that the missionary must be prepared to meet any eventuality, accident, murder, illness, or sudden death, on a remote station.³

This existential nature of the mission site was productive of, and helped to produce, improvisational relations between the missionaries and the Pitjantjatjara. The early contacts between the two sides were conducted and negotiated in the gestures and hesitancies of hospitality proffered and accepted by each. Between the native camp and the mission homestead lay Ernabella Creek, which flows metaphorically through our narrative as a kind of liminal space where the two Others met, face to face, in a Levinasian encounter, in their otherness, their alterity, their knowledge of their difference and separation, yet reaching out occasionally, at times uncomprehendingly, to each other in a politics of hospitality.⁴ The one is saying, share our land, as you have not come to

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⁴ Levinas sees the ‘face’ more as a metaphor for the encounter between the One and the Other than as a literal, physical ‘fact’: ‘My power... is now produced as the possession of a world I can bestow as a gift on the other... For the presence before the face, my orientation toward the Other can lose the avidity of the gaze only by turning into generosity, incapable of approaching the other with empty hands. This relationship... is the relationship of discourse [discours]. The way in which the other presents himself, exceeding the idea of the other in me, we here name face’: Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 50. The Levinasian notions here are resonant: the notion of the avidity of the Western gaze is almost a summary of the history of European colonialism. To what extent missionaries generally, in that history, can be said to have replaced that avidity with generosity is of course problematical. Their gaze was often as avid, for the conversion and civilization of ‘the native’, as the general colonialist avidity for commerce, exploitation and subjugation. But that an element, if not more, of ‘generosity’ inhered in the discourse and praxis of Love, Albrecht and Duguid, to match the generosity of their hosts, who ‘welcomed’ them into their lands, and was largely unmatched by anything that could be characterised as ‘generosity’ from other European sources, is a continuing argument in this study. Also argued as a corollary is the unfashionable (then and now) sense of responsibility felt deeply
kill us; the other is saying, we have come as friends, if distant friends (or older brothers), we have not come to kill as others have.\textsuperscript{5} The hospitality of the hosts is exemplified throughout this narrative by their willingness to educate these intruders about their land, language and lore, and at least listen to these strangers’ stories. Some indigenous peoples have used what Margaret Jolly has called the ‘saliency of silence’, the power of not speaking, hearing or listening, as ways of resisting colonial power.\textsuperscript{6} Others beat drums or ran away during sermons.\textsuperscript{7} The Pitjantjatjara exercised the resistance they did offer, along with their accommodation, in other subtle ways, which is perhaps to say that they were hospitable both in their resistance and their accommodation.

The first superintendent of Ernabella on arrival noted the quiet of the first nights when he had been used elsewhere to the sound of singing from the mission natives. When he asked them why they did not sing, they replied that the previous white occupant of the homestead would take pot shots at them with his gun if they sang at night. After that, the singing tentatively recommenced.\textsuperscript{8} Both sides had to establish and re-establish their boundaries and their bona fides. Nothing was guaranteed in their history.

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by these particular missionaries. Levinas again (paraphrasing him): I am responsible to the other and responsible for him (I must ‘feed him with bread from my own mouth’ if necessary): especially I am responsible for him in the sense that I must answer for him and ‘take his punishment’ which to Levinas ultimately means the other cannot be left to die alone: ‘I must stay with him and always do more until there is no more to do’: see Levinas, Otherwise than Being, p. 142; Levinas, Of God Who Comes to Mind, p. 175; see also Oona Ajzenstat, Driven Back to the Text: The Premodern Sources of Levinas’s Postmodernism (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001), pp. 24-25.
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\textsuperscript{5} According to the Levinasian ethics, the face of the Other ‘speaks’ an originary prohibition: ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ The desire of the Self for possession is ultimately murderous yet ‘to see a face is already to hear: Thou shalt not kill.’ The encounter with the Other interrupts ‘the imperialism of the same [Self]’: Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 39.
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\textsuperscript{7} Lamont Lindstrom, Knowledge and Power in a South Pacific Society (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), pp. 145-146.
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\textsuperscript{8} The superintendent was Rev. Harry Taylor, the previous mission Kumnunya. It is possible, from this story, to see Ernabella as almost a microcosm, even a metaphor, of the larger colonial world which had usurped the whole world of the Aborigines. The previous occupant of the homestead was a dogger, a small pastoralist, and shot at proximate blacks: a small-scale representation of the hostile settler. The missionaries, in contrast, came in amity, in a politics of hospitality, and ‘the singing started again’. Of course, the intrusive and reformatory nature of some mission sites did render them problematical: see criticisms of various regimes in Swain and Rose, eds., Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions, and Broome, Aboriginal Australians, esp. ch. 7. This did not apply so much to Ernabella which quickly developed a reputation as a progressive mission: see below.
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just another mission station?

From its inception, Ernabella carried the reputation of a progressive mission. It was labelled a unique experiment, radical, a new way of christianizing and civilising. Yet when FW Albrecht passed through Ernabella in 1942 on his way back to Hermannsburg after an enforced wartime exile he saw Ernabella as being ‘run along similar lines’ to his own mission. JRB Love himself was reluctant to concede Ernabella to being essentially any different from his Kunmunya. When a prominent scientist, Frederick Wood Jones, praised the Ernabella Mission as ‘the best yet’ in 1937, Love’s understandably defensive retort was that it was merely ‘carrying on’ the principles of the Kimberley mission. Love’s view, however, of the new Central Australian mission station as a ‘Kunmunya in the Desert’ was not general. The Duguidian experiment has almost universally been regarded as a new departure from a missiological tradition in Australia that had conspicuously failed. But were the reservations of Love and Albrecht merely those of two men protective of their own missions? Was Ernabella a radical experiment or was it in the final analysis little different from the orthodox, traditional mission station? It may help to catch a glimpse of it at the outset, to sense its themes, its concerns, the notions that sustained its missionaries and the representations they produced of their indigenous ‘hosts’, that is, their discourse about Aborigines, in the wilderness to which their God had sent them to make a discours, a ‘founding conversation’, with Aborigines.

in the company of savages

The diary that Love kept on his ‘inspection and establishment’ journey of 1937 is useful material for his initial representations of the indigenous people of Central Australia. Almost the first party of ‘blacks’ he sees are near Ernabella:

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9 Duguid himself, as founder of the Mission, was the principal, but not only, generator of the early ‘mythology’ of the Ernabella site, beginning with his Moderator’s Address in 1935 when he outlined the necessity for a new approach to mission work among Aboriginal people: Presbyterian Banner, vol. 40, no. 4.  
11 See Broome, Aboriginal Australians, pp. 117-118; also see Jean Woolmington, Aborigines in colonial society, 1788-1850: from "noble savage" to "rural pest" (North Melbourne, Victoria: Cassell Australia, 1973); and Swain and Rose, eds., Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions.  
12 Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 41.
we saw a scattered party of bush blacks, making towards a camping place, all carrying loads on their heads. The men and children were all naked and a reddish-brown colour, apparently from the red-brown dust of the country. The women that we saw were all wearing ragged and dirty remnants of dresses.\textsuperscript{13}

While Love seems to identify the people with the country, naked, raw, red-brown, dusty, it is the female Aborigines who strike a discordant note. His representation of Aboriginal women frequently involved their ‘ragged’ dress. His attitude towards Aborigines was often patronising and fastidious, such was his predilection for cleanliness and European standards of ‘civility’. Thus he could be surprised by the presence of these ‘virtues’ in indigenous people:

Today I got Kathleen, or Nancy, or whatever her name may be, a lubra employed here at present, to wash clothes for me, which she did only middling. She said ‘thank you’ for a handful of lollies which I gave her in payment – a little to my surprise, as the blacks are so contemptuously regarded here that I did not expect to hear thanks.\textsuperscript{14}

When Love visited a native camp, on the other side of the creek, for the first time, he noted again that the men were ‘totally naked’ but the women, ‘as they saw us coming’, put on ‘some filthy scraps of ragged garments’. Love spent an ‘interesting half hour with the men’, acquiring some vocabulary; when he moved to the women, ‘the aged women crouched on their knees with their faces covered by their hands, heads to the earth.’ Love is not disconcerted:

I put a lolly in each woman’s hand. One or two raised their heads, the others did not move. Then we moved to where [a] young woman sat. Beside her was a scrap of a blanket, from which protruded the foot of a small child. I raised the blanket, and the little child crouched to its mother’s side, burying its face against her thigh. I put a lolly in its hand when it sat up.\textsuperscript{15}

A few days later, he again visits a native camp across the creek with the children ‘laughing, white-toothed, unconscionably dirty, full of play and happy’ but again the women covering their heads. One had a sack over her head:


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 29 May 1937.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 27 May 1937.
I removed the covering, and a frightful spectacle met our gaze. She was apparently in an advanced stage of gangrene, both lips, nose and one eye were completely gone, the other eye seemed blind and deeply sunken. How she is still living is a marvel...\(^\text{16}\)

At another fire a women held a small pup, the mother of which 'came snarling at us...the children were all crouched behind a break-wind, by the fire, as a raw wind was blowing.' Between these visits across the creek, Love had climbed a prominent hill to get a better, panoptical view of the land, to encompass it within his European gaze. He saw 'the high broken ranges' to the north; on the south, Glen Ferdinand flanked 'by a high and rugged ridge.' Closer the Ernabella Creek was timbered with gums, 'a refreshing sight in this dry land', but the plains were sparsely dotted with mulga, gidgee, and saltbush. The general appearance of the country, from Love's vantage point, was 'harsh and dry, forbidding and desolate.'\(^\text{17}\) On his return to Ernabella in August, Love again climbed to a high point, and saw once more 'a desolating prospect'.\(^\text{18}\)

Large patches of ground are bare. Out where the sheep are looks very bad. Nowhere is there much feed visible. If no rain falls before the summer, I doubt whether many of the 2,000 sheep now on Ernabella will survive...to the North, beyond the Musgraves, the Northern Territory appears as a dark ocean...the hills are beautiful but the land is almost a desert.\(^\text{19}\)

The diarist writing is evocative. The rawness of the animal life and the desolate and forbidding country seem to match the primitivity of the inhabitants, just as the hues and red dust of the 'rugged' land appear to rub off on its 'ragged' denizens. JRB Love seems in the company of 'savages'.

**the liminal Creek**

Living arrangements at the early Mission site were not untypical of 'traditional' missions sites both in Australia and elsewhere. A 'block' of colonial buildings, basic European style, a homestead or two, a store, a ramshackles school, various sheds, made up the missionary quarters. The church, an improved school building, some more residences, were to come later. All this was distinctly

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 31 May 1937.  
\(^{17}\) Ibid., 30 May 1937.  
\(^{18}\) Ibid., 28 Aug 1937.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid.
separated from the natives’ quarters, which were across the Ernabella Creek. The Creek represented both a kind of dividing line, a boundary, and a copula between contiguous communities. Both fissure and fusion, it separated and connected Native and Stranger. It also represented the distance – social, racial, religious - between Aborigine and missionary, the separation and alterity of the Other who could be only be met face to face in the Creek, as it were, in that liminal space between the two sides, who then retreated to their separate ‘camps’, which remained still, at night, mysterious, forbidden and forbidding to each Other.

The separation was not merely metaphorical or symbolic. In JRB Love’s early ventures across the creek, in 1937 and in 1941, he often found a camp consisting of a small group of ‘blacks’, typically some men, a few more women, children and dogs. They were ‘interesting’, the diarist thought; he would pick up scraps of language, and note their ‘ragged, dirty’ clothes, or their wounds and burns; then return to the genteel domestication of the mission homestead, either to the dinner ‘around the tea-table’, sometimes with fellows up from the university, or the mission board – companionable white fellowship – or, later, with his wife, in a ‘clean, decent’ setting as a conspicuous and conscious contrast to the ‘sordid’ nature of aboriginal, primitive, savage life. Love put a premium on this dichotomy: he once explained patiently to the Board of Missions: ‘In all the sordidness of aboriginal mission life (did any of the members of the Board imagine it is often anything but sordid?) a man and his wife need the joy of a refined and happy home life to keep up this work.’20 We remember how, much later, an Ernabella missionary was appalled at the closeness of huts of the Arrernte to the whites’ living spaces at Hermannsburg: ‘There was no getting away from them, they were on top of you all the time.’21 Possession of Aborigines became important to the Ernabella missionaries; they wanted to attach them to the mission, they wanted them to become ‘our’ Aborigines; yet it seemed that separation and distance from Aborigines was also seen as necessary and, perhaps, natural.

21 See above, Introduction.
knowledge and expertise

Considered crucial too was the knowledge, experience and expertise which the Board of Missions and the Presbyterian missionary community assessed to exist plentifully in the human architecture of the site. Duguid had been into the Inland five times by the time Love took over at the mission. The Adelaide doctor had built up strong connections with the only other mission in Central Australia, Hermannsburg, through his relationships with Albrecht and TGH Strehlow, these nourished most recently on their 1939 trek through the Centre on camel. The anthropologists and scientists had been persuaded to support the mission. Cleland and Wood Jones were on side. Elkin, courted by Duguid, was interested, reminding Duguid that he [Elkin] had been the first man to take a motor vehicle to the Musgraves. Stating that he had ‘a good grip on the social organization and totemism of that area’, Elkin hoped that Love would take advantage of this. He also responded to some ‘confidential’ probing by Duguid by cautioning the doctor from his (Elkin’s) experience in the Kimberleys and his dealing with Love as editor of Oceania that ‘Love is never keen to have an expert work either on the language or social anthropology of his mission region’. Despite Elkin’s warning, Duguid claimed in 1941 that Ernabella had, in Love, ‘perhaps the most experienced, sensible and anthropologically-minded Missionary to natives in Australia’. Albrecht, in temporary exile from Hermannsburg, too, passed on to Duguid his pleasure at Love’s appointment: ‘That is splendid. Your determination in this matter begins to show open results which nobody can question...May God bless his going there, and give him the strength and wisdom he will require for the job – our prayers are with him and for the whole work.’ Despite his own initial reservations, the exemplary missionary was being carried to Central Australia on a wave of goodwill and great expectations.

22 Duguid, “Series 1: correspondence”: Duguid to Chinnery (copy), 1 Aug 1941.
23 Ibid., Elkin to Duguid, 27 Dec 1940: this letter was sent after Duguid had provided Elkin with information on Ernabella and had possibly, judging by Elkin’s response, asked for Elkin’s opinion of Love. See especially above, chapters 2-3, for details of interactions between Elkin and Love.
24 Ibid., Duguid to Chinnery (copy), 1 Aug 1941.
to preach Christ to the savages

How did Love approach the ‘whole work’ of the missionary venture at Ernabella? During his first visit in 1937, HR Balfour, on behalf of the Board, had asked him to put on paper his views on ‘the Aboriginal question’ and Ernabella, perhaps to assess (discretely) the compatibility of his thinking with Duguid’s. 26 His summation of the principal aim of the mission was succinct: ‘to preach Christ to the savages.’ But his progressivism in the process of doing this was evident, wishing, he said, to ‘conserve all that is, as far as we are competent to judge, good in the primitive organization of the tribes’ and ‘to destroy nothing that we are not quite sure is definitely bad in native custom.’ This did not mean leaving the Aborigines untouched: ‘their old life must be modified, to enable them to meet contact with civilization, which has already reached every aboriginal in Australia. And their old way of living must be uplifted by the teaching of Christ.’ Love felt strongly that he had ‘already proved’ at Kunmunya that it was possible ‘to engraft Christianity on the tribal system of law and belief’. As he put it, it was ‘futile’ for the missionary to beak down the traditional indigenous beliefs:

The new wine will burst the old bottle in its own time: the missionary ought not to do so, lest he bursts the old bottles and has not left an adequate substitute in their place.27

a bible in every home

But in what language was the ‘adequate substitute’ to be delivered? Another of Duguid’s fundamental principles was the acquisition and use by the missionaries of Ernabella of the local language. In 1937 Love told Matthews that he wished ‘to do something useful with this year...put the grammar of the local people on a written basis, for the use of future missionaries.’ He worked hard to grasp the language, assisted by the indigenes: leaving Ernabella on a camel trip, ‘three little boys ran alongside us, pointing out objects to us, and naming them till late...

26 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1937": Love to Matthews, 2 June 1937. HR Balfour, a member of the Board of Missions as well as a friend of Love’s, had accompanied Love to Ernabella during his first visit in 1937.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., Love to Matthews, 16 Jul 1937.
afternoon... He reported to Matthews regularly: 'Making tolerable progress with the language – the men are interested and eager to help me.' Love kept his notebook at the ready but felt he was not as quick at picking up indigenous linguistics as he had once been. It was not easy: at a camp he 'tried for more words, but there was so much chattering that I did not make much headway.' Slowly things improved, 'wider connections' were made, and Love was able to leave the first superintendent 'some notes on the native language.' On his return in 1941, he struggled to pick the language up again, reporting to Matthews: 'the language study goes on slowly. My memory is not as good at 50 as it was at 25.' For some time he preached to the Aborigines in English, apparently not being either sufficiently fluent or confident enough in the vernacular to do so, at least initially, although we have evidence that by August of 1942 Love was readily conversing in Pitjantjatjara with mission Aborigines. The young schoolteacher, RM Trudinger, who had arrived at Ernabella in early 1940, was preaching in the local language almost from the start and was privately contemptuous of Love's preaching in English to a crowd of uncomprehending natives. Differences between the two men may have been partly personal, but later came to a head over language policy.

The difficulties experienced over language on the mission site were due, in part, to ambiguities in Duguid's policy of privileging the local language. Duguid's view seems to have been that its validity was self-evident, given the overarching policy of retaining the traditional life of the Pitjantjatjara at the mission site. Duguid also appeared to believe that the missionaries, through the process of communicating with the Aborigines in their own tongue, would come to

32 Ibid., 11 Sep 1937; Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1937": Love to Matthews, 13 Nov 1937.
33 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1941": Love to Matthews, 8 Aug 1941.
34 The evidence comes from Albrecht: see Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Journey North, p. 4. Certainly by 1943, we have confirmation from another visitor, Rev. J. Eric Owen, that Love was speaking and preaching fluently in the local language: Eric J. Rev. Owen, "A Visitor's Diary: Ernabella Patrol 1943," (Melbourne, Presbyterian Church of Australia, Board of Missions, 1943), p. 8.
35 See especially chapter 11, below.
understand the local culture better and help the Pitjantjatjara to retain as much of it as was possible in the context of a dominant white culture. It was in fact the rate at which the language of that dominant culture was introduced which became an issue at the site. Duguid much later suggested that it had been the plan to introduce English after three years 'as a foreign language', but there is little evidence that this was the understanding of the missionaries at Ernabella in the early 1940s. The resulting ambiguity of the policy allowed for small but crucial shifts of opinion on language. Historically, evangelical missionaries in Australia had worked along the more traditional missiological (and, to them, urgent) lines of 'saving souls', often (with some honourable exceptions) to the neglect of any serious interaction with indigenous culture and language. At Ernabella, the evangelical Trudinger had become convinced that the conversion project was best facilitated by a translation of Christian concepts, doctrine, narrative into indigenous forms, whether text, songs (hymns), or art. His primary object at Ernabella was eventually to have translations of the Bible – initially a Gospel or two - available for each family, in which there was at least one person sufficiently educated to read in Pitjantjatjara.

Neither Duguid nor Love could be said to reside in the evangelical wing of the Presbyterian Church. Duguid's primary motivation was humanitarian and medical, to save bodies, not to save souls. He was interested in the retention of indigenous culture, which meant retention of the language. Love's position on language policy was more complex. He had been a notable translator of the

38 See Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 1/1939-46" (Mitchell Library, Sydney): Matthews to Love, 25 Sep 1943, with Matthews putting Trudinger's position as one with which the Board was in 'general agreement'.
39 If we need any further evidence as regards Duguid, his autobiography provides it. There is very little, if any, mention of God in the book, let alone Christ. The last paragraphs, when he writes of his faith, he speaks only of 'a Power greater than [our]selves' and of 'the astonishing power of selfless love'. This latter, he writes, remains 'the ultimate solution to the world's problems': Charles Duguid, *Doctor and the Aborigines* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1972), pp. 218-219. This is not the way an evangelical would have written. JRB Love, as a practicing missionary, ostensibly 'preaching Christ to the savages', as he put it, is a little harder to place. He may have considered himself an evangelical in a broad sense. I place him in a more progressive, Moderate wing; he does not appear to display the rather single-minded concentration on the conversion project, the task of saving souls otherwise condemned to eternal death, that tends to identify the 'true' evangelical, the true believer.
Worora language, and a pioneer of Australian efforts to translate oral indigenous languages to a written form, and to translate the colonial Biblical text into an indigenous one. He was to pursue similar lines in Central Australia. An awkward partnership between Love and Trudinger, with Pitjantjatjara assistance, was to produce a translation of the Gospel of Mark in 1945. But Love was also a proponent of the view that Aborigines needed to be provided with what he saw as an essential tool, English, to be able to negotiate the inevitable culture clash between a ‘primitive’ people and what he saw as a more advanced civilisation. And so he began to resist, slowly, subtly, and stubbornly, the vernacular-only language policies dictated by Duguid’s master plan and implemented on the mission site by the linguistically gifted Trudinger.

**they are taught little or no English**

Education was of course the principal arena where this conflict was played out. The schooling of native children had always been an important priority for missions, and particularly Presbyterian missions which, historically, had placed education on an equal level with evangelisation as missionary objectives. The Board and Duguid saw the Ernabella School from its early days as the jewel in the crown of the Mission, perhaps of all the Australian Church’s missions. The reasons for this judgement were clear: the methodologies of education at the school aligned perfectly with the broad policies of the Duguidian enterprise: all the teaching, and learning, was in the local language, the children were encouraged to remain unclothed, live with their families and participate in the life of their families and the tribe, including ‘walkabout’. In the words of the first teacher:

They speak and are taught little or no English; all instruction is given in their own language and subjects are correlated as far as possible with native and natural life. They are encouraged to go away daily and hunt in the bush, that is, to be fully learned in their natural school with vital

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40 See above, chapter 2; see also Harris, *One Blood*, pp. 836-838.
41 See Stanley, ed., *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*. Even that redoubtable Presbyterian Mrs Smith of Dunesk had specified the objectives of her much desired Scottish coinage as the education and evangelisation (note the order) of the Aborigines of South Australia.
42 See for example Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 1/1939-46": Matthews to Trudinger, 18 Jun 1941; Duguid, "Series 1: correspondence": Duguid to Matthews (copy), 23 Jul 1941.
subjects as bush lore, keenness of observation, swiftness of limb...43

This view of the school was reinforced by the SA Education Department, which subsidized the salary of the teacher and attested to its ‘unique’ qualities.44 The praise that was constantly lavished on the school, as remarkable and exceptional, did not sit easily with Love. He saw it as not dissimilar to the methods used at Kunmunya, with the difference that in the Kimberley mission, attention was also paid to teach English at school, which Love saw as necessary and prudent, given the inevitable collision of cultures to come. His first comment on the school on arrival as superintendent in 1941 reflected his immediate and continuing doubts as to its relevance: 'The little school is away over beyond the goat and ram yards, and is rather out of the life of the mission. This is a defect, but has its good points, when a lot of children are shouting.'45

The ‘little school’ had been under way for more than a year, beginning in the creek. It was somehow appropriate, at least metaphorically, that the first ‘formal’ attempt to ‘speak to each other’ took place in this liminal, indigenous space. But the ‘school’ soon moved up and out of the creek as it found a built European form. The SA Aborigines Protection Board (APB), which had come into legislative existence in 1940, assisted in the provision of considerable amounts of education materials for the school, as well as providing food rations for the children.46 It was the evangelical schoolteacher’s dream that the two missionary enterprises,

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43 South Australian State Records, "GRG 52/1 - SA State Records Office - Aboriginal Affairs Department - Aboriginal Protection Board - Correspondence Files (letters received)” (Adelaide, 1866-1968).: No 22 of 1941: copy of Ernabella newsletter, with article by Dr. C. Fenner, Director of SA Education Department, quoting RM Trudinger.
44 For example, the SA Chief Inspector of Education, Mr HC Hosking; ‘The school is unique, probably without counterpart anywhere in the world’; an early EM newsletter, prior to Love’s arrival, contained an article by the Director of Education, SA who wrote glowingly about this ‘unique and exceptional school’; see note above.
45 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1941": Love to Matthews, 13 Mar 1941.
46 RM Trudinger, the first teacher, wrote to the APB in June 1940 appreciative of the materials which had been sent to the school in response to a 3-page request form he had sent earlier: SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No. 24 of 1940, Trudinger to APB, 18 Jun 1940. The materials included: 3 boxes white chalk, coloured chalk, 40 individual blackboards, tins of blackboard blacking preparation, blank ‘newspaper’ paper, pastel books, rules, painting brushes, paint colours), enamel paint for desks, counting-boards, globe, 2 saws, 20 sharp knives, sandpaper, 4 chisels, bags, scissors, reels of cotton, thimbles, soaps, towels, combs, washbasins, mirrors, scrubbing brushes, billycans, and even some old linen or cheap cloth for handkerchiefs! On the APB, see especially chapter 8, below.
the teaching of young Aborigines to read and write in their own language, and the translation of the Gospel into that language, would result, eventually, 'in the creation of many converts to Christianity.' To Love, it seemed at least as important that education provided the necessary skills to assist in the Aborigines’ eventual and inevitable 'conversion' to living in a European-dominated nation, but with their cultural and tribal integrity relatively intact. The tensions caused through the pursuance of these different objectives would continue to surface in the remaining years of Love's superintendency.

**scalping the doggers in a desert for intellectuals**

Duguid and the Board of Missions saw as a significant priority for the mission the proscription of the white scalper, or the dogger, in the Ernabella area. This was seen as an important precondition for a successful venture. So the experienced and exemplary missionary, during his 1937 visits, began to prepare the stage in this regard. The doggers had permeated both the boundaries of the Reserve and the boundaries of good behaviour according to Duguid and Love who both believed that they exploited Aboriginal people, and especially abused the women. The salvation of indigenous women, from unscrupulous men, both white and black, and perhaps from their own 'savage sexuality', had often been a priority of the missionary enterprise. Love took a strong stand in his 1937 visits: he 'instructed' a secular employee of the station that 'private traffic' in dingo scalps was not acceptable: they were to be bought by the Mission from the Aborigines themselves at full nett value and then forwarded to Oodnadatta to the credit of the Mission. His diary provides an instructive context to this 'instruction': A party of 'anthropologists', which included Professor Stanton Hicks from Adelaide University, was visiting the inchoate mission site in 1937.

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48 See chapter 5, above.
51 Sir Cedric Stanton Hicks was Professor of Human Physiology and Pharmacology at the University of Adelaide 1926-58. Love's comment here was: '[the Aboriginal] men were all over with the University party at their tents, where they were making tests of skin temperature': Love, "PRG 214, Series 21, 1937 diaries": 22
The men, the missionary, the anthropologists, and the doggers, were all taking ‘tea’ at the homestead, the ‘natives’ somewhere out in the dark surrounding them. The talk was about them, of course, and Love’s diary gives us a glimpse into this ‘colonial’ setting:

at the tea-table tonight, Sir Stanton Hicks asked Ted [Briscoe], ‘What were those men carrying flour and sugar?’ Ted replied that they had brought in scalps. I asked if he had bought them. He said he had bought some and Davis had bought some. After tea I spoke to Ted privately and told him that the Mission was, among other things, against the exploiting of natives for scalps, and that scalps brought to the Mission would be purchased for full nett value. I gave him the option of handing the scalps over to the Mission or leaving. He elected to hand over the scalps...so the gauntlet is thrown down between the Mission and the doggers.\(^52\)

We may picture the colonial actors ‘at tea’: here is the exemplary missionary, with the anthropologists on one side, there to test, pinch and measure the primitive indigenous body as was the scientific practice and passion in the first half of the 20th century, and on the other, the ‘low whites’, the doggers, who bought skins cheap and sold dear, despised by the missionaries as carriers of the temptations of Mammon and Lust.\(^53\) It was to ‘save’ their Aborigines from such as the doggers, and to keep a wary eye on the intrusive scientists that missionaries like Love perceived as part of their duty. It was ironically their destiny to be seen by ‘history’ as themselves more intrusive than the scientists, and as exploitative in their way as the doggers.

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Aug 1937. Hicks was in fact testing as to how Aborigines who lay unclothed on cold desert nights were able to exhibit normal European metabolic values. This was part of a scientific project sponsored by JB Cleland to establish that Aborigines had relied on physiological adaption to their harsh environment in order to survive. Warwick Anderson provides a wonderful picture when he writes that at some time at Ernabella during the late 1930s (possibly referring to the occasion Love relates) ‘two tents were pitched side by side, and in one of them a physiologist lay naked on the ground and in the other an Aboriginal male did the same. The investigators found that the nomads of the desert possessed far greater powers of peripheral vasoconstriction, the ability to reduce the blood supply to the skin to reduce heat loss...Hicks believed that this ability was a ‘biological adaption’: Anderson, The Cultivation of Whiteness, pp. 202-204. Interestingly, Howard Florey had warned Hicks that going to Adelaide in 1926 from Cambridge University where Hicks had completed his PhD was going to an ‘intellectual desert’. Anderson comments that as Hicks was one of the most assiduous scientists in testing Aboriginal people, he had ‘found not an intellectual desert so much as a desert for intellectuals!’ He possibly enjoyed, then, sitting ‘at tea’ with the ‘out-of-the-way intellectual’ JRB Love.


\(^53\) On early 20th C scientific practices on the indigenous body, see Anderson, The Cultivation of Whiteness, especially chapter 7.
not a word was said

Yet both Love and Albrecht saw themselves in fact as establishing a ‘protectorate’ for Aboriginal people against the ‘intrusions’ of these colonial actors, particularly the doggers and the pastoralists, not entirely unaware of the intrusive nature of their own ventures, but attempting to minimize it as much as possible. In the same year that Love was on his first visits to Ernabella, Albrecht was writing to John Sexton of the AFA about the intrusions of pastoralists into the country of the Ngalia, noting that their ‘Pikili Water Hole, sacred to the tribe’ had been lost: ‘Not a word was said, and nothing at all done for the Natives who lost their Corroboree place, their spiritual home.’ His duty was clear: ‘we regard it as part of our work to do all we can to make these people feel at home on their old hunting grounds.’ Proselytizing work went on, mainly through ‘our Christian native men’ but, in a more progressive approach than the early Hermannsburg missionaries, ‘no direct attempt [had been] made to denounce Corroborrees, circumcision and polygamy, [however] a number of their dirtiest practices have been given up by themselves.’ While the flow of water from the Kaporiltja pipeline was regarded by the Lutherans as ‘a monument to the Mercy of our God who has heard the prayers of his dark people here suffering agony and death of Scurvy’, man was not able ‘to live off green vegetables alone’. The Mission Station could not carry the burden of ‘feeding the population under semidesert conditions’ for too long without danger of financial collapse. Albrecht thus urged the AFA to ‘get the Government to see its duty to those who through the advent of the white man here have been dispossessed and are unable to make a living in the old ways.’

big money, easy money

Love, too, was adamant that the Pitjantjatjara be allowed to ‘keep their country’ free from the depredations of the pastoralists and the doggers. Yet while Love championed the policy of eradicating the pernicious influence of the doggers, particularly on Aboriginal women, his diary in 1937 suggests some disquiet

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54 Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection", Albrecht to Sexton (copy), 21 Jan 1937.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
about the consequences that ensued as the ‘scalping’ income now flowed, either in money or in goods, to the natives: ‘the natives will be getting big money and easy money.’ Later, Love made the inevitable linkage between the availability of ‘easy money’ and a reluctance to work: ‘Large numbers of scalps – pups – coming in, with consequent big out-going of flour, tea, sugar from the store. Also a lessened desire for work on part of the men.’ Later, he wrote to Matthews:

the dingo scalps are pouring in...the numbers are astonishing – so flour, rice, tea, sugar, jam, treacle, are flowing! It is not an unmixed blessing: the people naturally with all their food just want to lie around all day and eat, and sing and make corroboree all night...We may need to think of spreading the proceeds of scalps out.

Work and money, and the moral connections between the two, the stock-in-trade of European and Protestant Christian notions of capitalism and the work ethic, were to be nodes of dissenion within the Ernabella missionary community, and between missionaries and Aboriginal people.

Colonial missionaries constantly struggled with the transference of European notions of work to the indigenous site. The mission site across the colonised world was as much as anything an attempt to import Protestant and Puritan notions of work and labour into indigenous environments where these notions were alien. Ernabella, however, as it also put an unusual premium on the retention of traditional life, was caught between this objective and Western ideas regarding the linkages of monetary rewards (or payment in kind) with work. The dilemma presented by the retention of traditional nomadism along with a collectivist, sharing culture, and the missionary attempt to graft the values and methods of a rudimentary European individualistic capitalism onto the indigenous regime only came to be seen gradually. Indeed, it was the Hermannsburg missionary, Albrecht, who in 1942, as we shall see, was the first to articulate questions concerning the Ernabella moral economy by raising the

57 Love, "PRG 214, Series 21, 1937 diary": 15 Sep 1937.
59 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1941": Love to Matthews, 10 Sep 1941.
60 See, for example, Comaroff and Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution, vol. 1, pp. 142-143.
spectre of ‘pauperisation’ at the Presbyterian Mission site.\textsuperscript{61} At the outset, however, Love retained some optimism that the white and indigenous economies could coexist:

the only industrial future I can see here is to develop Ernabella as a sheep proposition, with all the industrial work that that entails – the Aborigines are being trained now in the use of tools, handling sheep, horses, camels, building jobs, gardening... As the years go on, some people will become less nomadic, but the majority will remain, for a generation at least, nomadic, Ernabella their headquarters, and hunt through the Reserve, where we want them to be.\textsuperscript{62}

Love’s sanguinity was to be put to the test over the next few years.

\textbf{the lifting up of half-caste children}

Love shared with the white settler caste, as we have seen, the colonial obsession and anxiety regarding hybridity and miscegenation, or as it was known in Central and Northern Australia, ‘the half-caste problem’. In his Report for the new Mission, Love advocated a two-tiered system for mission children, with dormitories for half-caste boys and girls, who must be taken from their mothers ‘at, say, three or four years’, and ‘lifted up to take their place among the whites.’\textsuperscript{63} He estimated that there could be 20 or so such children at the Mission by the end of the first year. On the other hand, Love said he would ‘strenuously oppose’ the taking of the full-blooded children from their parents and placing them in Mission dormitories. The black children must stay with their parents, he urged. Love accepted that this would mean that school progress would be disjointed by frequent wanderings in the bush. That was good, he declared: ‘they are learning the lore of their parents and can get their own food in the bush.’

What was important, Love said, was that Aborigines were evangelized within the tribe, not by taking them outside the tribe.\textsuperscript{64} But for the half-castes, of course, it was to be different. On this issue, it appears, both Love and Duguid, the exemplary missionary and the combative humanitarian, were agreed. Files of the SA Aborigines Protection Board indicate that at about this time the Presbyterian

\textsuperscript{61} See chapter 8, below.

\textsuperscript{62} Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1941": Love to Matthews, 10 Sep 1941.


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
Church, on the suggestion of Dr Duguid, was considering establishing a Home for half-caste children in SA along the lines of the UAM Colebrook Home, with the children being 'lifted up' from stations, missions and government settlements throughout South Australia. While, in the end, the matter did not proceed, the episode demonstrated that the conventional wisdom of the Presbyterian and humanitarian communities was that the removal and 'uplift' of children of mixed blood was a desirable goal of social policy.

the Medical Mission to the Aborigines

The original Duguidian conception of the new Mission had been, as we saw earlier, of a Medical Mission to the Aborigines. We noted briefly in chapter five Love's influence in the evaporation of that ideal after his edict that a doctor was not needed at Ernabella. Here Love's concerns and comments on the health of the indigenes of the Musgraves can begin to be traced more fully. In 1937, Love commented frequently on the health, or otherwise, of the people in the area. At a small camp, for example, 'a tiny baby has a suppurring ear, a man has two sores, lumps, on either side of the scrotum...An old woman is blind, [is] led with a stick, and two young women have sore legs, one a fire-burn, the other large sores on shin and foot.' Illness and injuries, as well as hunger, had to wait, however, for the formal start of the Mission. Love's hospitality was constrained and contained within the strict and proper conventions of the 'establishment' of a mission. Thus, Love noted to Matthews towards the end of his reconnaissance mission in 1937:

There are men here with bad sores and blind women. I am not feeding any of them. I do not intend to incur any system of expenditure before Taylor makes his own plans. He will need a set of apothecary's scales. I've got a set of dental forceps and soaps, boric acid [acid], vaseline.

65 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 30 of 1942: From: Dr Charles Duguid Re: Presbyterian Church of Australia Establishing a Home for half-caste children in SA; also ibid., APB to Matthews, 19 Mar 1942.
66 Communications on the matter went between the APB and the Board of Missions. When HC Matthews indicated the Board of Missions was interested, the APB commenced enquiries regarding suitable properties. The matter was finally put to rest due to the pressures of the war effort; see ibid., No 30 of 1942, Matthews to APB, 2 Apr 1942; also see ibid., APB minute bk folio 159; APB to Matthews, 8 May 1942; Matthews to APB, 25 May 1942; APB to Matthews 28 May 1942 and 4 Dec 1942; Matthews to APB 31 Mar 1943.
68 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1937": Love to Matthews, 8 Sep, 1937. Boracic acid was a weak acid used as an antiseptic dusting powder.
Missionary medical knowledge and understanding of the interaction of health and spirituality in indigenous life were still basic when Love took over the administration of the Mission in 1941:

This morning it was reported by the house women that [the] infant girl, who had had bad sores, died last night...I do not know how the people dispose of the body. The mother and her friends all said that the child had ‘mamu’ i.e. devil. Another woman, who has been bringing an infant suffering with yaws, did not bring it today, apparently fearing that my medicine (ointment and cod liver oil emulsion) is not [working].

By August of his first year, Love had decided that ‘burns and colds’ were the ‘chief complaints’ of the natives. In October, he reported ‘a serious influenza epidemic’: ‘two men had died, and most of the camp (a hundred or so people) were ill.’ Three days later, the Log’s entry reads: ‘For several mornings I have had made a drum of tea and given all a hot drink, which cheers them up. All sick much better now.’ In fact, Love had brought many of the sick up from the camp, laid them around the homestead, and spent most of the three nights up attempting to look after his ‘patients’.

However, the missionaries were not doctors, despite the medicinal qualities of hot tea. Yet Love continued to resist the idea of a doctor for Ernabella, while the Board was keen to initiate something in this area if resources were available. Matthews reminded Love that Duguid and two doctors on the Board wanted to see research done regarding illnesses of Aborigines. He also suggested that Dr Jean Davies visit Ernabella. Love was quite willing for Davies to come up. He again was not sure if there was enough work for a Doctor at Ernabella, but said he would welcome Dr Davies’ opinion.

69 Love, "Logbook": 31 Aug 1941.
71 Ibid., 5 Oct 1941.
72 Perhaps it was not so much the tea as the indigenous imagination: a missionary in Vanuatu wrote (in 1910) that ‘we are not good doctors, but sometimes even sugared or bitter water will do the trick. The natives’ imagination is so powerful it can make them cured as well as dead’: Roux to Doucere, Tolomaco, 2 Feb 1910, cited in Margaret Jolly, "Devils, Holy Spirits, and the Swollen God", p. 246.
73 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1941": Matthews to Love, 16 May 1941. Dr Davies had been a medical missionary in Korea.
In May 1941, Matthews put to Love the idea of adding two rooms to the planned dispensary hospital for the accommodation of a doctor if one could be appointed.\(^4\) In a revealing comment, Love replied: ‘Much as I love the people and am willing to work for them, I do not think it good to live under the same roof...I have an idea of a little guest cottage.’\(^5\) To Love, medical practice appears always constrained to remain within the boundaries of ‘good’ or civilised racial behaviour. To ‘live under the same roof’ was to admit of no boundaries at all; it was ‘familiar’ behaviour, it allowed of the possibility of no space between the two peoples, no differences existing between white and black, of ‘going native’, whereas to Love the differences were all too obvious, as much as he ‘loved the people’. In his succinct manner, he stated in his 1937 Report to the Board of Missions: ‘The general station attitude to the natives is too contemptuous, the temptation to the novice in Mission work is to be too familiar.’\(^6\) Experienced and exemplary missionaries tended to find the right balance.

While, in early 1942, Love pronounced the health of the people ‘good’, there appears some relief in his note to Matthews in April that ‘Dr Davies is here, and has taken over the medical work of the Mission.’\(^7\) But the doctor could not stay, and Ernabella, which had been promoted initially as ‘the Medical Mission to the Aborigines’, continued to operate with its lay missionaries only and without an expert medical presence. With Dr. Duguid, an opinionated and combative ‘father of the mission’ watching Love’s performance like a hawk from the sidelines as Chairman of the Adelaide Committee, set up to ensure and secure the ‘good establishment’ of the Mission, it was a situation with some potential for tension and conflict. Imagined, established and constructed as a model protectorate amid an intended ‘pastorale’ of adequate feeding mechanisms, good health practices, and the privileging of the vernacular, the mission venture was susceptible to disension following any perceived failure to save ‘men without food’. Dissension, like complexity, was built into the structures and sinews of missionary discourse and praxis.

\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) Ibid., Love to Matthews, 13 Jun 1941.
\(^7\) Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1942"; Love to Matthews, 17 Apr 1942; also ibid., Love to Matthews, 4 Mar 1942.
CHAPTER EIGHT: 'Strangeness and Intimacy, Distance and Proximity': Love and the Distant Face

Mission Stations were often utilized as sites of research and surveillance by scientists. So, as we glimpsed in the previous chapter, Ernabella was also a place where anthropologists, biologists and anatomists observed, studied and measured Aborigines in their desire to 'study savages'. The scientific and anthropologist presence in Central Australia was a significant one from the late 19th century and the collusions and collisions between the discourses of anthropology and missiology in the Central Australian sites are important in the analysis of what missionaries said and thought about indigenous people. The boundaries between the two disciplines or professions

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1 A commentary on Levinas with a resonance for missionaries: 'Face to face with this other who suddenly appears before me - this stranger for whom I, too, am and shall always remain a stranger, this being who by the appeal of his naked and vulnerable face solicits, even condemns, me to take responsibility for him, and calls me into a relation where strangeness and intimacy, distance and proximity coexist - I feel, according to Edmond Jabes, 'this blind attraction for the distant face that blinds': Richard Stamelman, "The Strangeness of the Other and the Otherness of the Stranger: Edmond Jabes" Yale French Studies 82 (1993): 118-134, pp. 120-121, citing Jabes: "Il n'y a de trace que dans le desert: Avec Emmanuel Levinas" in Le Livre des marges 11: Dans la double dependance du dit (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1984), p. 70. The inset photograph is entitled 'Ernabella, Musgrave Ranges, 1940' and is from the Mountford-Sheard Collection, State Library of South Australia.

2 The Horn Scientific Expedition of 1894, of which Baldwin Spencer was a member, was the beginning of a large-scale, long-term scientific (including biological and anthropological) surveillance of Central Australian Aboriginal people: see S. R. Morton and D. J. Mulvaney, eds., Exploring Central Australia: society, the environment and the 1894 Horn Expedition (Chipping Norton: Surrey Beatty and Sons, 1996). Later, the Arrernte of Hermannsburg became the most famous 'native tribe' in the world after Spencer and Gillen had written The Native Tribes of Central Australia and introduced Sir James Frazier and the world to the Arrernte. Two of the most significant subsequent figures in anthropology, AP Elkin and TGH Strehlow were influential in the discourses of the missions of Central Australia. Elkin had been an Anglican priest in his early working life and retained strong ties to the Protestant Churches; Strehlow was born at Hermannsburg, a son of the most important missionary of early Lutheran missionary work in Australia, Carl Strehlow, who was himself an important, if non-professional, ethnographical figure and was the author of a massive multi-volume work on the Arrernte: Strehlow, The Aranda and Loritja Tribes of Central Australia. Spencer and the older Strehlow had deep differences of opinion over crucial aspects of Arrernte language and cosmology: see Derek John Mulvaney and John H. Calaby, So much that is new: Baldwin Spencer, 1860-1929, a biography (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1985). It was perhaps inevitable that TGH Strehlow would enter the lists on behalf of his father: see TGH Strehlow, Songs of Central Australia (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1971).
were not necessarily stable or fixed, though a profound division is arguable between an anthropological desire to keep the traditional native culture unchanged in order to study it and a missionary desire to substitute a European, Christian, ‘civilized’ culture. One of the historical complexities with this notion is that some missionaries were anthropologists, or at least amateur ethnographers, with a genuine interest in the cultures, customs and beliefs of the indigenous people whom they hoped to civilise and Christianize. Carl Strehlow, Albrecht’s predecessor at Hermannsburg, is one of the most notable and important missionary-ethnographers in the history of missionary enterprise. JRB Love, as we have seen in chapters two and three, was another variant of the missionary-anthropologist, a member of the SA Anthropological Society, with links to the ‘Adelaide’ group of scientists and anthropologists centred in the University of Adelaide and the SA Museum, correspondent with Elkin, and occasional contributor to magazines such as Oceania, and Man, and the author of Stone-Age Bush Men of Today which won him ‘scientific’ recognition, at least within the Presbyterian Church. Love represented, to some extent, the uneasy ideological collaboration between missionaries and anthropologists, complicated by the personal blurring and crossing of professional lines, which influenced both the thinking and practices of the Central Australian missionaries.

In his 1936 book, Love had found in some of the ceremonies of the Kimberley Worora people ‘rites akin to the most sacred observances of the Christian faith.’ He had written of the rites being ‘practised in the spirit of the deepest reverence and awe by naked savages in north-western Australia.’\(^4\) In 1937, his depiction of a different ceremony displays his revulsion at the ‘savagery’ and primitivity of the natives when presumably no traces of a ‘sacred’, Christian rite can be found. Invited to a corroboree at Erliwanyawany, near Ernabella, Love is disgusted by the production of blood by the participants ‘stabbing their penes...then they

\(^3\) By ‘an anthropological desire’, I do not mean to suggest that all anthropologists desired to keep indigenous cultures unchanged. In Australia, Elkin for one was committed to change, although anthropologists/scientists such as Thompson, Cleland, Tindale and Pink, it could be argued, were committed to the preservation of relatively unchanged societies and cultures. Conversely, as I go on to suggest here, not all missionaries were proponents for change, although most were. Love himself was a realist and a gradualist: seeing change for Aborigines as inevitable but wishing to slow down the rate of change as much as possible, and arguing for the retention of much of their culture and customs.

\(^4\) Love, Stone-Age Bushmen, p. 219; also see above, chapter 2.
danced around the fire in such a way as to exhibit the bleeding penis. The thing was the most disgusting exhibition I have seen among blacks.' Love cannot bring his fastidious self to believe that such dances have ever been a 'normal part' of their life and, ironically, finds the blame in 'the scientists who have come up here to study the aborigines [and] have encouraged the exhibition of unseemly things, for the sake of recording pictures..."5

Pernicious white 'contamination' of Aboriginal people, for Love, was not then limited merely to doggers and low whites but to scientists and anthropologists who encouraged 'primitive' displays for their own purposes. This may have been just the reaction of a prudish Presbyterian who after years of experiencing the 'sordid life' of mission stations so often used the words clean, decent, civilised to designate approval. Yet it seems somewhat incongruous for a 'missionary-anthropologist'. Perhaps it serves to reinforce Love's profound sense of the difference of the 'blacks', their absolute otherness and strangeness. One gets this sense with Love, that the 'black', while redeemable by the blood of Christ, has a primitive otherness that is beyond comprehension. One does not find in JRB Love the sense of difference inherent in Rousseauian primitivism, for example, the view that 'savages' are radically different from 'us', more authentic, morally superior, the notion of the noble savage. Love was hardly alone in this. The 'soft primitivism' that Bernard Smith discussed in his brilliant study European Vision and the South Pacific as being applied to representations of South Sea Islanders was rarely applied to Australian Aborigines, even by sympathetic missionaries.6 The protection and paternalism that Love seemed to

5 Love, "PRG 214, Series 21, 1937 diary": 7 Jun 1937. For an interesting parallel with TGH Strehlow's similar reaction to what was admittedly his 'first sacred ceremony', see Barry Hill, Broken Song, pp. 176-179. It was also an object of horror to Strehlow, who had had to move away from the ceremony, away from 'the reek of hot human blood.' Apropos Love's point about the scientists, it may not be merely coincidental that Strehlow's ceremony was conducted for the benefit of JB Cleland's Board for Anthropological Research from the University of Adelaide, which had co-opted Strehlow to 'muster' Aboriginal specimens for testing. One of the tests involved taking blood samples, which Cleland explained (in pidgin) to the natives was to 'see if the blackfellow's blood was more like the white man's than that of a Chinaman or Afghan': ibid., pp. 177-178, citing Philip Jones, "South Australian Anthropological History: The Board for Anthropological Research and its early Expeditions", Records of the South Australian Museum 20 (1987): 71-92.

advocate as a duty of the white man to the Aborigine was not only to protect the 'savage' from white greed and cruelty but to protect them from their own dark and impenetrably primitive nature.

the conversion project

And what of Love's original missionary objective of 'preaching Christ to the savages'? Let us trace, through his 1937 diary and the early days of his superintendency, the first tentative trajectory at Ernabella of this objective, apparently fundamental to the missionary venture, and apparently antithetical to the anthropological enterprise. It began with a curious, abortive incident on 5 September 1937:

I walked up the creek intending to gather the natives for some form of divine service but found they had nearly all gone kangaroo hunting. I saw the goats, so went towards them, when 2 women ran away and hid in the saltbush. Daisy, in charge of the goats, stood her ground; but I could get no information from her...so my first projected service at Ernabella camp failed.²

There is in this episode a sense of the unstable, even disconnected nature of relations between the indigenes and the missionary. It is an early contact but much of the relations between Love and the Aborigines of the mission are of this tentative and uncertain kind. This introduces some complexity into Love's venture: while his writing about Aborigines tended towards the authoritative, occasionally authoritarian, paternalistic rule-making, his actual relations with the Aborigines seem to be more hesitant, provisional, exploratory, speculative. The dominance and hegemony of the missionary-anthropologist is diminished or reduced in this light. Love, the inveterate collector and assiduous provider of Western Australian artefacts for museums, seems reluctant, for example, to meddle with indigenous ritual items. On his first visit, he was offered a small stone tjurunga by an Aborigine in return for sweets and tobacco, perhaps as Olive Pink was on her pre-mission visit to Ernabella:

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I gave the old chap a handful of lollies and a stick of tobacco for his tjurunga, then returned the tjurunga to him, as I did not want to collect these things. He looked puzzled, as did all of them; but when I told them to keep it, they went off happily.\textsuperscript{8}

When Love arrived as the head of the Mission, he laid down guidelines for Sunday Services. There would be a morning service, followed by an evening service after which a meal would be provided for the Aborigines. In the Superintendent’s Log for 16 March 1941:

Mr Mac [Walter MacDougall] conducted morning worship. I conducted evening. I have asked all to attend both services. Children came in the morning, but few adults. All came in the afternoon. A meal is given at the end of the day. I wish the morning service to be a voluntary one, not just a service to be followed by a meal.\textsuperscript{9}

Love wanted to measure the indigenous response to Christianity without the artificial distortion produced by the offer of the free meal: thus the morning, meal-less service. The meal without question was an inducement for attendance at Service: while the Duguidian principle of ‘no imposition of Christianity’ was adhered to, the mission offered a ‘sweetener’ (literally, as tea and sugar were always on the menu) for people who came to the evening service. No service, no meal. The Pitjantjatjara responded. Invariably the whole camp turned up on Sunday evening! Both sides were being exemplary in their hospitality and civility.

\textbf{a promise of better things}

By September, Love had had an opportunity to take preliminary measure of that response. Even though ‘the camp was full of rations’, the people still came to evening service:

so they come to the worship from interest, curiosity, because we like them to come and they like to come; not solely for the free meal which follows the Sunday evenings’. It is at least a promise of better things to come.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., 9 Sep 1937.
\textsuperscript{9}JRB Love, "Superintendent’s Logbook", in Ara Irritija Archives (Adelaide): 16 Mar 1941. Walter MacDougall had been acting superintendent of the mission immediately prior to Love’s arrival.
\textsuperscript{10}Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1941": Love to Matthews, 10 Sep 1941.
In early 1942, Love noted with some gratification that the attendance at the morning Sunday service was almost as good as the Sunday evening service, although he was not convinced that they came for the spiritual food as well: 'It would be false to pretend that the people have any interest in the message of Christianity as yet; but they are interested in these weekly congregations and they like to come and join the crowd. Understanding will follow in due time.'

The early optimism of the missionary came, almost imperceptibly, to wane in the light of his experience. By July 1942, he was writing to Matthews:

Since coming here, I have spent most of my time in physical labour. I quite realise that this is, from the evangelical point of view, something of a waste of time. But on the other hand, I get more cautious as I get older, and no longer hope to evangelise all the people in a few short years. To get the Mission established on an easy and running basis may not be such a waste of time after all.

Later, he reported that though church attendances were 'good', he was not so optimistic about 'progress'; but he concluded philosophically, 'time will tell'. He may well have meant panoptical time.

**cheeky aborigines**

In some respects, Love was a missionary of the old school who believed in the application of discipline and surveillance in respect of the 'blacks'. Yet he often seemed placed off balance by their unpredictable responses. His first letter to the Board of Missions after his arrival at Ernabella shows his concern with 'discipline': 'Things are in better shape than I expected. MacDougall has done well in tightening up the discipline of the Mission.' In his first year as Superintendent, he administered punishment to a boy who 'refused to come when called' and 'told other children to disobey'. Love had some initial difficulty securing him; when he had asked 'the men' to bring him, '[they] all disappeared'. Eventually, someone did bring him, and Love 'gave him half a dozen smacks on

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13 Ibid., Love to Matthews, 2 Sep 1942.
14 Ibid., Love to Matthews, 13 Mar 1941.

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seat with a board’ and released him on ‘promise of good behaviour’. According to Love, the people ‘were very pleased at the affair being concluded, discipline has been publicly upheld...and all is satisfactory.‘ Perhaps ‘the people’ were more relieved than ‘pleased’ at the conclusion, given the acknowledged reluctance of traditional Aborigines to administer corporal punishment to their young. A few days later, another incident occurred when Love scolded an aborigine, ‘who gave a cheeky reply’, and Love threatened to hit him: ‘He went off to camp. Some [discussion?] arising about all going off, [so] I lined up all working men and gave them the option of leaving or remaining. All said they wanted to remain.’

But not all of Love’s orders were quickly acknowledged. There was often recalcitrance, even if polite and playful. When there was some ‘trouble in the camp’ in 1941, Love suspected ‘misconduct with females’, but ‘nearly everyone when questioned simply replies ‘Wompani’ (don’t know) or disappears.’ To Love’s discomfort, the relationship between missionary and the Aborigines was becoming more of a negotiated relationship, with both sides having a say, a stake in the resolution of conflicts or disagreements. This process began even in 1937, before Love became superintendent: when Love finds some lost sheep, he gave the shepherdess a scolding, ‘which she took with smiles’. Love is disconcerted by the Aborigines’ habit of cutting down the available timber and saltbush for windbreaks. He ‘orders’ them to move camp but they ‘misinterpret’ the instruction and ‘were camped just across the creek from the homestead.’ After being ‘instructed’ again, only half the camp moved and Love gave them a ‘scolding’. But ‘they were so smiling about it all that I had to relent and agree they could move tomorrow.’

In his early days on the new mission site Love often appeared disarmed and surprised by the ‘smiling’ hospitality of the indigenous people. On his return from a 1937 camel trip to Ayers Rock, as it was then, passing back through

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15 Love, "Logbook": 5 Jul 1941.
16 Ibid., 24 Jul 1941.
17 Ibid., 20 Nov 1941.
19 Ibid., 9 Sep 1937.
Oparina, Love was delighted at his reception: 20

we saw smoke, and as we came close, we were welcomed with shouts by the people we left last week...these simple, kindly folk seemed really pleased to see us again, and had actually gathered a stack of firewood ready for us at our last camp. This was a delightful act, and we were as pleased to see them as they were to see us. The children capered about, the men smiled a welcome, and the women danced and wave their arms to us. 21

Love was appreciative of the hospitality but there were limits to his gratitude: once, while eating, the Europeans gave ‘the black people’ a large billy can of tea as a treat, but ‘we are not giving them free food, partly because we cannot spare it, and partly because we do not wish to establish a bad precedent for the future mission.’ 22 There were also limits to Love’s inclusiveness; he retained a sense of distance, of otherness, combined with a sense of patriarchal and paternalistic superiority: ‘The little children play about our camp. The women keep at a little distance. We give them tea, but do not encourage them to come into the camp.’ 23 Love was particularly fastidious about preserving correct and ‘distant’ relations with Aboriginal women, understandable given missionary anxieties about ‘going native’ and hybrid relations on the colonial frontier. But Love preferred to keep his distance from all ‘native people’, not just women:

An elderly man, whom the doctor has been anointing for nasty sores, about [his] pudenda and all over his body, has been getting a little closer each day, till today I plainly told him to go off to his own fire. I do not like to seem discourteous to these generous people, but they must not be allowed undue liberties. The man questioned my order, I assured him, yes! And he went off. I find already that the few words I have acquired of the language are very useful. 24

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20 Not unexpectedly Love was impressed with Ayers Rock: ‘This Ayers Rock is a stupendous and awe-inspiring sight; such an enormous mass of red rock rising sheer from the plain... The Aboriginal name for Ayers Rock is ULURU, wrongly spelt OOLRA, with 2 syllables, on Findlayson’s map [HH Findlayson, a pioneer European in Central Australia and a mammal curator at the Adelaide Museum]. Mt Olga (also weird looking) is called ‘KATA TJUDA’ which means ‘many-headed’, an apt name.: Love, "PRG 214, Series 21, 1937 diary": 24 Jun 1937.
21 Ibid., 29 Jun 1937.
22 Ibid., 29 Jun 1937.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
the Aborigines Protection Board

The appointment of JRB Love as Superintendent to Ernabella coincided with an important change in the administration of Aboriginal affairs in South Australia. In 1940, the position of an individual Chief Protector of Aborigines (CP) was abolished and replaced by an Aborigines Protection Board (APB), with the last CP, William Penhall, becoming the influential Secretary of the Board.\(^{25}\) The APB was charged with ‘the duty of controlling and promoting the welfare of the aborigines.’\(^{26}\) The equal emphasis on control and welfare was instructive. In Australia, the Aboriginal Acts and their amendments in the various states, at least up until the 1960’s, gave Governments considerable powers over the lives of Aborigines under their ‘control’\(^{27}\).

The APB was intimately involved with the early history of Ernabella Mission: rations, blankets, medical supplies, and educational resources were supplied and paid for by it, and the Mission, along with other missions and government aboriginal stations, had to report each year to the Board, which itself reported, through its Minister, to the SA Parliament.\(^{28}\) Ernabella superintendents and the

\(^{25}\) South Australia, as a Colony and as a State, had, from 1837 to 1940, an almost uninterrupted succession of individual Protectors, sub-Protectors and Chief Protectors of Aborigines. In 1938, William Penhall was appointed acting Chief Protector (CP) and confirmed in the position the next year. In 1940, the Aborigines Protection Board (APB) replaced the CP arrangement. The Secretary of the APB was to be the permanent head of the Aborigines Department. William Penhall was the Secretary from 1940 to 1954: see Cameron Raynes, ‘A Little Flour and a Few Blankets’: an Administrative History of Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia, 1834-2000 (Adelaide: State Records of South Australia, 2002). Note that Raynes queries the extent of the influence of Board members. He contends that from 1940 to 1954, Penhall effectively ran the Aborigines Department ‘despite the existence of the Board.’ As Secretary, all correspondences, requests and reports that came to the Board were directed to him; thus, Raynes argues, he effectively controlled the flow of information to the Board: ibid., p. 50. Be that as it may, there is some evidence in the voluminous APB files held in the State Records Office in South Australia that, at least as far as Ernabella was concerned, it was advantageous to have the founder of the Mission on the Board: see below, chapter 10. While the war years of 1939-1945 meant resources were often more scarce than ever, requests from Ernabella for extra rations in times of difficulty and drought, and additional medical and educational supplies were rarely refused, or unable to be met (although rations were reduced at times because of war conditions).

\(^{26}\) SA State Records, “GRG 52/1”: No.102 of 1940, APB Report for 1940.

\(^{27}\) The amended Act in SA brought every person in the State who was descended from the original inhabitants of Australia under its control. It was possible to apply for exemption from the provisions of the Act where an Aboriginal person ‘by reason of character, standard of intelligence, and state of development’ was considered ‘capable of living in the general community without supervision’: ibid. Other States enacted similar ‘protective and restrictive’ provisions, and exemptions: see CD Rowley, Outcasts in White Australia (Penguin: Ringwood, 1972 (first pub. 1970), see especially Part 1.

\(^{28}\) It may be noted here, in the context of financial and resource assistance to the fledgling Mission, that the admission of Ernabella to the Child Endowment Scheme, while unconnected to the APB (it was a
Board of Missions also corresponded regularly with the APB on other matters such as police or legal matters which involved Aborigines on the Mission; reports of patrols through the area, requests for adoptions of Aboriginal (including mixed-blood) children, and matters involving the removal of Aboriginal children. For Love it meant that he had to answer to two Boards: the Board of Missions, as their employee, and administratively to the APB. As well, the formation in 1937 of what became known as ‘the Adelaide Committee’, a Committee formed under the auspices of the SA Presbyterian General Assembly and reporting to it, headed by Duguid and comprising of ‘friends of the Mission’, to keep an watchful eye on the development of the mission, increased the surveillance and the pressure of the ‘metropolitan gaze’ on the exemplary missionary himself.

The formation of the APB provided an opportunity for white activists and academics interested in the Aborigines to have an influence in the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the State. The first Board included Duguid, who had lobbied the SA Government for his inclusion, Professor JB Cleland as Chairman,29 and two female activists, Constance Mary Ternent Cooke and Alice Maud Harvey Johnston, whose reports on Ernabella in 1943 were to create a controversy that shook the foundations of the new Mission and instigated a serious breakdown in relations between Love and Duguid. At the outset, however, all was sweetness and light. The establishment of Ernabella was praised not

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29 John Burton Cleland was Professor of Pathology at the Adelaide University medical school and a prolific scientific ‘expert’ on the anthropology, anatomy and pathology of Australian Aborigines. We have glimpsed Cleland before in this study. He was a major figure in the network of Adelaide academics from the 1920s to the 1950s which included people like Frederic Wood Jones, Robert Pulleine, TD Campbell and Norman Tindale who contributed significantly to national arguments about Aborigines.
only by Duguid’s ‘anthropologists’ but also by the Acting Chief Protector of Aborigines (CP) in South Australia in his 1938 Annual Report. The Protector was firmly of the belief that ‘the influence of the mission and the interest of its superintendent and staff in the survival of the aboriginals as a pure race will go a long way towards arresting the drift which has set in through the immoral association of white men with the Aborigines’, noting, as the missionaries had, the deleterious impact of the ‘white doggers’. It was important that the indigenous people have first contact with ‘men of strict moral character and integrity’. High hopes were thus held of the new Mission.30

**the flow of APB supplies**

The CP, and after 1940 the APB, was immediately useful to the Mission in terms of medical and educational supplies, although the intervention of Duguid was apparently necessary to initiate the flow of rations from the APB to the mission station.31 So, for example, in the State Records files for November 1939 under ‘Quantities of rations to be ordered for Ernabella’, were orders for 15 bags of wholemeal flour, 8 bags of yellow sugar, 2 cwt’s rice and 10 lbs tobacco. Also ordered were: cotton wool (hospital quality – 15 lbs), lint (10 lbs), gauze (100 yds), bandages, sticking plaster, plaster bandages, Mercurochrome powder, Silver Nitrate, Atropine Ointment, Petroleum jelly; also eyedroppers, syringes, surgeon’s needle, needles for yaws injections, and sterile horsehair for sutures.32 The

30 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No. 43 of 1938, Annual Report of Chief Protector of South Australia for the Year ended 30 June 1938.

31 Duguid wrote to the Chief Protector in October 1939 complaining that at the outset of the mission, the Presbyterian Church had been promised rations for sick and aged natives: ‘the Church has been supplying rations for 2 ½ yrs but they have not been forthcoming from the Government.’ Duguid let it be known that he would appreciate a retrospective supply to the beginning of the year: SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No. 52 of 1939 (k), Duguid to Chief Protector Penhall, 3 Oct 1939. Penhall replied the next day that he would arrange the necessary details of supply and transport. As an example of the supply of medical resources, a letter from Harry Taylor to Penhall in June 1939 requested medical supplies, including bandages, iodine, cotton wool, Boracic Lint, Tincture of Aconite and Iodine, and ‘some opium for relief of Dysentery’. Taylor was not sure of the name but was sure Dr Duguid would know: Ibid., No. 52 of 1939 (b), Taylor to Chief Protector, 23 Jun 1939. In a subsequent letter to Taylor on 30 Jun 1939, Penhall writes that Dr Duguid will bring the tincture of opium for the treatment of dysentery when he comes north.

32 Ibid., No. 52 of 1939, handwritten notes of orders; and later in file, a formal Advice Note in form of invoice re above items dated 25 Nov 1939. While some of the rations may have been in compensation for the delay mentioned in the above footnote, many of the subsequent orders appear to be of similar amounts. Rations were reserved for aged and infirm people, and children: the numbers of these varied. In his first telegram to the APM, two weeks after his arrival, Love asked for the March (1941) rations for ‘19 indigent aborigines and 40 schoolchildren’: Ibid., No 22 of 1941, Love to APB, 26 Mar 1941 (radio telegram). See

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feeding and healing regimes at Ernabella, as rudimentary as they were, were beginning to gain assistance from the State. The early stages of this partnership between the missionary and the administrators charged with the ‘control and welfare’ of Aborigines is worth examining.

Love commenced at Ernabella in March 1941. His first communication with the APB was to report the death of an infant and discuss the removal of two ‘half-caste children’. Then, two days later, he asked for an explanation of the rationing regime in SA. Penhall advised that rations were to be issued ‘to natives who are old and infirm or sick and unable to look after themselves; also to half-castes and such other children attending school who, in your judgement, cannot be provided for by parents.’ He also advised the scale of rations each week: for adults, rations consisted of 7lbs flour, 2lbs sugar, 40zs tea, 1lb rice, 2 sticks tobacco. For children, they were entitled to 5 lbs flour, 1 ½ lbs sugar, 1lb rice. These scales could be varied ‘according to your judgement’, Penhall advised: for example, growing children might need as much as adults. There were regular communications between Love and Penhall on rations and other supply issues. Love queries, at one point, the non-arrival of blankets, which turns out to be a war-related supply problem. At another time, he asks for ‘2 tons of rations’ to be at Finke by a certain date to be picked up by the mission truck; he also asks that the flour be part coarse and part fine: ‘coarse makes an attractive porridge, fine not so good but better for damper.’

the removal of children

The Chief Protector, and from 1940, the APB, also administered and approved removal of Aboriginal children. A forerunner to some of the cases that came up during JRB Love’s regime at Ernabella was the 1939 case of M. An Adelaide family requested CP Penhall to allow their adoption of an Ernabella child, M., a

discussion below on rations. Of course, the nutritional value of the government rations is another matter: see discussion in chapter 10, below.

33 Ibid., No 22 of 1941, Love to APB (Penhall), 20 Mar 1941.
34 Ibid., Love to APB, 22 Mar 1941.
36 Ibid., a series of telegrams between Love and Penhall, April-May 1941.
37 Ibid., Love to APB, 27 Jun 1941.
female ‘half-caste’, who had come down to Adelaide with Superintendent Taylor on a visit. The family promised a ‘good home’, a private education, and a companion, a white daughter of the same age. Penhall refused the request on the grounds that the mother of the child had agreed to allow M. to come to Adelaide only after Taylor had promised to bring her safely back to Ernabella: ‘this promise must be honoured’. However, Penhall made it clear that under the Act he had the power ‘to hand her over to your care’ and noted that: ‘It is intended to give consideration to removing all the half-castes from Ernabella a little later, and if you then desire to adopt, an opportunity will be given for application.’

As we have seen, both Love and Duguid were essentially in agreement with this policy of removal. Love acted quickly. Within a few days of arriving at the mission station, he wrote to the APB regarding the possible removal of two mixed-blood children from Ernabella. The two children, said Love, should be removed ‘to a more suitable environment’ as soon as possible:

The girl is fighting with other children, and is getting too big to leave safely in a blacks’ camp; the boy is old enough to adapt himself to white ways, and is too old to leave in a savage environment.

Love wanted the Board’s instructions. He ‘regretted to say’ that there were ‘several small half-caste children here’ who he thought were too young to leave their mothers yet: ‘I would urge leaving half-caste children with their mothers till 4-6 years, then removing them to their future environment before they get too old to feel the change too hardly.’ Penhall called the proposed removal ‘a good plan’ and suggested talking to the Oodnadatta police on their next visit to Ernabella: ‘if the opportunity occurs send the two south after advising me of the arrangements made with the Oodnadatta Police.’ On the general question of ‘half-castes at Ernabella’, Penhall repeated his view that these children should be removed from Ernabella, not only for their own preservation, but as part of our effort to maintain the pure blooded race on the northwest reserve. No doubt

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38 Ibid., No. 52 of 1939 (d), Edwards to CP Penhall, 27 Nov 1939.
39 Ibid., CP Penhall to Edwards, n.d., probably December 1939.
40 Ibid., No 22 of 1941, Love to APB, 20 Mar 1941.
41 Ibid., Love to APB, 20 Mar 1941.
this ideal will be difficult of attainment, but I think it is worth a strong effort.\textsuperscript{42}

When the two children arrived at Quorn unannounced, the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) Superintendent Erskine wrote a blunt letter of complaint to Penhall.\textsuperscript{43} Colebrook Home had received a telegram from the police at Oodnadatta requiring them to ‘meet north train 2 children Ernabella. Oodnadatta Police.’ The Colebrook authorities had no alternative but to respond, stated Erskine, although ‘our missionaries are instructed that no child is admitted to our home without the consent of our Council’. Penhall replied ‘to your rather peremptory letter’ that he had not known the children were being sent down immediately. Tentative arrangements were being made for children to be removed from Ernabella and he had intended asking the UAM to receive them in Colebrook.\textsuperscript{44} In fact, a letter had been sent from the Oodnadatta police advising Penhall of the removal of the children from the Mission Station. Whether he had not received or received but not read the letter by the time he received the UAM letter is unclear. Sergeant Bradley from Oodnadatta reported that on a recent patrol, Superintendent Love had asked him to take ‘the two half-castes’ to Oodnadatta, to be sent to Colebrook at Quorn: ‘he told me that you had advised him to hand over the children to me on my next visit.’\textsuperscript{45} As it turned out, Love also had written to Penhall immediately the children had been sent on their way but the letter did not arrive at the APB until 22 August.\textsuperscript{46} Such were the vagaries of communications in the early 1940s, and such were the cavalier ways in which removals occurred in this era, with all white actors, police, missionaries, and administrators concurring (with only their timing out of step), carelessly complicit.

There was an instructive denouement to this sad episode, giving us some clues as to how these things were sometimes worked out. The UAM advised the APB subsequently that they were willing to keep the two children at Colebrook

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., APB to Love, 31 Mar 1941.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., No 10A of 1941, United Aboriginal Mission (UAM) (Erskine) to Penhall (APB), 19 Aug 1941.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., Penhall to Erskine, 22 Aug 1941.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., No 7 of 1941, Bradley to Penhall, 13 Aug 1941.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., No 22 of 1941, Love to APB, 11 Aug 1941.
provided the APB paid 5/- pw for their maintenance.\textsuperscript{47} This was agreed. Penhall then sounded the UAM out regarding a further eleven half-caste children at Ernabella: was Colebrook able to take these as well?\textsuperscript{48} The UAM’s answer was considered. They agreed fully with the aims of ‘bringing all half-caste children away from the Ernabella district’ but were concerned at such ‘a large influx of children’ and some of their ages. They preferred children under seven years ‘as after that age they are difficult to control, as they have learned so much of bush ways and habits.’ Water was a problem: if the APB could help with some financial assistance, then perhaps...\textsuperscript{49} The APB subsequently approved a grant of £200 towards the cost of an improved water supply at Colebrook.\textsuperscript{50}

**the death-knell for gin-men**

Towards the end of the 1930s, the Chief Protector and the Ernabella missionaries were agreed on the pernicious influence of the doggers. Consequently the concerns of the Ernabella missionaries regarding the ‘contamination’ of the natives were often raised with the CP/APB. In December, 1939, for example, after Rev. Taylor had resigned, the acting superintendent of Ernabella, Stephen Ward, raised concerns about a dogger who ‘invariably has a crowd of native women around his camp...last week he took away our very capable house girl by giving her a new dress...Is there no law by which I can order him off the place?’\textsuperscript{51} Penhall’s response indicated he was as zealous as the missionaries to rid the area of doggers. He advised that amending legislation was soon to be proclaimed that ‘will sound the death-knell of every gin man in the state and I can assure you it will be used without mercy as far as I am concerned.’\textsuperscript{52}

**the buffer station**

Part of the strategy against the ‘gin men’ was to cordon the Great Aboriginal

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., No 23 of 1941, UAM to APB, 24 Aug 1941.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., APB to UAM, 29 Aug 1941.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., UAM to APB, 5 Nov 1941.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., see No. 36 of 1942, re: grant towards cost of improved water supply at Colebrook.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., No. 52 of 1939 (e), Ward to Duguid, 2 Dec 1939. Duguid passed on the letter to Penhall.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., No. 52 of 1939 (e), CP Penhall to Duguid, Dec 1939. The Aborigines Amendment Act became law in 1940 and section 30 of the Act made it an offence for a non-Aboriginal male person to ‘habitually consort with’, or have a sexual relationship with, an Aboriginal woman, unless married to her: see Raynes, ‘*A Little Flour...*’, p. 50; also SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No. 102 of 1940, APB Report for 1940.

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Reserve to the West of the new Mission Station off from the depredations of such men. The mission was thus to perform a 'buffer' function as part of the Duguidian vision of a 'protectorate' in the Musgraves. The Chief Protector, too, saw the real benefit of the Mission in secular terms:

The work of the Ernabella Mission is of great importance in that it is expected to retard the detribalisation of the natives living on the adjacent reserve and ensures that the inevitable contact with civilization is made first of all with people whose moral character is above reproach. 53

The Chief Protector's view thus aligned precisely with Duguid's vision of Ernabella as a 'buffer station' between the Aborigines of the Reserve and the Musgrave Ranges, and the encroaching white settler civilisation. The 'buffer station' notion, however, inevitably raised the old issue of the three blocks between the Mission and the Reserve. The leasing of these blocks would immediately undermine the logic of the buffer station. So the missionaries and the Church began a concerted campaign to resolve the situation. Matthews wrote to the APB, initially raising the tenure of the pastoral lease on the Ernabella property itself. 54 His Board, advised Matthews, felt that a pastoral lease gave insufficient security of tenure, and preferred a perpetual lease on the property. He then raised the matter of the three adjacent blocks, referring Penhall to a letter of Love's to the Board of Missions:

[the blocks] support 200 natives, especially through killing kangaroos. No settlement by white men could put anything like 200 white people in the place of the 200 natives who are now getting their food in these hills...the most kindly disposed settlement will be followed by the disappearance of the natives, unless they are preserved as we are doing it at Ernabella. Ernabella is keeping sheep on the flats and keeping the hills for the hunting parties of the natives, who also roam all over their country. 55

In the letter, Love concluded that the only proper action was to add these blocks to the Mission, or to add them to the Reserve, rather than throw them open for white settlement. Penhall agreed with Matthews and Love and proposed to pursue the matters with the responsible officer, the Commissioner of Crown

53 Ibid., No. 116 of 1939 (b), Chief Protector's Annual Report to the Commissioner of Public Works, 1939.
54 Ibid., No 22 of 1941, Matthews to APB, n.d., probably April-May 1941.
55 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893 /Folder 4/1941": Love to Matthews, 20 Apr 1941.
Lands. In August 1941, Penhall advised Matthews that the tenure of the adjacent blocks was held under an annual licence which arrangement would not be reconsidered until 1944. This decision to defer, he advised, did not indicate any hostility to the issue of a pastoral lease at a later date. In relation to the matter of the perpetual lease on the mission property, the Pastoral Board had advised Penhall that a conversion of the three pastoral leases the Church held on Ernabella to perpetual leases was not possible, as such as action would set an undesirable precedent. However, the leases ran for considerable periods of time so, Penhall told Matthews, the tenure under which the land at Ernabella was held could be regarded as being of a fairly permanent nature. And there the matter rested for the moment. The efforts of the Church and the mission were directed towards ensuring, as much as possible, the security of the Mission as a going concern and as a haven and buffer for a people, in Love's words, 'so lately removed from savagery'.

our job is to defend the Aborigines against wrong

What was then the relationship of Ernabella and Love, then, with the white pastoralists, stockmen and settlers, the 'contaminating whites', whom the missionaries went to considerable efforts to separate from contact with Aboriginal people? Love often assured the Board of Missions that, generally, relationships with other whites in the area were good. However, during the notorious Kitto trial, when opinions and feelings were inflamed, Love wrote to Matthews that 'every white resident, [from] whom I have heard an opinion, has shown a violent anti-black and pro-white attitude, without regard for the question of right or wrong'. Love recognised that it was not possible for the Mission to court favour or popularity with the settlers in the Centre:

56 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 22 of 1941, APB agreed to refer matter to Commissioner for Lands 10 Jun 1941: APB Minute Book Folio 107.
57 Ibid., No 22 of 1941, APB to Matthews, 27 Aug 1941.
58 Ibid., No 22 of 1941, APB to Matthews, 15 Sep 1941.
59 Pastoralists Kitto and O'Conlay were brought to trial in Alice Springs in 1941 charged with the murder of a Pitjantjatjara man, Lilliliki. After a number of unusual and unsatisfactory occurrences, including the disappearance of Aboriginal witnesses, and possible tampering with the physical remains of the deceased, the two men were acquitted, to the dismay of Southern friends of the Aborigines, including Albrecht and Duguid. For an account, largely from the perspective of TGH Strehlow, who was a patrol-officer in the NT at the time, see Hill, Broken Song. pp. 357-362.
If Ernabella had been popular in the district after the trial, then it would have been shame to Ernabella...we here all wish to live at peace with all men, as much as is possible, but popularity is not to be sought at the cost of right bowing before a wrong to the Aborigines, or to anyone else. Our job is to defend the Aborigines against wrong, and when wrong may be done by a white man to a black, then the missionary who champions the cause of the black man here will not be popular in this district.60

Again, we see that JRB Love, despite the ambivalence of his discourse about Aborigines, was 'with the black people' when it mattered.

**the Hermannsburg missionary at Ernabella**

The hospitality that the missionaries and the indigens extended to each other at Ernabella was often shown to others. Many visitors, scientists, anthropologists, geologists, ministers of religion, tourists, began to come to Ernabella. In 1942, similar hospitality was shown to Pastor Albrecht. He had been detained in Adelaide during the early war years after he had been seen as a security threat. In August of 1942, Pastor Albrecht was allowed to return to Hermannsburg, and he did so via Ernabella.61 Albrecht wrote a lengthy and enthusiastic report about the experience.62 He was also quoted in the Ernabella Newsletter as describing the visit as a 'real highlight' of the trip. He fully endorsed Ernabella, saying that he left 'with a heart full of joy and satisfaction that at least here, as at Hermannsburg, the native has a home where he is understood, feels his own, and has a future.63

Albrecht described his 'Journey North' with a lyrical passion. His 'view' of the countryside around Ernabella as he approached it contrasted with Love's 'desolate scenes'. Albrecht writes that his party drove for a hundred miles through 'the most beautiful flowers' that hid the 'arid' land; there were green bushes with blue, yellow and pink flowers, with the atmosphere filled with 'rich

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60 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893 /Folder 4/1941": Love to Matthews, 14 Nov 1941.
61 Albrecht was not permitted at this stage to take his wife and children back with him. He notes in his report on the trip, *Journey North*, that this was the first time he had had to 'say goodbye' to them: see Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection", *Journey North*, n.d., probably about September 1942.
62 Ibid., *Journey North*. Love's reaction was more muted and prosaic. The Superintendent's Log for 24 August 1942 reads: 'Rev. W.Albrecht (sic) of Hermannsburg with Mr Borgelt, arrived here this afternoon in their truck, on the way from Adelaide to Hermannsburg. Shearing started today': Love, "Logbook".
scent'. Albrecht stayed at the Presbyterian Mission for three days. He was impressed by the 'busy, cheerful' activity of the mission site and, particularly, by the school and the children there: 'What a cheerful crowd they were; it was a joy to look into their happy faces.' But just as Albrecht saw some parallels between the two missions ('...at Ernabella you have many of the things we see [at Hermannsburg] fairly developed, just in the making.' he also foresaw difficulties for the new Mission. He noted the Duguidian policy to 'keep the natives in their natural state as long as possible' but wondered 'how long will they be able to carry on in this way?' Noticing requests to Love from the natives for clothes as part-payment for work, Albrecht saw this tendency as becoming irresistible: 'it is absurd to imagine that [they] can be kept away from such influences – like a monkey in a zoo. The problem is there and cannot be dodged.' Albrecht saw 'clothing' as a metaphor for the changes and 'temptations' – a favourite missionary term - that the white society, through cattle stations and townships, would bring and that Aborigines would desire.

**the ugly face of the loafer**

Albrecht also discerned the beginnings of what he called 'the ugly face of the loafer', the person who lives off the work of others. While the Lutheran had tried to understand the collective nature of traditional indigenous society, the individualistic work ethic had profoundly permeated his Puritan and Pietist mentality. Albrecht was deeply contemptuous of the loafer and saw him as an immoral sickness, a cancer: 'at Ernabella we could just study this problem in the beginning, but it is there.' Love had already made the connection between easy money and 'loafing'. When it came to the problem of work and the Aborigine, missionaries everywhere usually spoke the same language. Forming part of the

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64 Ibid., p. 1.
65 Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Journey North, p. 4.
66 See Henson, A Straight-out Man, p. 3. In fact, Albrecht does discuss the problem of 'work and the Aborigine' in a number of his (especially later) papers and articles with a great deal of understanding and empathy for the predicament of his Aborigines, but always within the strong framework of his upbringing. Even a paper written probably around this time deals perceptively and not merely critically with the attitudes of indigenous people to Western notions of work: see Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Is the Assimilation of the Aborigines Possible? (n.d.); see also Albrecht, "Albrecht Material", Lutheran Archives: The Question of the Economic Rehabilitation of Aborigines (1953); Stages of Transition (1961); Employment of Aborigines on Cattle Stations (n.d).
67 Ibid., Journey North, p. 3.
anxious border of white civilization, mission stations were places where the
marks of that civilisation were to be inscribed on the indigenous body and soul.
One of those marks was 'work': the station was a site that privileged work in the
Western sense. Work was the fundamental activity of pastoralists and mission
stations, where even proselytizing activity was referred to in such terms: we
worked among the Pitjantjatjara, we worked among the Arrernte. One of the
standard ways in which to civilise and reform the indigenous body was to reform
indigenous habits of industry, or what was often seen by many Europeans,
including missionaries, as lack of industry. Most Mission Boards and
missionaries during the 1930s and 1940s saw the introduction to even remote
parts of Australia of a form of capitalist economy as inevitable and natural. The
station was one site where this transition was to be managed and where the
'native' was to be guided into capitalist work-disciplines and rhythms of time-
labour. The theological and philosophical reconstruction of work by the West –
by Luther, Calvin and Wesley among others - had predisposed Protestant
missionaries to regard disciplined capitalistic enterprise in the world as a
virtue.68 Missionaries such as the Hermannsburg Lutherans drew a connection
between Christianity and economic activity by advocating a gospel of work
designed to instill the self-discipline that would make 'natives' good wage-
labourers.69 The Arrernte at the mission were taught the disciplines of
punctuality, cleanliness, moral purity, self-restraint, and industriousness that
were required of a good worker and a good Christian.70 Albrecht saw the 'loafer'
as the antithesis of these virtues: as he famously wrote to his Board Chairman in
1937, 'a Christian cannot be a parasite'.71 He thought he had 'glimpsed' the

68 See the classic books in this area: RH Tawney, Religion and the rise of capitalism: a historical study
(London, 1936), and Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, T. Parsons trans. (New
69 See Leske, ed., Hermannsburg: a vision and a mission.
70 See Rowse, White Flour, white power, for a brilliant discussion of Hermannsburg missionaries, work and
'evangelism in the desert'; also Robin Radford, 'Aspects of the Social History of Hermannsburg', in Hardy,
Megaw and Megaw, eds., The Heritage of Namatjira: 63-96, esp. pp. 71-72; see also EP Thompson's
celebrated connections between religion (Methodism) and the incorporation of workers into a very different
environment in Industrial Revolution England: Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class
71 Cited in Henson, A Straight-out Man, p. 112, referring to a letter from Albrecht to Reidel, 29 Sep 1937.
Rowse uses the phrase as a chapter heading in his White flour, white power. Noel Loos writes of the 19th
Lutheran missionaries at Hope Valley in North Queensland that European patterns of economy and work
were so ingrained that 'the need to induce the semi-nomadic food-gathering and hunting Aborigines to accept

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loafer in the early history of the new Mission and was warning the superintendent. For while Love wished to retard as long as possible the incorporation of the Pitjantjatjara into Western economies, the straight-out Lutheran saw this as an ultimately futile exercise, with the Aborigines themselves pushing for the incorporation.

the matter of the incorporation of Christianity

The two missionaries, from different religious and theological contexts, differed more seriously on the question of the ‘incorporation’ of Christianity into indigenous spiritual lives. Albrecht did note that Love had a fine record of service and he admired the fact that after only fourteen months at Ernabella, all conversations between Love and the indigenous people were conducted ‘in the vernacular’. While Albrecht thought that ‘the Presbyterian brethren here are working much on the same lines as we at Hermannsburg...’ he conceded that Love and he differed on some fundamental points of doctrine and missiology:

Rev. Love believes that if the Gospel is offered to the native, there is no need to trouble any further about his religion. The two, Christianity and their beliefs of old, can well stand together and be of benefit to the people. Our attitude, on the other hand, is that Christianity is exclusive and if mixed with other beliefs becomes diluted and loses its power to transform and regenerate.

A reflective Albrecht later provided a more acerbic account of a conversation between them at this time:

A missionary from Ernabella, Rev JRB Love, once told me that he saw in their blood-drinking ceremony a foreshadow of the Holy Communion. I told him that in my opinion this was a shocking statement but he replied this was only my narrow mind that could not see further. Such attitudes and principles will never build the Church of Jesus Christ. And surely the Church has not sent Missionaries to the Aborigines to re-establish old

regular agricultural employment was seen in itself as essential to conversion. There was no appreciation of the Aboriginal economy’: Loos, “Concern and Contempt”, p. 108. Albrecht’s Protestant Lutheran obsession with 2 Thessalonians 3:10 admittedly often seemed to bring him close to this position. Certainly the ‘loafer’ and ‘parasite’ maddened him beyond anything else in Aboriginal society, despite his genuine and empathetic attempts to understand it.

72 Ibid., Journey North, p. 2.
73 Ibid., p. 4.

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pagan customs. If we have not more to offer we should stay away.\textsuperscript{74}

It was a significant encounter: Love the exemplary Presbyterian progressive, and Albrecht, the conservative Lutheran evangelical. It could perhaps be portrayed with apparent justice by a certain historiography as a defining moment in Australian missionology, when the old met the new, when the conservative, evangelical, fundamentalist, Word-driven missionary came face to face with a progressive, moderate, liberal, anthropologically and culturally sensitive missionary. But was it such an encounter? History rarely allows us the luxury or latitude of forgetting the complexity of things. We may need to reassess such a view after we look more closely at the core of Love’s experience at Ernabella, from 1942 to 1946, in the next three chapters. The formidable figure of the Hermannsburg missionary will be useful as a context against which to weigh that experience. After all, Albrecht had significant links with each of our Presbyterian triumvirate of Duguid, Love and Flynn, and was involved in explicit and implicit conversations with them and with the wider settler community on what they all tended to call ‘the Aboriginal problem’. Curiously it was Friedrich Wilhelm Albrecht, the German Lutheran pastor born in Poland, who, even more than the others, spoke almost always of ‘our’ Aborigines.\textsuperscript{75} They had possessed him, as they possessed JRB Love in different ways, from the moment he had arrived in Hermannsburg in 1926 to the ‘joyful waving of their hats’ and the ‘friendly voices amid ‘the stately station buildings beneath the green trees’ to his response as an old man in an Adelaide nursing home to his biographer’s first approach to him: ‘in spirit, I’m still there [in Central Australia]. They were my life, you see.’\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{74} See F.W. Albrecht, "Albrecht Material", Lutheran Archives: ‘Hermannsburg in Central Australia, in the process of radical change’ (n.d.).

\textsuperscript{75} It was a characteristic of missionaries to use the possessory pronoun in relation to the Aboriginal people on their mission. Russell McGregor has pointed out that it was (is?) a common practice among anthropologists in referring to those people they are studying but suggests that it was a matter of academic possession, which led on occasion to dissension: McGregor, “The Clear Categories of Olive Pink”, p. 6. I suggest with missionaries (and not a few anthropologists) such as Albrecht, Love and others that it was much more a marker of identification and empathy with the particular community or ‘tribe’ with whom they were associated, or even with all Australian Aborigines. Almost a thesis could be written on the historical and social meanings of the ‘case of the two pronouns’: that in essence the white settler spoke of ‘the’ Aborigine while the missionary spoke of ‘our’ Aborigine. Perhaps this thesis could, in one sense, be characterised as such a thesis.

\textsuperscript{76} Paul GE Albrecht, From Mission to Church: Appendix 3, FW Albrecht: ‘Fifty years’, p. 303; Henson, A Straight-out Man, p. xiii.
CHAPTER NINE: ‘Justice is already the first violence’
the Control of the Indigenous Body

Mission Stations operated not only as sites of research but also as locales of discipline and surveillance, where the logic of Foucault’s panoptical gaze could be articulated. Governmental agencies such as Aboriginal Protection Boards, and church bodies like the Boards of Missions, kept a close bureaucratic eye on Aboriginal people, requiring from superintendents annual reports, numbers, names, permissions, acquittals for monies provided, punishments for minor infractions, police action for misdemeanours and crimes. The mission station represented the related ideal of fixing the wild, nomadic, indigenous Body to a settled place where it could be inscribed with the marks of civilization, cleanliness, dress, domestication, good behaviour, law and order, the marks of control.

Even Ernabella, with its Duguidian policy of minimal interference in traditional life, was involved in efforts to re-form the Aboriginal body, to control and clean it, and to re-order it, by various means of ‘uplift’ and ‘policing’ actions, in terms of European conceptions of civilised existence. Yet the Presbyterian mission was unusual in the extent to which it resisted this almost universal missionary imperative to reform and remake the indigenous body in an ‘improved’, European image. Its interference with the indigenous body was less intrusive,

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2 See for example the voluminous data on South Australian missions and settlements in SA State Records, "GRG 52/1".

3 See, for example, Comaroff and Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution, vols. 1 and 2, for a magisterial account of London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries among the Tswana in Southern Africa establishing what the Comaroffs see as hegemonic regimes through the combined imposition and acceptance of European forms and structures involving more or less radical modifications to traditional life and culture.
for example, than that of Hermannsburg. The Lutherans had always insisted on strict adherence to regimes of clothing, work and abandonment of traditional customs and ceremonies. At Ernabella, colonial actors such as administrators and police who entered the contact zone of the Mission during the Love regime noted, some with distaste, others with approval, the relatively unregulated nature of the indigenous interaction with the mission. When the feminist and activist Constance E. Terten Cooke visited Ernabella in 1943 in her capacity as a member of the South Australian Aboriginal Protection Board (APB), she was impressed with 'the complete freedom the native people enjoy. Mr. Love does not interfere with them in any way, they come and go as they please.' A police officer, on the other hand, who noted the refuse left behind by the moving of camps, was disgusted and held a recalcitrant Love to account. The anarchic quality of the mission existence that Terten Cooke observed did not mean that there was not purposive economic activity (from a European point of view) occurring amongst the Pitjantjatjara: sheep were shepherded and sheared, building, fencing, and domestic work was going on, but the mission attempted to encourage this activity to occur within the rhythms of a traditional life, of ceremonies and walkabout. Workers were expected to leave after three months; schoolchildren were told to follow their parents into the bush. The Body of the Other was given, and often took for itself, some space to exist on its own terms, across the karu, the creek, away from the missionaries and the mission compound.

In Australia, Peggy Brock has written of the paradox of missions in South Australia; namely that 'Aboriginal survival owes much to them, and yet, with the possible exception of Ernabella in northern South Australia, the missionaries were the avowed enemies of the cultures they were instrumental in saving': Peggy Brock, "The Missionary Factor in Adnyamathanha History", in Swain and Rose, eds., Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions; 277-290, p. 289.


5 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 90 of 1943, Copy of Report by Mrs. Terten Cooke to the Aborigines Protection Board: Impressions of a visit to Ernabella Mission, p. 3. Note that other comments in her report were to cause Love some grief: see chapter 10, below.

6 Ibid., No. 90 of 1945, Police Report (MC Connell) of 8 Aug 1943: see below in this chapter.
saving the indigenous body

Much of the post-colonial critique of missions and missionaries is directed, with justice, at ethnocentric attempts across the colonial world, in India, Africa and Oceania, at the reformation of the indigenous body in the Euro-Christian image, with attendant representations of the aboriginal or indigenous body and bodily practices as sordid, dirty or evil.\(^7\) The Central Australian missionaries were not immune to these colonial representations, as we have already seen, or to strict reformative attempts, particularly in the Lutheran case, to impose alien regimes on indigenous culture. They did, however, go to considerable lengths to feed and heal the indigenous body, to prevent a physical as well as a social death, to 'save' the individual body and the 'tribe'. This concern for the native body (which often existed coternominously with a thinly veiled contempt for it) seems to go beyond simplistic linkages to a missionary desire to capture or possess the Aboriginal body for the Christian religion or the Christian God. That these linkages existed in some form in Central Australia, particularly in evangelical missionary discourses, is undoubted. However, apart from the obligatory tying of the evening meal with the evening service on Sundays, little on the mission site at Ernabella was dependent or conditional on 'conversion'. There were rewards for 'coming across' to the white side, for crossing the boundary, the karu, as it were, into the mission compound, to go 'with the whites'. Some of these rewards were intangible, involved with status, with desired connections to knowledge, power, and magic, as well as material reasons, such as the desire for European goods. But in most cases, the indigenous body took what it needed, or wanted, from the missionaries, and went back to the other side of the karu. At Hermannsburg, serious consequences could ostensibly follow conversion: converts were not

\(^7\) Although not all indigenous peoples were seen at the same 'degraded' level. Anna Johnston has shown how 19thC missionaries as well as other colonial actors considered Australian Aborigines to be on the lowest rungs of the evolutionary ladder of racial hierarchy. By the early 19thC understandings of racial hierarchies included a respect for Polynesian races, for example, which would never be accorded to Australian Aborigines where European conceptions of racialised and sexualised orders of 'savagery' profoundly influenced missionary practices and representations. The comparative savagery of the Australian Aborigine was thus seen as contributing to the widely acknowledged failure of benevolent missionary attempts to ameliorate their condition and elevate their character: Anna Johnston, "Antipodean heathens", pp. 72-73.
allowed to attend ceremonies or practice polygamy. And, conversely, at the Lutheran mission, where a ‘congregation’ existed, as it did not yet at the Presbyterian site, its members were privileged and set apart from other, ‘bush’ natives. The native evangelists, especially, must have seemed to embody the ‘new life’ to which the Arrernte were encouraged to aspire: they could read and write, they wore suits, they were given powerful responsibilities such as handing out rations and running stores. Yet even there the Arrernte generally ensured they created sufficient space to survive on their own terms. At Ernabella, they were often provided this space as a matter of policy. Both Love and Duguid acknowledged the precariousness of the condition of indigenous bodies, and accepted on behalf of their indifferent countrymen a powerful moral burden to ‘save’ indigenous bodies as a consequence, a burden not linked only to a desire to seek redemption for indigenous souls before the Christian God.

Yet missionary discourse about Aborigines in Central Australia was not a monolithic and unchanging one. Under the stress, frustration and challenges of the mission field, in a harsh climate in an inhospitable land, with a clientele that could be recalcitrant and resistant, with critical scrutinizers within Boards and Committees perched quizzically in the safety of the capital cities on the coast, discourses could fracture, their internal contradictions could be exposed, and intense pressures could be exerted along the fault lines of connections to other colonial discourses. To suggest that a politics of hospitality existed in the ‘pastorale’ of Central Australian mission sites is not to suggest that all was sweetness and light, that mechanisms of control and governance were not

8 Peggy Brock has suggested a complex dialectical relationship between missionary and indigenes, where indigenous peoples’ responses to missionaries are determined by the material and ideological advantages of conversion against possible loss of status and benefits within their own communities, with most retaining connections to both worlds: see Peggy Brock, "Mission Encounters in the Colonial World: British Columbia and South-West Australia", The Journal of Religious History 24 (June 2000): 159-179.


10 A core part of Paul Albrecht’s narrative in From Mission to Church (2002) of the shift at Hermannsburg, from the patriarchal regimes Carl Strehlow and, to a lesser extent, his father FW Albrecht established to an ‘indigenization’ of the mission regime in the 1970s and 1980s, was his realization of the extent to which Christianised Arrernte retained (usually discreetly and hidden from the missionaries) what they saw as important parts of their traditional beliefs and cultural practices: see Albrecht, From Mission to Church.
attempted and disputed. Discourse battled with discourse. Praxis was brought to bear heavily on policy and principle. And JRB Love was in the thick of it all.

**saving the ‘half-caste’ body**

We have seen how, in 1941, Love supported, with the approval of the authorities, the removal of mixed-blood children or ‘half-castes’ from the ‘sordid camps’.

In 1942, Love was again involved in attempts to ‘rescue’ such children. It is worthwhile examining one incident closely as revelatory of contemporary discourses of removal among missionaries and other colonial actors. James Lennon, a white man, had written to the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) requesting that his five children by M., an Aboriginal woman, be removed to Colebrooke, although he was not sure where they were, adding he had given their ages to the previous superintendent, Mr. Taylor, at Ernabella.

The UAM forwarded the letter to the South Australian APB, saying they were prepared to take the children, although they qualified this by adding that ‘if the oldest two become a disturbing influence due to their age, after a fair and honourable trial, we would ask that they be removed...’ Secretary Penhall then wrote to Love in some quandary about this ‘difficult’ case:

> I understand the family roams between Oodnadatta and Ernabella. I [also] understand M. is a very devoted mother and would probably feel it very keenly if she were separated from her children. If M. and family are at or near Ernabella at the moment, please take soundings as to whether M. would consider parting with her children. This is rather a difficult case, and as I have not come into contact with the family, I am rather at a loss to know whether or not it is desirable to remove these children from their present environment. As they are half-castes, it is not desirable that they should be attached permanently to the Ernabella Mission. At the same time, it might be difficult for them to be brought into contact with the children at the Quorn Home [Colebrooke], who are more or less sophisticated.

Love responded to Penhall at some length. He began by advising that the family had not been at Ernabella since he had arrived, and that he did not think that

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11 See chapter 8, above.
12 SA State Records, “GRC 52/1”: No. 69 of 1943, Lennon to UAM, 7 Jul 1942.
13 Ibid., No. 69 of 1943, UAM to APB, 21 Jul 1942.
14 Ibid., APB (Penhall) to Love, 29 Jul 1942 [most correspondence to the SA APB was both directed to Penhall and answered by him].

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the mother would willingly part with the children. While he did not believe the father had any legal claim on them, Love was reassured that 'he is concerned for their future welfare, an attitude, which I think should receive all possible consideration' but, Love added, 'the first consideration must be the welfare of the children':

From this point of view, I am quite sure, myself, that to put these children into a school where they will be taught and get to earn an independent living later on will be by far the kindest and wisest thing for the children. Mr. Trudinger, the schoolteacher here, has more than once expressed indignation that these children, who, he says, are intelligent and capable of uplift, should be left to hang about blacks' camps. I do not know these children, but I quite agree that to leave young half-caste children, especially girls, in blacks' camps is cruel and immoral.15

Again we find the distaste, even loathing, regarding the 'blacks' camps' and the perceived moral obligation on the part of the white missionaries to provide 'uplift' (literally) for the 'intelligent' half-castes. The implication here is that the full-blood children are not intelligent or capable: as we know Love did not believe this, it indicates the sort of complicated and contradictory logic involved in straddling discourses of removal and primitivity and those of redemption and individual worth. It is also disturbing and unsettling from late 20th and 21st century perspectives of the problematic nature of the removal policies of earlier times to find the exemplary missionary and undoubted 'friend of the Aborigines' believing it was 'cruel and immoral' not to separate mixed-blood children from their families.16 Love accepts that 'it is inevitably cruel to take half-caste children from their black mother' but goes on:

this can be to some extent alleviated by showing the mother photographs of the children in their new school and also, I think, their grief is spent

15 Ibid., Love to Penhall, 16 Oct 1942.
16 It is instructive that Love seeks support from the opinion of the schoolteacher, RM Trudinger. As I've indicated elsewhere in this thesis, the two men clashed both personally and ideologically during their 'partnership' at Ernabella. Love appears to have been aligned with what might be called the Moderate wing in the Presbyterian Church, whereas Trudinger represented a more evangelical, fundamentalist wing. This difference translated into significant missiological differences in relation to educational and language policies at the Mission, as well as a profound divergence in their interpretation, in the mission contact zone, of the discourse of indigenous 'salvation'. These issues are discussed below, especially in chapter 11. For the moment, the temporary coalition of the two on the matter of separation of 'half-caste' children seems to indicate the general support for such policies in missionary circles in Australia, even in groups that disagreed about almost everything else.
sooner than would be the case with a normal white mother of a family. The two children...who were removed from here last year to [Colebrook] were seen by my wife recently when she was passing through Quorn. She found them happy, clean and they spoke very nicely to her when she met them on the road going home from school. Their departure from here caused little sorrow and they are undoubtedly far better off where they are now. Obviously James Lennon does not feel his girls will be happy and safe if left with their mother. I think I agree with his concern.17

Love's somewhat breathtaking (to us) presumptions, which appear to have been shared by Trudinger, do not appear to have convinced Penhall entirely. The APB Secretary reiterated to the missionary that 'this one requires special consideration, partly as I understand the elder children of this woman are very intelligent, and the mother herself is very good to them.'18 Penhall had already contacted the Oodnadatta police, asking them to make enquiries as to 'how the children are faring' and if the mother was willing to send them to a children's home. If necessary, the APB said it 'might bring M. to Port Augusta to be near her children.' It was conceded that M. was a 'very good mother' but 'the Board feels that there is no future for these half-caste children unless they are given some education.'19 A further letter to the Oodnadatta police passed on new information provided by a Mr. Holt of Evelyn Downs Station that M. was living there, 'under tribal laws with an aborigine named T'. Penhall again asked for advice from the police on removal of the children, and added:

I may state that Lennon deserted the family some time ago and, as far as I am concerned, the children will be removed only if it appears wise to do so, not because he has made the request.20

After sending this letter, Penhall was contacted by Mr. Holt who advised the APB that the mother 'refuses to part' with her children:

17 Ibid., Love to Penhall, 16 Oct 1942. Love represented orthodox Presbyterian thinking in characterising the UAM children's institution at Colebrook as a 'fine Christian work', a judgement in which Duguid also would have concurred but which has generally not survived a post-Bringing Them Home analysis. In 1943, when a similar Presbyterian 'Home' was mooted, Love expressed caution: 'is this intended to oust or rival the UAM Colebrook Home at Quorn? If it is, I would not touch it...I cannot contemplate a possible attack on another branch of Christian work. My opinion of Colebrook is that it is a fine Christian work, being done well': Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1943": Love to Matthews, 3 Apr 1943.
18 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No. 69 of 1943, Penhall to Love, 24 Oct 1942.
19 Ibid., Penhall to OIC, Police Station, Oodnadatta, 17 Nov 1942.
20 Ibid., Penhall to OIC, Police Station, Oodnadatta, 26 Feb 1943.
She is married to a blackfellow who is a very good stepfather and very kind to the kiddies. They have been with us for 2 years and are contented and well cared for. Both parents are working for us and the 2 eldest children are being trained for domestic work and intend teaching and training the others as they grow. J. Lennon does not contribute anything to their help.  

The police recommended leaving the children ‘with the Holt family for the moment’. The police knew of Lennon and did not consider him ‘to be a suitable person to make suggestions as to the welfare of aborigines’. Emboldened by the police recommendation, Penhall replied that ‘I have always regarded Lennon’s request ...as a piece of impertinence in view of his neglect of those children. Moreover, in my view, most of the children are now too old to be placed in a Home for Children, and they appear to be very well treated at Evelyn Downs Station.’ Another letter from Holt confirmed that the children were ‘well and perfectly happy here...well supplied with an abundance of goat’s milk and other wholesome foods and also well clothed and encouraged to better themselves to learning to read and write.’ It ended with the poignant observation that ‘M. is extremely fond of her kiddies and would [be] terribly upset if her children were forcibly taken from her.’  

Soon after the receipt of this letter, the APB decided to take no action ‘for the present’.

It is curious, and surprising, that in the case of M. and her five children, out of the missionary, the administrator, the policeman, and the pastoralist, it was the exemplary missionary who appears to take the least progressive, hardest-hearted line. It is probable that all these colonial actors supported removal policies as a general rule and it was only the particular circumstances of this case that militated against separation; we note Penhall’s reiterated edict that ‘half-caste’ children should not be permanently attached to the mission. In the end, it was the ages of the children, the support of the pastoralist, and the fierce determination and love of the mother that ‘saved’ the children. This was one aspect of ‘saving’ to which JRB Love was not prepared to stretch his conception of ‘salvation’. Indeed, in this respect, his conception was precisely the obverse.

21 Ibid., GA Holt to Penhall, 28 Feb 1943.
22 Ibid., OIC, Police Station, Oodnadatta to Penhall, 3 Mar 1943.
23 Ibid., Penhall to OIC, Police Station, Oodnadatta, 15 Mar 1943.
24 Ibid., GA Holt to Penhall, 7 Apr 1943.
For Love, to ‘save’ the half-caste body was to ‘rescue’ it, ‘uplift’ it from the ‘sordid blacks’ camps’ and re-form it among the white and educated exemplars of civilization. From our perspective, sixty years on, to imagine indigenous grief as less than ‘civilized’ grief, and to believe a photograph could in any way adequately replace a son or daughter appear as serious failures of sense and sensibility from someone who was attempting to deal wisely with the Aborigines. We should note, however, that Love’s blind spot was shared by a mission, a church and a nation anxiously obsessed about whiteness, blood and race. 

saving the female body

Another ‘rescue’ surfaces from this period of Ernabella history, another narrative revelatory of congealing and contesting discourses: a female body is ‘rescued’ by the missionaries from the supposed clutches of a white man, not a ‘civilized’ white man but a mailman and shearer, approximate to the ‘low white’ whom the missionaries constantly feared would ‘contaminate’ their Aborigines. In June 1943, the Ernabella schoolteacher, RM Trudinger, was assigned by the APB to ‘rescue’ a young Aboriginal girl N. who it seems to have been assumed by almost everyone involved had been ‘abducted’ by a Mr. Quinn from her family at Ernabella. Love had contracted Quinn to bring the mail and do some shearing at the mission station. The girl left in his truck. This was now an exercise, note, not in removing the child, a full-blood Aborigine, but recovering her and bringing her back to her home, a sort of reverse removal. During her ‘abduction’, the young girl had apparently ‘smuggled out’ a letter written in her native language that found its way to her schoolteacher, who was in Adelaide at the time. The letter indicated that she had been ‘taken’ with a ‘tribal elder sister’ to Cooper Pedy and was ‘living in a house, eating and drinking with whites’ utensils, and sleeping in a bed.’ According to Trudinger’s report, this ‘indicated a very possible undesirable intimacy with whites in that place.’ The schoolteacher set out on what he called in his subsequent report to the APB ‘a week’s journey to Cooper


26 Ibid., ‘Report on a week’s journey to Cooper Pedy’; (Trudinger).
Pedy and beyond, for a young Pitjantjatjara girl.\textsuperscript{27} He had in his pocket a letter from the Secretary of the APB, Penhall, formally directing Quinn to hand N over to Trudinger. Failure to do so would result in ‘appropriate action [undertaken] for the recovery of the child.’ Quinn was advised that ‘removal’ of the girl ‘should not have been undertaken without the permission of the Aboriginal Protection Board’.\textsuperscript{28}

Anxiety and heightened fantasies about the girl’s assumed predicament led Trudinger, armed with the APB’s letter, to travel ‘incognito and under my second name’ in search of her to Cooper Pedy. He eventually arrived at the place to where the child had been ‘abducted’. The facts turned out somewhat at variance with the fevered representations: the mailman had been travelling to Ernabella with his Aboriginal assistants, P. and his wife T. It was T. who had persuaded her younger tribal sister, against Quinn’s wishes, to come with them to Cooper Pedy. The child was perfectly well and had not been mistreated in any way. The mailman himself had ‘delivered’ the letter to someone who had forwarded it to Ernabella, and initiated the ‘incident’.\textsuperscript{29} Thus, Trudinger ‘secured’ N.’s ‘release’, although it was in fact the sister ‘who was very unwilling to part with the girl and it was only after forcible action on the part of Quinn that we eventually wrested N. from [her] grip and placed her safely in the cabin of the truck.’\textsuperscript{30} On her ‘safe return’ to Adelaide, and later to Ernabella, letters of thanks were passed around, from the APB to Trudinger and to Duguid, and from Duguid to Penhall and the APB.\textsuperscript{31} An official letter was also sent to Quinn from Penhall advising him that ‘my Board regards your conduct in agreeing to [the] removal as extremely foolish and that under no circumstances must you do such a thing again.’ Quinn’s attention was drawn to Section 34A of the Aborigines Act, the recent prohibition

\textsuperscript{27} SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 16 of 1943, ‘Report on a week’s journey to Cooper Pedy and beyond, for a young Pitjantjatjara girl’: (Trudinger), n.d.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., Penhall to Quinn, 21 Jun 1943.
\textsuperscript{29} The letter became quite famous in Ernabella missionary folklore since it suddenly displayed to the Adelaide world and beyond the unexpected ability of a thirteen-year-old Aboriginal Pitjantjatjara girl to be able to write and communicated effectively in her own language.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., ‘Report on a week’s journey to Cooper Pedy’.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., see letters Penhall to Trudinger, 15 Jul 1943; Penhall to Duguid 14 Jul 1943; Duguid to Penhall/APB, 15 Jul 1943 (on behalf of Board of Missions).
on ‘habitual consorting with’ or ‘carnal knowledge of’ an Aboriginal female.\textsuperscript{32}

This ‘incident’ reveals something of the near hysteria that was generated in missionary circles when what were regarded as the riff-raff of white settlerhood, the low whites, encountered Aboriginal women. It is apparent that these sorts of situations invited an inflated rhetoric of ‘rescue’ not dissimilar to that of reverse ‘rescues’, of mixed-blood children from their Aboriginal mothers and the ‘sordid camps’; extraordinary measures are taken, disguises assumed, names changed, letters of authority are carried as weapons – all measures that demonstrated missionary fixations with the moral universe of the indigenous female.\textsuperscript{33}

The representation of the ‘rescue of the young girl’ affair in the Ernabella missionary historiography is revealing. N.’s narrative was retold and updated in 1952 in a Presbyterian Board of Missions pamphlet.\textsuperscript{34} Her narrative remained fixed in terms of ‘rescue’ rhetoric but it was now ‘rescue’ from the ‘pre-mission’, primitive past represented by her ‘tribal sister’. Ernabella Mission now represented, in the form of the photographed N., the modernized young Aboriginal ‘body’, dressed, healthy, happy, literate, intelligent, ‘self-respecting and respected’ because, according to Duguid’s contribution to the pamphlet, her language and culture was in turn ‘respected’ by the missionaries.\textsuperscript{35}

There was an interesting sequel to this affair.\textsuperscript{36} We note Love’s absence from this particular narrative. In fact, the white man at the center of the ‘abduction’, Quinn, later returned to Ernabella, showed the Board’s letter to Love, apparently taking exception to the ‘aspersions’ contained in it. Love then wrote acerbically to the APB, supporting Quinn, suggesting Trudinger should apologize to him (Quinn) ‘if he had made any statements reflecting...on the personal character of Mr. Quinn’. He also complained to the APB that he had not been consulted in

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., Penhall to Quinn, 30 Jul 1943.
\textsuperscript{34} Presbyterian Board of Missions, "From Desert to School: the Story of an Aboriginal Girl", in \textit{Ara Iriritja Archives} (Adelaide, 1952), 12pp.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., pp. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{36} There may still be other ‘sequels’ to the story of the ‘rescued girl’, even after the time that has elapsed. The whole story may not yet have been told.
the matter. Penhall replied diplomatically, saying there was no intention to cast aspersions on Quinn, and he defended his letter to him, explaining ingenuously that the ‘advice’ to Quinn had been in the nature of a ‘friendly indication’ of a ‘protective provision in the law for native women in general’. He apologised for not communicating with the ‘highly regarded’ superintendent, as ‘the matter had seemed so urgent’. The urgency built into the psychologies of these ‘rescues’ of the half-caste body and the female body may be taken as a significant marker of missionary anxieties about the indigenous body.

Tony Scanlon has argued that while mission sites may have provided a sanctuary for indigenous females from ‘low whites’, and from what missionaries saw as the ‘innate immorality’ of these women themselves, this situation tended to circumvent tribal marriage arrangements upsetting traditional tribal equilibrium. While this may have been true on some or most mission sites, Duguid and Love were very careful not to overturn tribal law and custom at Ernabella, although along with most Europeans they disapproved of polygamy and the betrothal of young girls to older men. Love put down his views in an exchange of letters with the WA Commissioner of Native Affairs Bray in 1944. Bray wrote to Love as a respected former missionary in Western Australia wanting advice on the ‘ advisability of Christian marriages in contravention of tribal custom. In his response, Love emphasized two points: one, the European system of marriage, he said, does not, and must not, apply to the Australian Aborigines; and, two, the main principles of the tribal marriage must not be broken:

Marriages within the same moiety were always forbidden and must, on every mission or any other station controlled by white people, remain forbidden. Where numbers are in decline, the only solution is to modify the tribal system (but keeping within the rule of no marriage within the moiety) and marriage with the consent of the main men of tribe or to find wives or husbands from other tribes.

37 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 16 of 1943, Love to Penhall, 6 Sep 1943.
38 Ibid., No 16 of 1943, Penhall to Love, 15 Sep 1943.
40 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1944": Bray to Love, 18 Sep 1944.
41 Ibid., Love to Bray, 12 Oct 1944.
As no conversions to Christianity occurred at Ernabella during JRB Love's regime, we are not sure whether Love would have continued to follow this policy in praxis on the mission site when put under pressure. He did make an exception to his policy of non-interference in tribal custom: 'unless the application of the custom is definitely harmful to a man or woman concerned', and went on to observe that 'in case of marriage, tribal custom is not infrequently harmful to the woman.' Despite these reservations, we have no record of Love interfering with traditional arrangements and relationships at Ernabella, apart from the removal of half-caste children from the 'sordid camps'. Not for Love the spectacular and fervent 'rescues' of 'poor native women' that occurred on other mission sites across Australia.

how merciful and loving God is

At Hermannsburg, the mission regime was more interventionist in traditional arrangements. In 1948, Albrecht sought advice from his Chairman Reidel regarding a 'difficult' case of a man, A., who had left his first wife, 'taken another', had a child with her, and now wanted to come back to the congregation:

He had tried to become reconciled to his first wife, but she avoided him and ran away to another place. What is one to do in a case like this? Is he to return to his first wife, and leave this one with the child? Or is it sufficient if he becomes reconciled to her and then continues to live with the one he has now? I have given him no reply....

Albrecht seems to have had doubts and was moved by the man's predicament but Reidel was adamant: the guiding rule was that marriage is indissoluble by man, and only God can dissolve it by death. In this case, where the man's first wife did not wish to be reconciled to him, he had to leave his second wife (and child) and live alone until the first wife died. Despite 'feeling sorry' for him, Albrecht informed him of this ruling. The Arrernte man listened quietly, and

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42 Ibid.
43 See, for example, FX Gsell, 'The Bishop with 150 Wives: Fifty Years as a Missionary' (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1955).
44 Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Reidel, 21 Mar 1948.
then provided a marvellous riposte: 'He pointed out how merciful and loving God is, and left.' Hospitality sometimes consisted of gently throwing the sermon back in the pastor's face.

an inglorious brawl

Back at Ernabella, JRB Love's 'hospitality' was complex, and occasionally hostile. While non-interventionist in matters of custom, at other times, in the interests of order and discipline, and the imposition of a missionary 'pastorale' on the local indigenous people, Love was not slow to intervene. A curious incident occurred at Ernabella in August 1942 after Love had been concerned about what he called 'sophisticated natives' from Northern Territory stations selling dog scalps at Ernabella at the South Australian value of 12s 6d in contrast to 7s 6d in the Northern Territory. Entrepreneurship from primitive blacks made him uncomfortable. Love was also convinced that 'men of this sort' had introduced swearing and gambling into the camps of 'our mission people'. The tension generated by this contaminating of the primitive indigenous body and mind (ironically by other indigenous bodies albeit 'spoilt' by contact with 'low whites') led to trouble. Love asked from where a particular native man had come. He described what followed to Duguid:

He replied with abuse, I told him to take his scalps away and go. He struck me in the face and laid open my cheek. I hit him. A melee ensued. Mr. Ward came to my help. I found myself held by several men...After a few minutes this unseemly and inglorious brawl died down, without serious consequences to anyone (except that I carry a mark that will take some time to heal). I told all the men to take their scalps away, as I would not take any. At intervals during the day I had deputations from several men, asking me to sell them stores for their scalps, as they were good men. I replied that one bad man could make things bad for all. I would take no scalps.47

indignation and impertinence within the pastorale

What do we make of this episode? Love was an official Receiver of Dog Scalps and was obviously not averse to using his powers, such as excluding certain traders or shutting up shop, to advantage. He did so on other occasions; for

46 Ibid., Albrecht to Reidel, 24 Jul 1948.
47 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 32 of 1942, (copy) Love to Duguid, 1 Sep 1942.
example, about two months after this episode, some more trouble occurred:

Yesterday I refused to issue any stores for sale, as some of the people, against instruction, had pulled up saltbush in front of the station to make windbreaks. Much indignation and some impertinence. Old people and workers got their Saturday issue, then the store closed.48

Notice the spirited indigenous reaction here: the missionary exercises power but, 'impertinently', it is resisted by (almost) equal combatants. The flow in the capillaries of power do not run one way. Even the 'inglorious brawl' seems to have ended in something like a draw. A battle was being fought in the contact zone for the bodies and minds (and souls) of the natives but it was also a battle of wits. Wit was ever-present on the mission site. Love noted once that he was always on the lookout for 'fake' scalps since a native had tried to pass one off from the back skin of a dingo already handed in: 'these natives of the Musgraves are not without cunning or roguery.'49 Or sly (in)civility, we might say.

**disrupting the pastorale**

Discipline and surveillance were deemed necessary on this site, as on other colonial sites. The politics of hospitality was qualified; it did not preclude watching the indigenous body carefully and attempting to read the indigenous mind for signs of unruly or lawless behaviour threatening the 'pastorale' of the mission site. The APB in its annual reports to the South Australian Parliament was keen to publicise its vision of this 'pastorale':

Ernabella Mission 1942: The superintendent, the Rev JRB Love, reports that the largest number of aborigines counted at the Station on any day during the year was 350. 2 patrols by camel team were undertaken into the adjacent Reserves, and the country was found to be in good condition, food was plentiful, and the health of the people very good...Aborigines are employed as shepherds at Ernabella, each flock being in charge of a married couple. Mr. Trudingger is in charge of the Mission School, and is rendering excellent service. The roll strength [of the School is] 140 but attendance varies between 20 and 70. This is due to children going with their parents on hunting and other tribal excursions...Fruit and vegetables are grown to meet local needs...The conduct of the natives is stated to be very good.50

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49 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 49 of 1942, Love's Report for Ernabella for year ended 30 Jun 1942.
As usual, life was more complicated than the representations of reports. A missionary's wife in 1942 reports boys 'stealing' carrots from the garden. Love asks some women to bring them to him; they say they cannot do so. Love refuses them supper. Soon the boys are sent. 'I gave them a few smacks with a piece of board, then issued a meal to the women who missed yesterday afternoon.' The same day, two young men had chased an emu behind the stockyards with some mission horse and bridles. Again Love asks for them to come to him, again he is refused. 'I said that all the men could bring them both before the store opened on Saturday. The two soon afterwards came.' Love fines them and hopes 'it will prove a lesson in discipline' although he notes: 'it did not seem to worry them much.' The resistance of the Ernabella Aborigines appears carefully calibrated and calculated; when it is 'cowed', it is only because they are getting something for it. The momentary dropping of resistance is perhaps itself a form of 'foraging' for something valuable.

Love attempted to involve the senior men of the Pitjantjatjara in discipline. In July 1943, after three initiates kill a sheep, Love persuaded the fathers that they must punish the boys, saying that he did not wish to call the police in. The initiates were duly delivered:

I called all men to a meeting in the bed of the creek, away from the women, who are not allowed to be near the initiates, and told the assembled men what had happened, and that it rested with them to punish the boys. They agreed, and said it was the duty of the kuta to administer punishment...Each boy in turn received half a dozen hits across the backside from a kuta.

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53 It is important to note again the rapport that both Love and Albrecht established with the senior men or elders of their respective missions (see n. 14, chapter 3, above). Perhaps the bond was the compatibility of patriarchal worldviews, as some might suggest. Possibly gender and age were factors. From the perspective of this study, these relationships could be said to epitomise the politics of hospitality, although there were times, as below, when these exemplary missionaries were not able to carry the elders with them, or the Other staked out the ground of their own agency and autonomy.
54 Love, "Logbook": 14 Jul 1943. Kuta is defined in Goddard as 'a senior brother or close male cousin. Your own older brother or the cousin whose father is the older brother of your father': Goddard, Pitjantjatjara/ Yankunytjatjara to English Dictionary.
Tensions existed on the mission site despite the vision of the pastorale and qualified the politics of hospitality. During 1943, after Love had been at Ernabella for over two years, he felt, increasingly, the threat of violence. He confided to the Logbook: 'Ernabella has the unpleasant possibility of violence breaking out any day such as I never experienced in 25 years on the tropical north coast.' But Love was always involved in the project of restoring the pastorale: after a fist was raised to another missionary, Love mused:

We cannot use violence in our work; we shall have to work quietly and carefully; some of these men are inclined to be insolent. In time I believe the mission attitude will win the respect and obedience of the men, in a better way than violent dealing could do.\textsuperscript{56}

\textbf{across the creek}

The project of restoration was, however, an unstable one. On occasion, the exemplary missionary felt constrained to abandon the 'pastorale' and call on the colonial constabulary. After a misdemeanour, when the garden was 'robbed', Love suspended Christmas celebrations for 1943. A week later, the store was broken into. Love gathered the men and told them the police would be called. The young men responsible for the break-in were named but were protected as initiates. Love reacted like an angry parent or schoolmaster:

The men of the tribe have them under full control and have chosen to side with the thieves against the mission; therefore I have taken the view that it would be mere foolishness to issue gifts to the community at present. I plan to hold a day for sports and gifts later when the lesson of missing Christmas has reached the people...\textsuperscript{57}

Love contacted the Oodnadatta police, advising them of the break-in 'by A. and three others'. He suggested that it might be difficult to 'effect an arrest as A. is intelligent and cunning...[Nevertheless] I ask for his arrest if possible.'\textsuperscript{58}

On 17 January 1944, the people assembled for a day of sports and Christmas

\textsuperscript{55} Love, "Logbook": 14 Jul 1943.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 1 Jan 1944.
\textsuperscript{58} SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 24 of 1944, Love to OIC, Oodnadatta Police, 6 Jan 1944.
gifts, a day, said Love, 'delayed on account of stealing'.\textsuperscript{59} As the people assembled, A. appeared and an instructive drama ensued. Immediately, Love told A. to go to 'the other side of the creek.' The missionary instinctively wishes to expel the offender from the mission compound, from 'his home', which, as he knew, was also the 'home of the Other'. The politics of hospitality were breaking down. As instinctive probably was the indigenous reply, according to Love's report that evening in the Logbook: 'A. retorted that he would go where he liked. Slowly he walked as far as the corner of the fence and stood there.' A hurried consultation of the white staff took place. One can imagine the discussion: what to do with this recalcitrant body? They agreed to try to chain A. to a tree and hold him there until police could be summoned. Love recounted the events:

We took a [...] chain and moved towards A. He withdrew, took off his hat, shirt and trousers and peeled off and picked up a handful of spears and spear-thrower. As we approached he moved across the creek, then dropped his weapons and (?) his clothes and ran away. At the sheep yard he [pulled?] out two sticks and threw them. I called on all the men to hold him. None would do so. A. threw several stones and ran away. We then returned to the homestead, dismissed the people and I am waiting to get a telegram to Oodnadatta police, asking for the arrest of A.\textsuperscript{60}

This is a haunting episode, poignantly metaphoric of some of the dealings between the missionaries and 'their' Aborigines. It is full of noncomprehension, difference, hostility, hurt, as Love orders A. 'to the other side of the creek', across the karu, back to the other world, the Other's World. We see A's immediate reaction: he removes his 'white', 'civilized' accoutrements, the shirt, hat, trousers, so apparently desired by indigenous bodies, and picks up the traditional weapons of indigenous power and aggression, the spears and spear-thrower (woomera), and moves across the creek, toward the 'sordid camps', away from the liminal zone where missionary and native had met in some sort of hospitality.

We note, too, the response of the 'men' of the tribe: in that moment of response, of non-response, they too move across the karu and leave the isolated, anxious missionaries with no apparent recourse but to 'call on their own men' now

\textsuperscript{59} Love came in for some criticism from colleagues (including Trudinger) for 'giving in' and holding the Christmas celebrations albeit delayed.

\textsuperscript{60} Love, "Logbook": 17 Jan 1944. Note the Superintendent's Logbook was handwritten, and while it has been transcribed, some words are illegible, accounting for the omissions and queries.
for assistance. So the telegram to the police: the police come and A is arrested.\textsuperscript{61} The pastorale is restored. Or is it?

**fixing up the boys**

When to call in the police? FW Albrecht had written about this problem to Duguid in 1935 after an incident involving the notorious Constable William McKinnon and the ‘hiding’ of two boys at Hermannsburg that had prompted an official inquiry.\textsuperscript{62} Albrecht was not sure if he would have called on McKinnon to ‘fix up these two boys’ (Albrecht had been away from the mission at the time) but admitted that he would have handed them over if the policeman had been available:

> However, during the time I have been in charge of this place I have neither sent anyone to jail nor handed them over to the police for punishment... I always managed to straighten these things up with the advice and aid of the old men at the place, and there has never been a need to touch anyone myself or call on other members of the staff to do so.\textsuperscript{63}

Yet the Lutheran missionary conceded that ‘although it is very seldom a Native receives corporal punishment here’, he could not deny that ‘it has some effect on the community life here, and a very beneficial one at that’:

> If anyone, even from the Government quarters, comes along, I shall make no secret of this my opinion, even if severe criticism should follow from people who don’t know anything about Natives.\textsuperscript{64}

**a police matter**

Yet the ‘two sides’ of the colonial relationship were not always as neatly defined as they were in these incidents. Nicholas Thomas has pointed out that colonial discourse was a fractured phenomenon of a ‘dispersed and conflicted character’.\textsuperscript{65} Love also had an ambivalent relationship with the police. While

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 21 Jan 1944.
\textsuperscript{62} Australian Archives CRS F1 Item 1938/636, 4: JB Cleland, VJ White and JH Sexton, ‘Report of the Board of Inquiry’, cited in Hill, *Broken Song*, p. 234. Hill writes of this incident, and another more serious one involving the killing of an Aboriginal man at Ayers Rock, since TGH Strehlow, his subject, was the translator for the Cleland Inquiry into the two ‘incidents’: see *Broken Song*, ‘Farce of an Inquiry’, pp. 231-235.
\textsuperscript{63} Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 24 Apr 1935.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 24 Apr 1935.
\textsuperscript{65} See Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism’s Culture*, especially Thomas’s Introduction.
occasionally willing to 'call for the police', he was at other times quite hostile to
police action when it appeared unjust. But what was just or unjust was
problematical. Another episode is worth examining. In June 1943, Penhall
asked Love ('in your capacity as Protector of Aborigines for that area') to
investigate a report that Oodnadatta police had used 'unnecessary force' in
removing natives from a neighbouring station. Love reported that some
Aborigines had apparently been hit with whips and chained. The proprietor of
the station had claimed 'the Natives' had kept his cattle from coming to water at
his wells. Love concluded that the proprietor was entitled to police assistance in
protection of his cattle, although he questioned the police methods:

Is the use of physical force ever justifiable in dealing with uncivilized
aborigines? Two years ago to this question I should have given and
indignant No! Now, after two years of experience in Central Australia, I
am not so sure. I am compelled to admit that the aborigines in this part of
Australia can quickly show signs of becoming 'cheeky'. I will not advocate
the use of violence; yet possibly a summary treatment might prevent the
development of a position that might become disastrous to black and
white. The main point is: what course is most likely to benefit the
aborigine? In the present case, I am of the opinion that further action is
not likely to benefit the Aborigines.

The APB files contain the police reports on this matter. In his report to his
inspector, the police officer involved, MC Connell, denied whipping the natives
but said he had threatened to do so if they came back to the station. He had
used force on only 'particularly cheeky one'. Marks observed on Aboriginal
bodies were 'probably' made in the 'process' of their running through the scrub
in the attempt to evade police. He admitted to chaining two Aborigines at
Kenmore Park but had subsequently released them:

I know Mr Love does not approve of chaining aborigines to hold them in
custody, as he has informed me that even though an aborigine had
committed a murder of a white person he would not chain him up, but
would allow him his freedom as it was the job of a policeman to apprehend
murderers and not his.

Connell noted that the station proprietor ran ten thousand cattle, which were so

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66 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 90 of 1943, Penhall to Love, 21 Jun 1943. The station was Kenmore
Park.
67 Ibid., Love to Penhall, 13 Jul 1943.
68 Ibid., copy of police report, MC Connell to Inspector Bourke, Port Augusta, 8 Aug 1943.
terrified by the aborigines' that they would not drink at the wells. The cattle stations were 'developing the country' and would 'lose money' if 'this sort of situation' were allowed to continue.

he resented my intrusion

It was the constable's private view that it was 'healthier' for the 'average aborigine' to be left to hunt their own food than 'congregated in large numbers' on the mission. He noted a visit he had made to Ernabella in November of the previous year when over two hundred Aborigines had been camped in 'filthy conditions' with 'half-starved dogs everywhere'. When he had suggested to Love that it was better to keep the Aborigines in the Reserve than in 'these insanitary conditions', the missionary had 'strongly resented my intrusion'. The police officer, claiming that he had detected possible violence in the air ('one or two aborigines told me: 'Missionary soon be finished''), advocated 'firm measures' to control the natives, lest they 'get cheeky' and 'out of control'. He concluded, in the manner of police reports into police action, that 'my dealings with the aborigines at Kenmore Park was in the best interests of all.'

In light of the police denials and Love's opinion that further action was not likely to benefit the natives, Penhall recommended the APB take no further action. However, the combative Duguid, still on the Board, entered the fray. Commenting on the matter to other members of the APB, Duguid noted that 'MC Connell has never liked Ernabella and is the most anti-missionary MC Ernabella has had to deal with.' He called the policeman's story into question, characterized his threat to whip the natives as 'illegal', and pointed out that under the Pastoral Acts Aborigines possessed the legal right to hunt game on pastoral leases. He was particularly contemptuous of the constable's arguments regarding the disruption by the Aborigines to the efficient running of the station: 'against that we have the coming of the station causing the efficient dislocation of a tribe of about 700 natives.' He dismissed the notion of station owners 'developing the country' for the national benefit: 'These station owners are interested in nothing

69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., comments by Duguid to APB, n.d. (but probably between 20 Aug 1943 and 3 Sep 1943).
but their own welfare and are heedless of the result to aborigines'. On Duguid’s recommendations, the APB thanked the police for their report but noted the legal rights of Aborigines on pastoral leases and advised that the Board could not approve of threats to whip natives. The station proprietor was also advised of the relevant part of the Pastoral Act.

**a proper footing between blacks and whites**

In the wake of the above affair, Love was supplied with a copy of the police criticisms of him. These were, specifically, that no rations had been available at the mission, and Love had advised the natives ‘to go bush’ and look for food; the ‘filthy’ condition of the native camp at Ernabella; the alleged assault by a native on Love, and the subsequent closing of the store as a punishment; and Love’s attitude towards the chaining of Aborigines. Love’s spirited reply contained a denial that he had told the natives to go bush: ‘this is their normal procedure.’ He insisted that the Ernabella Aborigines did not rely on rations (through scalps) for subsistence: ‘they buy when they have scalps to sell and Ernabella has rations to supply.’ These arguments over rationing were preshadowing and rehearsing the more serious debates over ‘underfeeding’ that ensued over the following two years. At the moment Love was penning this letter to the APB, the two female members of the Board who in part initiated these debates, Constance Ternent Cooke and AM Johnston, were at the Mission site, keenly scrutinizing the exemplary missionary at work. Love continued his

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72 Ibid.
73 The relevant section of the SA Pastoral Act dealing with the rights of natives as to game and water read in part: ‘And reserving to aboriginal inhabitants of the said State and their descendants during the continuance of this lease full and free rights of access ingress egress and regress into upon and over the said lands and every part thereof, except such parts as improvements have been erected upon. And in and to the springs and surface waters thereon, and to make and erect such wurlies and other dwellings as the said aboriginal natives have been hertofore accustomed to make and erect, and to take and use for food birds and animals...in such manner as they would have been entitled to do if this lease had not been made’: quoted in ibid., Penhall to Frazer, 23 Sep 1943. Similar provisions were enacted in the Pastoral Acts of the other Australian States but were observed more in the breach than in the observance: see Henry Reynolds, *The law of the land*, 2nd ed. (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1992), pp. 150-153; also see Reynolds, "Native Title and Historical Tradition" in *In the Age of Mabo: History, Aborigines and Australia*, ed. Bain Attwood (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 17-34. See also now the landmark case of *Wik*, which dealt with Aboriginal rights (native title) on pastoral leases.
74 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 90 of 1943, reference to APB Minute Book Folio 226. See also ibid.: Penhall to Love, 28 Sep 1943.
75 Ibid., Love to Penhall, 7 Oct 1943.
76 See chapter 10, below.
defence: attributing much of the police comment, as had Duguid, to 'jealousy' over the large Ernabella blocks 'being held as an Aboriginal Mission', he reiterated his strongly held view that:

the Musgrave Ranges should be retained in perpetuity as a home for the aborigines. The three [Ernabella] blocks would not support more than 20 whites, yet now they support about 300 blacks. Surely Australia owes 300 aborigines their own territory, which they can hold without hindering the progress of Australia. 77

Love thought the comments on the 'filthy conditions' of the camp 'rather exaggerated' but observed that he was not 'championing the sanitary habits of these Aborigines': he felt that 'in time, they will stay in one site and observe sanitary rules.' In relation to the question of the chaining of Aborigines, Love called this method 'the most humane and only feasible method of restraining them'. 78 He noted tartly that 'it is the job of the police to apprehend murderers', but adding that 'the citizen will do what he can to assist.' While Love admitted the 'assault' on him, he expressed the hope that 'although these are new experiences to me, after so many years of work among the aborigines, yet the Mission methods will succeed in establishing a proper footing between blacks and whites.' 79 JRB Love did not here elaborate on the precise nature of that 'proper footing'.

Charles Duguid, however, was not completely convinced by Love's defiant defence. He was sufficiently disconcerted by the criticisms made of 'his' Mission and its head that he recommended to the APB that 'the administrative head of the Aborigines Department and a representative of the APB should without delay visit Ernabella and report to the Board'. 80 The Board did not follow this

77 Ibid.
78 We have already seen that he and other missionaries at Ernabella considered using them in the above case of A.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid., comments and recommendations of Duguid to APB, n.d. (but probably between 20 Aug 1943 and 3 Sep 1943). It is somewhat curious that Duguid seems unaware that Terten Cooke and Johnston of the Board were planning a visit to Ernabella. I am assuming that those visits were already under consideration. It is possible, but unlikely, I think, that the visits were planned after Duguid’s recommendation. It also may be that the APB did not adopt Duguid’s recommendation of sending the administrative head of the Aborigines Department and an APB member to Ernabella because of the planned visits (if they had been planned at this
recommendation. As it happened, Love in fact was 'investigated', more or less inadvertently, by Ternent Cooke and Johnston. Their reports to the APB following their visit to Ernabella generated the 'underfeeding and underpaying' controversy that seems to have finally ruptured the Duguid-Love partnership which had guided the Mission from its early imagining and the battles with the Flynn forces through to its successful establishment.

**black and white law**

Love's attitudes to the complex issue of the interplay of black and white law were equivocal. He appeared willing occasionally to privilege indigenous justice over white law but at other times supported the hegemony of 'the white man's law'. In October 1942, for example, he sent a report to the APB about the death of a native at Ernabella, indicating that he thought the man had died as a result of a 'tribal killing', following a blow on the neck and a superficial spear wound in the shoulder. Love doubted whether the injuries the man received had directly killed him: 'rather do I think he was struck, given to understand that he must die, and accepted the sentence'. While he did not believe 'in the present uncivilised state of these people' that police action would be 'useful', he thought that some police visibility at Ernabella 'might have a good effect, in showing the people that they are under the eye of the white man's law'.

Late in 1944, another man P. was speared at the Mission site 'after sexual misconduct'. His wounds alarmed the staff and he was taken by mission truck to Kulgera to meet a plane for Alice Springs. A few days later, Love was informed by wireless that P. had died in hospital. Love noted in his Logbook:

> A deputation of men came to me tonight, asking if policeman is coming out to take men, for death of P. I said, No. The elders had justly speared him for wrongdoing, and I would write a letter to Adelaide, telling Mr. Penhall the circumstances.

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81 See reference in ibid., No 90 of 1943 to Minute Book Folio 226 (3 Sep 1943).
82 See chapters 10 and 11, below.
83 Ibid., No 32 of 1942, report by Penhall, 28 Oct 1942, quoting Love.
84 Ibid., Love to Penhall, 1 Oct 1942.
85 Love, "Logbook": 27 Dec 1944.
Love duly communicated to Penhall his view that it was a ‘tribal matter’. Penhall agreed, saying that in the circumstances it was ‘almost impossible to prove intention to murder’. He reported in these terms to the full Board, which in turn supported the Love/Penhall position. The police, however, got wind of the case and Penhall was forced to write to Inspector Bourke at Port Augusta defending the APB’s decision to take no action in the matter:

As the incident was considered to be the usual tribal proceeding following the breaking of a tribal law, my Board felt that it was unnecessary to take any further action in the case, especially in the apparent absence of any intention to seriously harm the deceased. It would appear his death was due to an infection, and the delay in getting him to hospital.

In his response, the Inspector, after giving the Secretary of the APB a brief lesson in the law of homicide and manslaughter, and suggesting that the decision not to prosecute ought to have come from the Attorney General’s Department, argued against the limited recognition of indigenous justice that the APB, and Love, were proposing:

I can only regard it as my duty to treat the whole matter from the standard of the white man’s law and disregard tribal customs, which, in my opinion, if allowed to predominate would be a serious thing for the security of cattlemen, pastoralists and bushmen who by virtue of their calling in the bushlands where the natives predominate would be in constant peril.

Diplomatically, Penhall advised Bourke that he welcomed a police investigation and assured him that if the police decided to prosecute, he was sure Love would cooperate and ‘render all assistance’. Two months later, Love reported that F., one of the men who had initially wounded P., had been arrested and had admitted spearing P. Love, as a Justice of the Peace, had hastily convened a court at Ernabella. He reported on the matter to Matthews (well after the event):

A court was constituted here, at which I found F. guilty of maliciously wounding P and remanded him to Port Augusta for sentence. I

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86 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No. 11 of 1945, Love to Penhall, 1 Jan 1945.
87 Ibid., Penhall to Love, 11 Jan 1945; also APB agreement, 31 Jan 1945.
88 Ibid., Penhall to Bourke, 12 Feb 1945.
89 Ibid., Bourke to Penhall, 15 Feb 1945.
90 Ibid., Penhall to Bourke, 19 Feb 1945.
communicated with the APB. Penhall agreed to use his influence to have this case treated as one dealing with tribal law. I think I rightly interpret the mind of the Board if I say that we do not wish to break down the administration of tribal law; but the Aborigines cannot be allowed to kill. In this case, death was not intended, but supervened, and the facts should be taken into consideration.91

The APB in fact did lodge an application with the Crown Law authorities to the effect that the offence be regarded as ‘the outcome of tribal misdemeanour and consequent punishment’ and no further action ought to follow.92 However, the matter proceeded to court, where Penhall gave evidence on behalf of the defendant. F. was found guilty of malicious wounding. He was only sentenced to seven days imprisonment as he had already been in custody for ninety-nine days.93

How then do we assess JRB Love’s discourse on law and the Aborigines, as well as on the broader matters of ‘control’ of the indigenous body? We note, as in other parts of his thinking on indigenous Australians, an independent, progressivist ideology sat side by side with a considerably more conservative ideology. It was Love’s tendency to proclaim a general policy of non-interference with indigenous matters, whether in law, or morals, or marriage arrangements, and then to detail significant qualifications to that policy. It should probably not surprise us that his attitudes in the sensitive area of European law/traditional law were in some regards similarly ambivalent and cautionary. It can be argued that the complexities of this fundamental matter still remain and continue, nearly seventy years after Love’s struggles with them on the mission site, to prevent a resolution or the achievement of a satisfactory balance. We can say,

93 Ibid., report of the case in unidentified newspaper in APB files. Interestingly, there were attempts made after this case to integrate the legal systems. In 1945, JB Cleland, Chairman of the APB, brought before the Board a proposal to establish a Special Court to adjudicate on so-called ‘tribal’ offences: note ibid., No 78 of 1945. In his submission Cleland claimed that ‘the arraignment of tribal natives in Criminal Court on serious charges because of the punishment of wrongdoers according to tribal laws is a source of embarrassment to the Court and of bewilderment to the persons on trial.’ He recommended that the Aborigines Act be amended to provide for the establishment of Courts dealing with trivial or ‘purely tribal’ offences. Cleland’s recommendations were approved by the APB and went to Cabinet. The file has a note: ‘no action this session’. Two years later, in March 1947, Duguid brought the matter forward at an APB meeting in an attempt to keep the matter before the Board.
however, that Love’s discourse of ‘a proper footing’ for relations between black and white Australians included the ‘saving’ for indigenous Australians of some autonomous legal space within the larger reality of European colonial hegemony.

In the broader issues of ‘control’, with the exception of the ‘half-caste’ body, we have seen that discipline and surveillance, while present at Ernabella as elsewhere, were exercised in a looser fashion than almost anywhere in the missionary world. In some ways, we are provided a picture in this particular contact zone, of an equivocal and uncertain life, on the edge of financial, spiritual and even a moral bankruptcy, where it was often perceived by a civilization grown used to exercise power and dominance, that the Aborigine also held (occasionally, frustratingly, annoyingly at times) considerable influence in the dialectics of power and control between white and black. Except, of course, when the ‘colonial constabulary’ was called in. This of course on one view represents the limit of Aboriginal agency and autonomy. The use of this ‘last resort’ on both the Ernabella and Hermannsburg mission sites was rare, although its existence in the background must be acknowledged. But it ought not blind us to the dynamics of the quotidian negotiations between missionary and Aborigine regarding the politics of hostility and hospitality on the mission site.
CHAPTER TEN: ‘We live from good soup’: Healing, Feeding and the Indigenous Body

The Ernabella missionaries wished to rescue the indigenous body from illness and disease, through medical and feeding mechanisms. The original purpose of the mission venture at Ernabella had been ‘a Medical Mission to the Aborigines’. Its founder was a doctor. Yet Love himself, as we have seen, was instrumental in rejecting the idea of a doctor based at the site since, he reasoned, a doctor would not be sufficiently occupied. Indeed while Love’s 1937 diary represents ‘blacks’ as dirty, naked, unkempt, and occasionally diseased, they are also often seen at the same time as healthy and contented. Warwick Anderson in his The Cultivation of Whiteness has traced the path of biomedical science in Australia from an environmental discourse (keeping the neighbourhood clean) to one focused primarily on hygienic white citizenship, with prohibitions on contact with ‘unclean’ minorities such as Aborigines and Asians. The missionaries provided an addendum to such discourses. They were concerned with the transfer of diseases but more with ‘low whites’, unclean and immoral, infecting the

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1 Levinas: ‘We live from ‘good soup’, air, light, spectacles, work, ideas, sleep...these are not objects of representations. We live from them’: Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 110. My use of the phrase ‘good soup’ is meant as a mixture, as a soup, if you like, of metaphorical and literal meanings, including ‘ingredients’ missionaries thought necessary for the indigenous Body; food, health, freedom from disease, work, cleanliness; it is also a reference to the ‘soup’ of goat’s meat and garden vegetables by which the missionaries were convinced they were helping to keep the Aborigines alive. The ‘soup’ is referred to by all the members of the SA Aborigines Protection Board who visited Ernabella between 1943 and 1945: for example, Professor JB Cleland noted in his report of his 1945 visit that ‘the bread seemed good, and the stew was thick and looked appetising’: SA Records, "GRG 52/1": No 11 of 1945, Report of a visit to Ernabella in the Far North and North West of South Australia (Cleland); also see this chapter, below. The inset photograph is one of JRB Love distributing rations at Ernabella in August 1942 from the store, the locale of the underfeeding controversy. The photograph is from the Borgelt collection at the Ara Irititja Archives, Adelaide.

2 Love did fashion representations of some gruesome images of disease and illness, which seemed more initially to reinforce his view of the ‘primitivity’ of Aboriginal people than raise concerns about their health, although the latter concerns seemed to develop through his time on the mission site: see above, chapter 7, and this chapter.
indigenous bodies with whom they came into contact. While ‘contamination’ from such quarters came to bear broader, more metaphorical associations, a physical, germ-bearing interpretation was certainly a component of the general missionary discourse. Love’s vision of a semi-nomadic people, still hunting at leisure in the Ranges, kept separated from unclean white bodies and protected by the ‘buffer’ mission station as their base, may have precluded or at least diminished in his mind the necessity for an ongoing permanent medical presence. Aspirin and hot chocolate in the hands of a hospitable missionary may have seemed sufficiently good medicine.

**epidemics**

However, while Love had effectively discountenanced the permanent stationing of a doctor at Ernabella, missionary doctors did assist in temporary capacities. Duguid, of course, was a regular visitor to Ernabella, although more often, it seems, before and after Love’s residency. ‘Medical patrols’, a favourite expression of the missionaries, imbued with Christian notions of the Good Samaritan and healing the sick, were conducted on occasions. Love himself went on a medical patrol of the Musgrave and Mann Ranges with Dr Davies in May-June 1942, along with Mrs. Love, their son, and two native men. However, medical facilities were scarce. Love’s Logbook demonstrates the primitivity of the medical equipment:

There are five cases of pneumonia here at present in Dr. Davies’ charge: 2 men, 3 women. They are camped besides the box which serves as a dispensary. This is not very desirable, but the best we can do till a proper hospital-dispensary building is up.

Love characterizes nearly all the ‘illnesses’ occurring at Ernabella as ‘epidemics’.

Epidemic of mumps is still going on...Also an epidemic of diarrhoea among babies. Several of these have recovered with the use of [?] and castor oil; some still ill. M, whom I brought back from where he had been taken to die, now has diarrhoea to add to his other troubles...This morning I gave one of his wives porridge for herself and children and damper for the sick husband. On going to see him I found the two women and three children

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3 See SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 32 of 1942, Love’s Report of Medical patrol of Musgrave and Mann Ranges, May-June 1942.

eating all the food and giving him none. I gave him a pot of rice and sat by while he ate it ravenously.\(^5\)

While the mechanics of germ contagion were undoubtedly at work, it is hard not to see Love’s epidemics as a way in which his ‘medical discourse’ was constructing and representing Aboriginal identity as ‘savages’ living too closely together in the ‘sordid camps’, in the squalor of the dirt, sharing food, sharing disease.\(^6\) Yet it was not all representation. Mundane comments in the Logbook mask what must have been traumatic events for the missionary and his ‘patients’: ‘Last night the infant daughter of M. died: diarrhoea. The mother and the granny brought the baby, dying, yesterday afternoon; but not before it was too late.’\(^7\)

By May 1943, Ernabella had a new but still rudimentary hospital-dispensary but the ‘epidemics’ continued to sweep the camp. The mission staff was not immune with Love and his small son becoming ill. Mrs. Love took over ‘the sick call’, giving bad cases ‘aspirin and chocolate’.\(^8\) Soon after, in September 1943, a serious influenza epidemic hit Ernabella:

Sep 18...Tonight M. dies, of influenza, near workhouse, where several sick were camped. I thought she had been getting on well, and was shocked at her sudden collapse. Buried immediately, by young women about ¼ mile away. Sep. 19. Frightful wind and dust. Went around camp this morning with a bucket of cocoa and clinical thermometer. Found most of the patients apparently much better. Sep. 23...Two old women have died of flu. The camp apparently does not take much notice of death of old women, as camp site has not been moved. Oct 3...the influenza epidemic seems to have passed its peak. Total of 8 deaths, last one being on Sunday last. No new cases during the week. Half a dozen old people [still?] pretty sick. I have a second attack myself. Am giving cocoa, tea and milk to patients, as well as more rations.\(^9\)

Medical help was available, and occasionally sought, via wireless from Alice

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\(^6\) For a stimulating exposition of the ways Western biomedical discourse imposed meanings on the African body, see Megan Vaughan, *Curing their ills: Colonial Power and African illness* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991). Vaughan demonstrates that these constructions were often contradictory. This is also the case on occasion with Love who while constructing images of the sick amid the squalor, also rejoices (elsewhere) in the ‘bright, happy, healthy’ faces of Aboriginal people around him.
\(^7\) Love, "Logbook": 1 Nov 1942.
\(^8\) Ibid., 9 Sep 1943.
\(^9\) Ibid., 18, 19, 23 Sep, 3 Oct 1943.

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Springs. On 7 January 1945, the Logbook noted:

A good many gone bush, including old N., who has a badly cut head after a fight. A piece, the size of a shilling, of skull was exposed. I had been giving treatment under advice from [doctor] at Alice Springs. Wound septic and horribly smelling. It will be interesting to learn if he recovers in the bush.10

Assistance also came from Flynn’s Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) which wrote to Love about the ‘desirability of each Outpost Station being in possession of a Standard Medicine Chest containing drugs, dressings and appliances which could be used by settlers under instructions within or ‘over the air’.11 Love duly advised the APB via Duguid and the necessary items were dispatched to Ernabella. Often in the early forties, Love would turn to Duguid for help with medical supplies. For example, in June 1943, during another ‘epidemic of colds’, Love advises Duguid that the mission is ‘out of aspirin’ and a thousand tablets were sent.12 In March 1945, Love tells the doctor that ‘we are in the midst of another epidemic of horrible colds, to which these people are so subject’:

the moral effect of some medicine, to drink and rub in, is good for the blacks so it is well worth while using some...The people come in to dispensary in the morning and cough all over me, to show how bad they are, and treat my remonstrances as a good joke. Germ infection is something that they fail to believe.13

At other times, not even the moral qualities of medicines nor anything else could be of much help:

August 24 [1945]. Fri. Last evening word came in that J, husband of K, was very ill at [?]. [?], the blind medicine man, and a number of schoolgirls and women, went out to his camp. This morning I went in the buckboard, with Mrs. Love, Mr. Henderson and Mr. Claude Henderson and [N?] to see if we could help him. We found the camp, with J just dying. As we could do nothing, we left the people, after a prayer.14

In 1945, the Board of Missions secured the services of a full-time nursing sister for the Mission Station. Love noted in the Logbook with discernible relief: ‘Sister

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10 Ibid., 7 Jan 1945.
11 See SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 16 of 1943, RFDS to Love, n.d. (probably about April 1943).
12 Ibid., Love to Duguid, 8 Jun 1943.
13 Ibid., No 11 of 1945, Love to Duguid, 19 Mar 1945.
Melba Turner arrived to take charge of medical work here."\textsuperscript{15} Love had always preferred to take the burden of 'working with the blacks' on his own shoulders, to rely in the end on his own expertise, and on the segregation of indigenous bodies from white sources of contamination. He had begun his association with Ernabella by using his massive authority within the Presbyterian Church to defeat the proposal for a 'medical mission'. At the end of his term, he admitted to Matthews in his valedictory letter that procuring the nursing sister was 'the best forward move Ernabella has had for a long time. Ernabella is fortunate to get a woman of her experience and balance to inaugurate this very important part of the work.' He remembered wondering whether there would be enough work at the site for a medical person, and commented: 'she is making it a full-time job!'\textsuperscript{16} Love concluded that 'so far she has not lost a case through death' and predicted that she would be 'of enormous benefit' to the Mission.\textsuperscript{17} It was as close to an admission of error that the stubborn missionary ever made. Perhaps he accepted in the end the medicalization of the mission site as not only another demonstration of the superiority of European civilization over the world of the savages and their 'epidemics', but as a further, and better, way of 'saving the blacks' than cocoa and milk.

\section*{the starving of the Aborigines}

Indigenous bodies were also to be rescued from starvation. Feeding the indigenous body was becoming synonymous with saving the indigenous body. The centrality for the Aborigine of food, and the land from which the food ultimately came, began also to impose itself on the missionaries who had positioned themselves in Paul Carter's 'lie of the land', in the folds and textures of the aboriginal Earth itself. The Central Australian missionaries were convinced that the nation was 'starving' its indigenous population out of

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 26 Nov 1945.
\textsuperscript{16} With the advent of a trained medical presence on the mission site, the requests to the APB for medical supplies become much more sophisticated and comprehensive. For example, on 12 December 1945, Sister Turner (through Duguid) requests an order for: Flavogel; Sulphanilamide powder; milk of magnesia; silver nitrate solution; zinc sulphate eye drops; mercurochrome; Vaseline; cough mixture; cotton wool; bandages; enamel basins; sandsoap; medicine glasses; a scalp; morphine; MSA; strychnine; oil of cloves; barrier cream: SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 11 of 1945, Turner to Duguid, 12 Dec 1945.
\textsuperscript{17} Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1946": Love to Matthews, 12 Mar 1946.
existence. Duguid and Albrecht in their 1939 trek had noted the terrible paucity of Aborigines in the Petermann Ranges.\textsuperscript{18} One of Albrecht's most vivid and repeated images in his writings is that the bullock had always taken precedence over the Aborigine in Australia: the two could not coexist in an ecological sense; they required the same ground, the same waterholes, the same space. Space, water, ground were the pastoralists' currency from which they created wealth and power, and it was not until indigenous Australians bartered some of their traditional life for an accommodation with the pastoralists that coexistence with cattle in their own country became a possibility.\textsuperscript{19} Albrecht accepted this possibility and even saw it as an opportunity for Aborigines forced (or desiring) to abandon their traditional life.\textsuperscript{20} But Duguid and Love were placing an immense premium on the retention of country on which indigenes could pursue a traditional existence, protected by the 'buffer' mission station, until they were ready for entry into the white world.

**rationing**

Mission stations were often sites of rationing, where indigenous bodies were fed, clothed and blanketed on behalf of the state. Tim Rowse has deftly characterized the 'pervasive colonial practice of rationing' as a technique designed to substitute peaceful relations for violence as a mode of governance in Central Australian colonial relations.\textsuperscript{21} As such a technique, rationing was of course attractive to missionaries, who, in Levinasian terms, 'had not come to kill'. When

\textsuperscript{18} Presbyterian, "Proceedings, GAA, 1939": Report on 'Ernabella Medical Patrol' (Duguid), p. 150: 'It was learnt from the natives... that last year many natives died of starvation west of the Mann Ranges. When conditions became serious in the Petermann country, many of the natives went north-east into the cattle stations, and as far as Alice Springs on the line. Others stayed on, and in the end made for the Mann Ranges in South Australia, but they arrived too weak to search for food, and died around the waterholes. These people died not of disease, but of starvation in Australia in the year 1938.'

\textsuperscript{19} See Ann McGrath's classic exposition of this accommodation in *Born in the Cattle*.

\textsuperscript{20} Note, however, that Albrecht saw the cattle station as an 'opportunity' for indigenous Australians who had been forced to abandon completely their traditional life. In one of the many papers he wrote during his long career as a Central Australian missionary, covering many aspects of black-white relationships, he commented: 'Employment at cattle stations is and remains still the biggest opportunity, and the most congenial work for Natives.' The congeniality, for Albrecht however, was not in the possibility of combining this employment with the retention of some traditional life, as McGrath suggests in *Born in the Cattle* but that in the relationship with the station 'boss' and foreman, Aboriginal workers would learn 'responsibility' and 'become very useful': see Albrecht, "Albrecht Material", in Lutheran Archives: Employment of Aborigines on Cattle Stations, n.d., possibly about mid-1950s.

\textsuperscript{21} Rowse, *White flour, white power*, pp. 7, 63.
Ernabella was established in 1937, the South Australian Government also designated it as a Ration Depot where government rations could be distributed to eligible natives. The mechanism of a rationing store on the mission site also allowed the Mission to pre-empt the notorious white ‘doggers’—men who exploited Aborigines by buying dingo skins cheaply from Aborigines and selling dearly to the State—by paying the Aborigines directly for the scalps either in cash or in kind, usually flour, jam, tea, or tobacco available at the store.\(^{22}\) Rationing thus also provided a ‘buffering’ mechanism as protection against ‘low whites’, against corrosive elements in Western civilisation, as well as a technique of feeding the Aborigines.

Yet this notion of feeding ‘(Aboriginal) men without food’ is not necessarily a simple one.\(^{23}\) There was undoubtedly a humanitarian aspect to rationing, an act of Levinasian responsibility by the missionaries to ‘keep the blacks alive’, as well as some compensation (meagre by any measure) by government for the irruption of white pastoral industry into indigenous lands, disrupting native game and foodstuffs.\(^{24}\) There was also the desire to attract Aborigines to the mission by the provision of goods and foods desired by them, an incentive to bring indigenous bodies to the Mission. The mission needed indigenous bodies to be a Mission. While the structured distribution of food did redress a grievance, and address a need, it is arguable that it disguised ‘a coercive intent’ by serving to encourage Aborigines to ‘restrain their wandering habits’, abandon nomadism and adopt the practices of settled modernisation.\(^{25}\) While they were ‘free’ to leave the mission, indeed encouraged at Ernabella to hunt and forage for food, the mission was a haven in a still hostile colonial universe. It may be preferable to say with Rowse that rationing ‘purchased’ acquiescence to a new social order.\(^{26}\)

\(^{22}\) The primary rationale behind the money-for-dingo scalps scheme was to reduce the threat of dingoes, in particular to the large belts of SA pastoral sheep land (to the south of the Ernabella region).
\(^{23}\) Rationed goods were generally food, although blankets and clothes were also distributed.
\(^{24}\) ‘Rations’ in the narrow sense was provided and financed by government, in the present case, through the SA Aboriginal Protection Board: however, missions such as Ernabella and Hermannsburg supplemented these goods with additional ‘rationing’ from their own resources, such as mission sheep or cattle, and goods donated by metropolitan congregations.
\(^{25}\) See for example Julie Evans, "Beyond the frontier: possibilities and precariousness along Australia's southern coast," in Russell, ed. Colonial frontiers: 151-172.
\(^{26}\) Rowse, White flour, white power.
There were other complications. The mechanisms of the rationing regimes across Central Australia, with certain Aborigines (aged, sick, children, workers) to be fed, and others, such as able-bodied unemployed men, denied rations, were hardly arbitrary but in fact designed to reinforce the work ethic particularly important to white European Protestant missionaries. However this ethic was subverted by the Aboriginal tendency to live communally, to share goods and gifts. Also problematizing rationing at Ernabella was the competing priority of that Mission to encourage (or allow) the indigenes to retain their traditional life as far as possible, to hunt kangaroos and euros, and forage for native foodstuffs, as opposed to being ‘given’ rations. The missionaries expressed the problematic in varying ways, in terms of ‘pauperization’, an undermining of the work ethic, a disinclination to ‘reward unworthy recipients’, or the problem of the ‘loafers’ or ‘parasites’.27

While Albrecht, at Hermannsburg, citing Pauline injunctions about earning food through the sweat of work, was an exponent of the traditional Lutheran emphasis on the work ethic, the Ernabella missionaries such as Love, while not so strident, in general accepted the orthodox Protestant, European discourse on rations, feeding and work; in short, feeding had to be earned or deserved. There were, however, exceptions, and these were crucial. The Central Australian missionaries were not in the business of letting people die, even those whom they saw as lazy and undeserving. In a letter to Matthews at the Board of Missions in February 1945, JRB Love indicated the line he would draw between not feeding Albrecht’s ‘loafers’ and allowing people to die from hunger. Reporting that a serious drought was persisting, he was adamant that ‘we are not going to feed idlers, before it is necessary; but you may be assured that we will not let people starve here, if the native food supply should fail.28

27 The Lutheran FW Albrecht at Hermannsburg was much more inclined to use these phrases than Love or the other missionaries at Ernabella. Yet interestingly Albrecht is the only Central Australian missionary (as far as I have read) to make, even if fleetingly, the affinity between the indigenous culture and habit of collective sharing and Christian notions of giving to those in need. The internal and intrinsic contradictions between contemporaneously inculcating a individualistic capitalist work ethic and persuading the adoption of Christian beliefs and values are not commented on by the Central Australian missionaries!
contaminating cash

Love's entries in the Ernabella Superintendent's Logbook and his communications with the APB give an insight into the complexities of feeding for a missionary caught in the web of conflicting discourses. Complicating matters was the conviction of the missionaries that too much money in the hands of the natives was dangerous. Cash was contaminating. Too much food was also contaminating: it sapped the desire to gather and hunt. Love found that he had to walk a fine line between supplying sufficient food to prevent starvation and having insufficient supplies so as to 'persuade' the people to 'go bush'.

Some days presented no shadows. Christmas Day 1942 saw a total of '91 men, 126 women, 92 children and 30 infants: total 339 present.' All were given 'soap and lollies' as well as gifts such as belts, mirrors, combs. The day ended with an evening meal of damper, jam and tea: 'A happy and successful day'.\textsuperscript{29} Other days were more difficult:

March 28 [1943]. Sun. Accumulation of sugar [but] we have barely enough flour in store to feed shepherds for two weeks, so shall use [meat?] and split peas for school children and necessary workers till we get flour. Stealing milk from goats while out grazing has been rife lately. Today, Mr. Ward saw a number of elder girls, with [ram?] shepherd, goat shepherd and children, taking milk. I dismissed the pair of goat shepherds, the ram shepherd, and sent off the others without any [tea?] Much shouting and what sounds like abuse going on now. Having no flour to give, gave tea to all present after evening service. Have plenty of sugar, a limited amount of tea, jam is 'frozen' according to Mr. Wilkinson, so we must go carefully.\textsuperscript{30}

When dingo scalps were in abundance, considerable pressure was placed on food supplies: 'August 29 [1943]...63 dingo pup scalps taken yesterday in store and a large quantity of flour, sugar, tea and jam issued...Could not take all scalps, as I could not pay enough for all. Nobody at church this morning except workers: all too full of damper and jam. This huge issue of food is not a good method. Shall have to try something better.'\textsuperscript{31} Again, in September:

\textsuperscript{29} Love, "Logbook": 25 Dec 1942.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 28 Mar 1943. Wartime exigencies created considerable problems of supply for the Central Australian missionaries, as, of course, did their remote locations.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 29 Aug 1943.
Large number of scalps in yesterday. I could only take 16, for which issued 3 sacks of flour, ½ bag sugar, 1lb tea, about 20 tins jam. The rest were told to hold their scalps; that an approximately equal amount of stores would be issued weekly till shearing cut out, then truck would go to Finke for more stores. Many were unwilling to disperse, but finally went off.32

In October, 1943, in the middle of another influenza epidemic, Love noted briefly in the Logbook what was to become a significant event in his administration: ‘October 4. Mon. At 11.30pm last night mail arrived with Mesdames Cooke and Johnson (sic), representing Aborigines Protection Board, to visit Ernabella. Going around camp to sick today. The two ladies came, to see people and treatment. Old [T.?] died at noon, buried in afternoon.’33 Love was to hear of the ‘Mesdames’ again.

Communications flowed regularly between Love and Penhall of the APB regarding matters of rations, often regarding supply problems or changes in quantity or quality of food.34 At one point, for example, Love advised the APB that the mission had a surplus of tea and perhaps the value of tea not needed could be replaced with jam as the ‘aged folks like it’. Penhall was ‘pleased’ to provide jam as an additional ration for the old people.35 Later, Love noted to Penhall that the native wild tobacco was scarce: ‘Could the Board secure the release of 5lbs per month to Wilkinson, Oodnadatta?’36 Seven lbs of tobacco were eventually forwarded to Ernabella: ‘two sticks per week for each native who smokes.’37

helping the people until the rains come

When the long drought of 1944 persisted into the next year, and traditional food was in short supply for the people, Love had to abandon, temporarily, notions of deserving and undeserving Aborigines. As he noted:

32 Ibid., 12 Sep 1943.
33 Ibid., 4 Oct 1943.
34 The APB supplied rations to mission stations as well as government settlements and isolated cattle stations throughout South Australia. The mission (in Ernabella’s case) provided considerable supplements to the government ration foods, including vegetables grown in the garden as well as the meat of goats and sheep: see also above, note 25.
35 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 16 of 1943, Love to Penhall, 23 Oct 1943.
36 Ibid., No 24 of 1943, Love to Penhall, 30 Sep 1944.
37 Ibid., Penhall to Love, 10 Oct 19434.
For the past week I have been issuing one meal per day to all people in camp, to supplement their hunting. There is no grass seed, no fruit, most of the kangaroos are in poor condition, so native foods are now inadequate. I have asked the APB to sanction this feeding of all natives till rains make native foods plentiful again.\textsuperscript{38}

The situation had in fact become quite serious by early February 1945 when Love telegraphed Penhall: ‘Drought serious please forward extra tea sugar jam would appreciate preserved milk regards Love.’\textsuperscript{39} Penhall responded promptly. Soon after, Love followed up the telegram by writing at length to Penhall about the drought, pointing out that Ernabella had had only two inches of rain in 1944. Initially, Love pointed out, this had had the paradoxical effect of improving the food supply as ‘the kangaroos had flocked in’ and ‘the natives were living really well on meat’. Thus the Ernabella policy of paying full value for dingo scalps had proved ‘a great help in scarcity as people come in with scalps and were able to buy flour, tea, sugar and jam to supplement kangaroo meat.’ This, said Love, ‘preserved their independence’. However, now there were none of the grass seeds, wild fig, or small roots and fruit that normally provided a balance to the indigenous meat diet. Dingoes also were scarce ‘and so the value of the scalps was not enough to properly feed all the people.’ Love wrote to the APB:

So I have commenced to issue a free evening meal, of damper, jam, tea, sugar and some powdered milk, to all hands at Ernabella. This is not intended to encourage idleness. Such work as I can think of I ask from the able-bodied people, but I cannot give full work all the time to a hundred people. I am not giving meat to all hands, only to workers and school children and the usual pensioners. The issue of damper is intended to supplement, not to displace, the natives’ hunting. I would be very grateful if you can bring this statement before the APB and ask approval to our helping people until the rains come and until, after the rains come, there is more native food in the bush.\textsuperscript{40}

Penhall arranged for extra stores, and assured the missionary that ‘there is no doubt that the State has a duty to provide for tribal natives who are in need of

\textsuperscript{38} Love, "Logbook": 1 Mar 1945.
\textsuperscript{39} SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 11 of 1945, telegram Love to Penhall, sent 1 Feb 1945.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., Love to Penhall, 9 Feb 1945.
food because of the prevailing drought." Love is most careful to avoid the
terrible Protestant charge of ‘encouraging idleness’. He was, however, unable to
evade charges of ‘underfeeding’ and ‘underpaying’ Aborigines on the Mission.
These originated with the reports of the ‘Mesdames’ of the APB who had visited
Ernabella in October 1943. These reports were damaging to Love’s reputation,
especially among the members of the Adelaide Committee under Duguid. This
Committee became increasingly interventionist in the affairs of the mission and
thus more and more an irritant to Love.

scarse rations

The reports of Johnston and Terten Cooke throw a fascinating, external light on
feeding and healing regimes, and on the wider mission life, at Ernabella. After
noting that the two women had arrived at Ernabella during ‘an epidemic of
pneumonic influenza’, Johnston described how ‘Mr. Love visited the camp twice,
sometimes three times, each day, taking hot cocoa and milk; and other
nourishing foods were also carried to the sick. The work became so strenuous
that Mr. Love arranged for some of the sick to be brought nearer his home so he
that he could attend to them during the night.” Conditions in the ‘hospital’
were primitive, Johnston noted; beds were needed (bags filled with spinifex were
being used), as well as a cupboard for drugs, and chairs for the dispensary.

Each day began with breakfast at 7.30am. All the natives assembled
outside the garden gate soon after. Then followed a short service
conducted by Mr. Love, some of the natives taking part in the Lord’s
Prayer. Then they proceeded to the ration depot where they received
breakfast consisting of porridge and damper, served in their own
containers, and taken to the camp. Lunch consisted of damper, tea, and
sugar; for tea, damper and soup (made from goat and from vegetable from
the garden, and supplemented with split peas or rice substitute).
Dampers are made near the depot each day by 3 or 4 lubras. These
rations are supplied to the pensioners (old people), the sick, working
natives, and the children... On Friday afternoons natives begin to come in
from the bush, bringing dog scalps with them. These are received on
Saturday mornings, when they are bartered for goods [which] include
flour, tea, sugar, and jam (tobacco, when available). We also noticed that

41 Ibid., Penhall to Love, 1 Mar 1945. This action was approved by the full Board on 7 Mar 1945 (the
retrospective nature of this approval indicating, incidentally, the autonomy and authority exercised by
Penhall as the Board’s Secretary).
42 Ibid., No 90 of 1943, Report by AM Johnston on a Visit to Ernabella, 28 Oct 1943.
at the same time women received one dress length and two tins of jam. Ternent Cooke described how rations were distributed: 'the old and infirm, or "pensioners" as they are called at Ernabella...receive one meal only, at night. This consists of a hunk of damper and tea with sugar.' Rations had been reduced due to the war and to Ternent Cooke the old women looked 'undernourished'; she thought that 'possibly their share of food from the hunt was small.' She recommended that the Board should give 'further consideration' to the 'native pensioners ration.' She also noted that only a limited number of scalps were able to be exchanged at the Mission as the store was low on goods:

We watched from inside the store, and saw that the natives became angry when Mr. Love said he could take no further scalps. He had to start to close the door and speak to them firmly. Mr. Love told us that he does not think the natives are treacherous, but they are quick-tempered.

While Ternent Cook conceded the difficulties of an isolated mission station, she wrote: 'it seems a pity that the store does not contain enough to supply the aborigines with a few of the ordinary amenities of life, especially as some work and others have the means to barter.' She was also concerned at the effect of the cold climate on the people: 'It distressed me to see the sick people lying naked on the ground with, perhaps, only an old bag to lie on. There seemed to be few blankets, though Mr. Love said that nearly every native had had one.' Ternent Cook also queried the staffing levels of the Mission and the amount of remuneration for Aboriginal workers, suggesting both should be 'revised'. She concluded, however:

I was impressed by the amount of manual work that is of necessity done by the missionaries, by their fortitude, long hours, self-sacrifice, and by the difficulties of the work of the Mission.

**good feeding is the first bulwark against disease**

The Board of Mission was concerned about the two APB reports, along with Duguid in Adelaide who perhaps naturally regarded any criticism of Ernabella,

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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., Report by Mrs. Ternent Cooke, n.d.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
even mild, with alarm. Matthews wrote urgently to Love regarding the apparent unavailability of rations at the Ernabella store:

The Board is very concerned that we are not keeping faith with the SA Government who asked us if we were willing to be a depot. We agreed. And the natives may become discontented and go elsewhere. The Board wants you to have at Ernabella at least three months supplies. If the store does not have capacity, enlarge the capacity of the store so as to have sufficient for all emergencies.47

The unusually peremptory tone of this letter was evidence of the Board’s concern. Duguid, too, seemed to be losing confidence in the man whom three years previously he had described to Chinnery in glowing terms. As Duguid was still on the APB, he was irked and possibly embarrassed by the criticisms, however limited and indirect, of the administration of Ernabella. Suddenly, to Duguid, the exemplary missionary became a man who gave orders without any practical knowledge, and failed to cooperate with his staff, or with experts.48 Duguid went even further than these criticisms, cutting loose with savage and unsubstantiated allegations against Love’s record at Kunmunya, with the unfair implication that he had allowed Aborigines to die:

Love’s failure to save the natives from preventable illness and death at Kunmunya is common knowledge in circles in Adelaide....the interest of the Aborigines is why we are at Ernabella. Love says the appalling death rate at Kunmunya was due to leprosy and yaws but people have no right to die from either if they are well fed....good feeding is the first bulwark against [disease].49

The failure to supply scalps, Duguid charged, was ‘primarily’ because ‘the old custom’ of keeping three months supply of food in the store had been deemed unwise by Love. Duguid claimed that Hermannsburg kept six months food in reserve although it was closer to the railhead than Ernabella. He was also concerned, as was the Board, with the suggestions made in Ternent Cooke’s report regarding underpayment of natives employed at Ernabella. He

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48 Duguid, “Series 1: general correspondence”: Duguid to Matthews (copy), 7 May 1944. Elkin may have triggered this last grievance with his assessment that Love had never enjoyed the scrutiny of anthropologists on his missionary turf: see ibid., Elkin to Duguid, 27 Dec 1940.
49 Ibid., Duguid to Matthews (copy), 7 May 1944.
remembered an incident where another missionary at Ernabella had become ‘disturbed when Love would not allow him to give a ‘reward’ to a native for specially good or very arduous work.’ Duguid argued that ‘not to recognize good work because the doer is an Aborigine is wrong.’ He concluded:

The interest of the Aborigines is why we are at Ernabella. The Board [of Missions] must direct that the Aborigines be properly fed and rewarded. Love will find it hard to have his work inspected and discussed. He was so long on his own at Kunmunya without oversight. But it must be done. He will have to submit to it.\(^{50}\)

Duguid had ignored the fact that Love had a logical reason for his reluctance to stock the store for a lengthy period of time, the danger of weevils. It should also be noted that due to the primitive state of communications and transport operating at that time in Central Australia, and the distant but constant presence of the war, there were genuine logistical difficulties in maintaining a constant supply of rations and food. As we have seen in Love’s reports, when the pup scalps were plentiful, the pressure on the store was immense.

**cash is not a necessity**

Love took the implied criticism from the Board calmly at first, noting that problems with the reliability and size of the mission truck, and the size of the store, had contributed to the rations crisis. He began negotiations with the APB for a financial contribution to build a larger store and requested a new, larger truck from the Board of Missions.\(^{51}\) He agreed to provide ‘pensioners’ with two meals a day. But Love’s strategy in both matters of feeding and payment was to provide a disincentive to the mission Aborigine to remain on the mission and be fed through the rationing regime. Love was insistent that the indigenous hunter-gatherer economy was retained as far as possible, thus reducing the imperatives and costs (he was a frugal Presbyterian at heart) of rationing to the minimum. He argued to Matthews that, while he had agreed ‘in principle’ with the APB to

\(^{50}\) Ibid.

\(^{51}\) Penhall for his part quickly began the process of filling the lacunae in materials at Ernabella that the Ternet Cooke and Johnston reports had identified: see SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 90 of 1943, Penhall to Board, 17 Nov 1943. He also wrote to Chinnery in Canberra (the Commonwealth Advisor on Native Affairs) regarding the APB’s ‘consideration of adequate diet for detribalised and semi-detribalised aborigines in the Ernabella district’: ibid., Penhall to Chinnery, 16 Feb 1944.
pay cash wages to natives employed by the Mission, 'cash is not a necessity' to
the aborigines at Ernabella: 'too much cash only means idle men and women
living on the workers.' Not all the Ernabella missionaries agreed:

Mr. Brown does not think we give our workers enough. The rest of us
(with long experience) think lavish giving of money may most likely do
more harm than good...I propose to give every worker, in addition to the
food and clothes they get now 1/- each Sat morn to spend on sugar, lollies
etc...then on special work, for example shearing, to be paid in accordance
with their skill; up to the white man's pay if they can reach the white
man's standard.52

Tim Rowse in his book on rationing describes the transformation of the rationing
relationship during the assimilation era and sees the essence of the change over
time as cash substituting for rations.53 The experience of Ernabella and Love is
indicative of the deep unease felt by some missionaries at this process. Love did
concede that the payment of wages for labour would increase gradually [but]
'presently, the allowance of £600 p.a. [from the Board] seems ample.' He also
asserted that to hold extra rations on hand in the store risked getting flour
infested by weevils. He made the point that 'Cooke and Johnston did not
appreciate the fact that...the natives do not live on proceeds of scalps.'54 The
exemplary missionary, expert in Aboriginal custom, added a tart addendum:

Regarding my former practice to issue pensioners with one meal per day:

52 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1944": Love to Matthews,
4 Jul 1944.
53 Rowse, White flour, white power.
54 Ibid., Love to Matthews, 4 Jul 1944. After discussions with the APB and the pressures Love was feeling
from missionary circles in the South, Love eventually agreed in June 1944 that a larger store to carry up to
three months of rations was advisable, and the SA Parliament in December of that year voted £200 towards
the cost of the work: see SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 58 of 1944, Love to Penhall, 14 Jun 1944;
Penhall to Love, 5 Dec 1944. In his stubborn fashion, however, Love continued to argue against the
enlargement of the ration store. In January of 1945, he put a lengthy case to the APB for an alternative
means of spending the money: the construction of a 'community shelter' which could be occupied 'by large
numbers on stormy nights' and which could be used for 'community gatherings for recreation or uplift, either
for their own corroboree singing or for talks by white friends'. Love had genuinely been concerned for some
time about what he saw as the denuding and deforestation of the Ernabella environs by the natives who
stripped timber for their shelters, and saw his 'community shelter' or 'Rest Home' as Penhall called it, as
ameliorating this problem. Love submitted plans for the shelter and committed himself and the Mission to
contribute to the labour to build it: see ibid., No 11 of 1945, Love to Penhall, 3 Jan 1945. Penhall was forced
to point out to Love that Parliament had voted monies for the purpose of 'a new ration store' and it was not
possible to use the money for any other purpose. He added that the large amount of galvanised roofing Love
had envisaged for his shelter was not available due to war conditions: ibid., Penhall to Love, 16 Jan 1945.
Love was finally beaten on the matter of 'a new ration store'.
At the suggestion of Mr. Penhall, I have, since my return, been giving them morning porridge as well, to meet the impression on the part of some well wishers that the old people were not getting enough. This morning was cold, with a heavy frost. No old folk turned up for breakfast. I asked where they were, and was told that they did not want to come for breakfast on this frosty morning, but would come for the evening meals! So much for one meal not being considered enough. The wild blackfellow only eats once per day.\textsuperscript{55}

The repercussions of what was now becoming known as the underfeeding (and underpaying) crisis at Ernabella continued. Matthews, writing to Duguid privately, thought he understood the complexity of the issue. The missions, he felt, ought to encourage the people to find their own food in bush. Yet he had heard from Rex Battarbee about a ‘drift’ of natives from Ernabella to the Ration Depot which Federal authorities had established near Alice Springs where they could apparently get food whether working or not. Missionaries and mission administrators invariably became anxious when ‘drift’ was mentioned: it was code for both contamination by low whites and for nomadic movement away from the mission station towards the tempting township lights.\textsuperscript{56} Matthews was also concerned about malnutrition and felt that the APB should direct Love regarding a properly balanced diet for the Aborigines. As to underpayment, Matthews told Duguid that natives on missions should be better paid than elsewhere: ‘It is our simple duty to free ourselves from any possibility of being charged with underfeeding or underpaying our workers.’\textsuperscript{57}

\textbf{a belief that the Aborigines are not worth saving}

In his private letter to Duguid, Matthews demonstrated a profound concern and a rare vein of analysis about the role of the churches in establishing missions to

\textsuperscript{55} Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1944": Love to Matthews, 4 Jul 1944.

\textsuperscript{56} Duguid, “Series I: Duguid correspondence”: Matthews to Duguid, 18 May 1944: ‘Yet Battarbee tells us that many natives who used to go to Ernabella now go N-E to the Depot which the Federal authorities have established near Alice Springs or Hermannsburg and get food whether working or not’. Battarbee, the artist who became Albert Namatjira’s mentor, was working as an administrator at Hermannsburg during the war years. Indeed he was placed at Hermannsburg by the authorities apparently partly to keep watch on the potentially subversive activities of the dangerous German missionary FW Albrecht! The ration depot referred to was probably Areyonga which, interestingly, was the locale of a dispute that erupted in 1947 between the Ernabella and Hermannsburg administrations over the issue Matthews was concerned about in 1944, a ‘drift’ of Pitjantjatjara people away from Ernabella to Areyonga: see this chapter, below.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
the Aborigines. It is worth quoting extensively, if only because it articulates a
discourse of ‘salvation’ that existed not only on the mission site but was held at a
high level in the Presbyterian missionary church:

Our failure, and it is a possible failure at Ernabella, goes much deeper
than underfeeding. I do not know if I can express it properly but I think
underlying it is an un-uttered belief that the Aborigines are not worth
saving. Or they are not capable of being used worthily in our modern life.
We as Churches play at the business of saving them, and we are the only
people who can save them. Our equipment of a Mission station is of the
most meagre and inadequate kind. Beside a people who are community-
minded, who think of work in terms of the group, we set down an
individual or even two, who can give to the Aborigines the most inadequate
conceptions of what the white community from where they came stands
for and does...Ward [a missionary at Ernabella] says we will never make a
shearer of the Aborigine, or a pastoralist, or an agriculturalist? But do we
go the right way about trying? We read of examples of good shearers. But
these are individuals. What of the tribe? Is the general effect of our
insufficient labours on their behalf just to break the tribal life up and so
disintegrate the life of the community? In the back of my mind is the
uncomfortable conviction that some of those who are at work with the
Aborigine do not really believe that there is any future for him.58

It is hard, against the background of the arguments about Aborigines that Love
was having around this time with Matthews and the Board, and with Duguid,
regarding rations, feeding, payment of wages, and appropriate employment for
adolescent aborigines, to believe that the Secretary was not referring to JRB Love
in his last, rather bitter comment.59 Love, however, did participate in a discourse
of salvation. If he did not feed the indigenous body to the satisfaction of
Matthews or Duguid, it was because he wanted the Aborigine to continue to feed
himself as far and as long as possible; if he did not recompense the indigenous
worker adequately, it was because he feared the effects of a cash economy on the
indigenous moral economy. Matthews’ perception may, however, have been to
sense a deep pessimism that resided in Love’s thinking about the indigenous
future. He was uncertain as to whether the Aborigine would survive in a White
Australia: they would have to ‘earn their way’ now, in another harsh
environment, within and against the white culture. He wanted, however, to

58 Ibid.
59 For their ‘discussions’ on employment at the mission station for aboriginal adolescents in particular, see
chapter eleven, below.
ensure that no part of any failure to survive could be held to his account. His 'future' for the Aborigine was, in the end, a radically conservative vision, to hold to the nomadic and traditional past for as long as possible, with only incremental and forced steps into a shared and unstable future with white Australians. It was here Love's discourse diverged to some extent from Albrecht's: the Hermannsburg missionary, while still a gradualist, had accepted, albeit reluctantly and with considerable reservation, that the Aborigines themselves would seek an accelerating incorporation into the white man's world.

**keep feeding until the ground has been recovered**

Love went on the offensive when he realized eventually that his reputation was coming under fire through 'persistent reports of underfeeding and underpaying'. He wrote to the Board, demanding to know from where the reports had emanated: 'I am astonished to hear that any such report has been made. It is not true: but I think perhaps that I should know from whom the charge has come.' Matthews responded to Love's demand regarding the source of the 'underfeeding' reports: he pointed out that it had begun 'with the 2 women who visited Ernabella in 1943', and added, somewhat disingenuously, that 'I deeply regret that you should be worried by such rumours. Mr. Penhall was very emphatic that there was no truth whatsoever in them'. Duguid also contacted Love about the matter, on Matthew's request, confirming that the report on underfeeding had come from the APB but curtly advising Love that 'no good would come from mentioning names.' Then he gave Love a directive that must have rankled: 'The APB wants you to keep on feeding until the ground has been recovered.' This probably summed up the difference between them on this

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60 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1945": Love to Matthews, 20 Mar 1945. It is some indication perhaps of Love's isolation, both in a geographical and psychological sense, that by 1945 he had apparently not yet completely deduced the source of these 'persistent reports', although he already knew some at least had come through the APB female members' reports.

61 Ibid., Matthews to Love, 4 Apr 1945. In fact, a deputation of the Board of Missions, which included Matthews, had flown to Adelaide in early 1945 to meet with the Adelaide Committee over concerns about Love's administration, and had also met with Penhall: see below, chapter eleven. My comment about Matthews's disingenuousness should perhaps be tempered with the possibility that Penhall had, at this meeting, fully laid to rest the residual misgivings Matthews had had regarding Love in the more immediate aftermath of the 'underfeeding crisis'.

62 Ibid., Duguid to Love, 8 Apr 1945.

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issue: Duguid thought much ground had been lost; Love would never have conceded that any had been given away.

In the end, the Board did back their superintendent strongly and in fact reprimanded Duguid in forceful terms for his allegations of lack of care of Aborigines on Love’s part, asserting there was no basis to them.\textsuperscript{63} And Mathews, ever diplomatic, suggested to the superintendent in a letter that ‘it is just possible that those who make comments on such matters should make them only after a prolonged stay amongst the natives’.\textsuperscript{64} Duguid, characteristically, refused to back down and his relationship with Love began inevitably to deteriorate.

\textbf{The last scrutiny}

Penhall himself, with Cleland and Len Cook of the APB, visited Ernabella towards the end of 1945. Cleland and Cook wrote glowing reports of their visit. Penhall did not write a report but reported to Matthews on his visit to ‘this very interesting and well conducted Mission’.\textsuperscript{65} The reports focused on the issues of feeding and payment, as well as Love’s administration, and taken together provided substantial vindication for Love. It should be remembered, however, that the APB had a vested interest in a positive narrative on Ernabella. After all, it was responsible for the broad administration of ‘native affairs’ throughout South Australia and it does seem that a concerted effort was made to ‘rehabilitate’ the mission station after the traumas generated by Terten Cooke and Johnston. Penhall observed to Matthews that ‘everyone appeared to be

\textsuperscript{63} Duguid, “Series 1: Duguid correspondence”: Matthews to Duguid, 8 Jun 1944. Matthews advised Duguid, in his capacity as Secretary, that the Board was ‘very seriously disturbed’ by his criticisms of Love. It rejected any question of disloyalty to the Board or unwillingness to carry out its directions. The Board asserted that ‘Ernabella has not failed to give adequate food and payment. The Board stands by Mr Love. Except in drought, it is not the policy of the Board to feed the natives promiscuously.’ The Board found that Love’s failure to pay for scalps in 1943 was due to repeated breakdowns of the mail truck. He himself was not responsible. Duguid’s statements on Kunnunya were based, asserted the Board, on ‘insufficient knowledge’. The Board felt compelled to say that Mr. Love was not responsible for deaths at Kunnunya. The Board was satisfied that Kunnunya natives were adequately fed. None of this was meant however to detract from the Board’s ‘very warm appreciation of all you [Duguid] have done since the inception of the Mission’.

\textsuperscript{64} Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1944": Matthews to Love, 31 Jul 1944.

\textsuperscript{65} SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 11 (A) of 1945, Penhall to Matthews, 8 Mar 1946.
provided with ample food'. He said the food at Ernabella consisted of stew composed of meat, either sheep or goat, with 3 or 4 kinds of vegetables. The baker's oven constructed by Trudinger was producing good bread, with aborigines assisting with the mixing, kneading, and baking. Native game and fruits abounded. Cleland thought 'the system of feeding is wise'. He found the stew thick and appetizing, although he thought the diet 'lacked meat'. This deficiency was compensated, he noted, by 'what the hunters and gatherers bring in from the bush'. Cleland stated that 'the saving of infant lives by the care bestowed by the Mission must be considerable'. The payment of one shilling a week to workers was deemed adequate at such a remote location. Cleland considered that the 500 or so 'floating population' of indigenes that visited the mission annually served an important function in the white economy by 'controlling' the dingo problem. His overall assessment was that 'we are fully convinced that Mr Love's administration is a wise one, and a very successful one. If his successors are able to control the situation as he has controlled it, there is a prospect of a happy pure-blood native population being resident here for many years to come.'

To Cleland, as interested and sympathetic as he was to Aboriginal people, it was still a matter of 'controlling' a primitive tribe, albeit of 'happy pure-bloods'.

the work has to be done

The whole 'underfeeding' affair had a couple of interesting postscripts. The APB became interested in the question of adequate diets for the Aborigines under its control and attempted to get expert advice on the adequacy of diets for remote Aborigines. It also put in place a survey of all missions and settlements under

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66 Ibid., Cleland: Report on a visit to Ernabella in the Far North and North West of South Australia.
67 See Ibid., No 68/1945, Sec, APB Subject: Nutrition of Natives in South Australia. The whole matter of the adequacy of the diet provided for indigenous people by the colonial enterprise is an interesting question and one that I have not been able to pursue in this study at any length. From the perspective of the 21st C, it seems an early and sustained confluence of the desire of Aborigines for, and the willingness of colonial agents, including missionaries, to provide, articles such as flour, tea, sugar, jam and tobacco as staple items, cannot have provided, on their own, a satisfactory diet. The Ernabella missionaries would have replied that the mission's feeding regime was meant only to supplement the good protein and good exercise regime of the still hunting-gathering Pitjantjatjara. Note that the APB had a list of a nutritional scale drawn up at Adelaide University (and submitted by Professor JB Cleland, the Chairman of the APB) of what a person on rations should receive per day: 1 pint milk, 1 oz. butter, 1 oz. cheese or an egg, 1 serve meat, 1 serve potato, 1 citrus fruit or large tomato, 2 serves vegetables, 3 serves cereal. It is instructive to note how this scale varies from the earlier 'ration menu' that Penhall had advised Love was the standard at the outset of his administration in
its jurisdiction regarding the issue of feeding. Another sequel was a dispute that developed in the late 1940s between Ernabella and Hermannsburg, and between the Presbyterian and Lutheran Boards of Mission, over exactly these issues of rationing and feeding. We have already seen that the Presbyterian Board was aware of talk of a drift of ‘their’ natives at Ernabella to a depot near Alice Springs, Areyonga, which was administered by the Lutherans through Hermannsburg and the Finke River Mission (FRM). Albrecht and the FRM had established Areyonga in the early forties as ‘a haven of refuge’ for what Albrecht characterised as ‘remnants of the Pitjantjara people’ who had left their own country. Albrecht had convinced Chinnery, the Commonwealth Advisor on Native Affairs, to assist his mission in ‘saving’ Pitjantjatjara caught between the Musgraves and Petermanns, and Alice Springs. Albrecht explained the rationale to the Chairman of his Board:

I caught Chinnery before he returned South and he almost immediately agreed to finance a store as at Haast Bluff and start a Ration Depot with a Native in charge. Mr Chinnery said, and we know it only too well, that if we didn’t step in, nobody else will and these people will lose the last little vitality they show as a tribe...none here want to load more work on our shoulders, but to leave this alone was impossible; the work has to be done.

But controversy arose in 1947 when the new Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, VC Coombes, succeeding Matthews, wrote to the Chairman of the FRM, Reidel, putting the Ernabella concerns in somewhat inflammatory terms:

1941: see above, chapter 8, where the adult standard weekly ration consisted of 7lbs flour, 2lbs sugar, 4ozs tea, 1lb rice, and 2 sticks of tobacco! Also: there was an interesting exchange between Elkin and Duguid (still a member of the APB) in 1944. Elkin wrote to Duguid regarding a pamphlet the Adelaide doctor had written on the future of the Aborigines, where he had pressed for the need for adequate food and nutrition for natives, to ‘build up against diseases’. Elkin was especially concerned that Duguid had predicted that after the war, there would be ‘greater intermingling of whites and Aborigines’. He asked Duguid what grounds there were for this assumption, and did Duguid believe there would be ‘greater white exploitation after the War’: Duguid, "Series 1: Duguid correspondence": Elkin to Duguid, 17 Apr 1944. Duguid replied that after the opening up of the Interior by the military, it was inevitable that this would happen and he added that ‘the interests of settlers will always be regarded higher than Aborigines by the Government’: ibid., Duguid to Elkin (copy), 1 May 1944.

66 The institutions were surveyed on the number of Aborigines receiving food from APB, how many entirely dependent on APB (breaking this into aged/infirm, unemployed men, women dependents, children under 12yrs old). Also, the survey sought information on varieties of food, quantities of food, numbers of meals, the provision of stew or soup, and if so, the proportion and nature of solid food to each gallon of water: see SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 68 of 1945.

Ernabella natives were being 'enticed' to Areyonga by 'artificial inducements' and by the 'largesse' of the whites there, there was an 'abnormal admixture' of tribes there, and that Ernabella natives were badly influenced by a certain 'immorality and lawlessness' at Areyonga.\textsuperscript{70} The Lutherans strongly refuted all the charges separately and with such finality that the matter was never raised again.\textsuperscript{71} Reidel was clearly bemused by the accusation of 'largesse' on the part of the whites. He pointed out that it was the Government, not the mission, which provided the rations and decided who would be the recipients, and added dryly: 'It would be quite a new charge levelled against the Government, according to our experience, that they are dealing out largesse to natives.'\textsuperscript{72}

\textbf{the Aborigine has seen and tasted something new and preferable}

Albrecht also entered the debate, pointing out that the policies of Ernabella and Hermannsburg in relation to rationing did not differ much. Yet he recognized, as he had five years earlier in that 'gestural moment' when he had briefly met Love, that Ernabella was faced with additional dilemmas because of the priority it had put on retaining the traditional life of the Aborigine. Albrecht argued that if Ernabella was 'losing its attraction' for the native, it was not because Areyonga was offering artificial inducements, which in any case the Lutherans denied, but because Aborigines were aware of and interested in what was happening all around them, on cattle stations, and other settled areas:

Are not the white staff of Ernabella living a normal life, and while doing so, are closely watched by the Pitjantjatjara people whose appetite and curiosity to try everything themselves is by now well [aroused]?? And is not Ernabella feeding workers and schoolchildren who automatically develop a desire for still more and better things? [Are] not some clothing and blankets issued to Aborigines at Ernabella? If so, then it is just impossible to let a person move about in garments today, and then expect him, or even somebody with him, to go about naked tomorrow. It does not work if he is fed on flour, tea, or sugar today, and then expected to relish a grass seed damper tomorrow...\textsuperscript{73}

He felt that while it was 'a grave mistake' to try to hasten the development of the

\textsuperscript{70} Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 6/1946-51": Coombes to Reidel, 26 Nov 1947.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., Reidel to Coombes, 5 Dec 1947.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., Reidel to Coombes, 5 Dec 1947.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., Albrecht to Reidel (copy), 14 Jan 1948.
Aborigine in any way, it was also ‘fatal’ to any work among them ‘if the people are misunderstood in their desires, or even attempts made to retard development.’ He advised Ernabella ‘to re-examine its policy to see whether the reasonable demands of the people have been met.’ Albrecht sympathized with Ernabella’s predicament: ‘Ernabella is only beginning to experience for the first time in measure what has been a tremendous problem to us for many years past because of the proximity of the Railhead.’ While he noted that Ernabella ‘prides itself with the idea of keeping the Native in his natural state’ he argued that ‘just that attempt today is the Natives’ biggest grievance. He has no desire to stay as he is after he has seen and tasted something new, which, in his opinion, is preferable to what he has had so far.’ Albrecht concluded in a spirit of magnanimity and cooperation:

In spite of what has been said, Hermannsburg and Ernabella are not divided and will continue to cooperate in the best interests of the people whom we are committed to serve...[W]e have no intention of belittling in any way their magnificent effort, nor cast a slur on their work.\(^74\)

Hermannsburg and Ernabella, it is true, shared similar broad goals, of keeping their indigenous people separated from harmful influences, teaching Christian belief, avoiding ‘pauperisation’, and inculcating a work ethic, although there were significant differences of emphasis. Yet the principal problematic that Ernabella faced in relation to feeding and rationing was, as Albrecht saw, the tension between colonial techniques that were designed to draw indigenous people into the white capitalist economy and its attendant values and work ethics and a missionary philosophy that was determined to separate and insulate them from that economy and values and privilege the traditional hunter-gatherer economy and culture. It was a tension that perhaps JRB Love, and Ernabella Mission, faced in a purer form than almost anywhere else in Australia because of the unusual preference the Mission site gave to ‘saving’ the traditional forms of society and economy for the indigenous body. But, in the end, it was a tension they found difficult to resolve.

\(^{74}\) Ibid.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN: ‘Language is always addressed to the other’: of Teachers, Tongues and Translations

In ‘the last scrutiny’ of Love’s administration of Ernabella, the executive of the APB, its Secretary, William Penhall, and the Chairman, JB Cleland, after visits to Ernabella in 1945, had provided Love with an official stamp of approval. Penhall belatedly wrote to Matthews in March 1946, assessing the staff at the mission as ‘a very good team’: ‘Mr. Love is a painstaking and capable leader, and appears to have the confidence of his men.’

Ironically, well before Penhall wrote this letter, Love had already advised the Board of Missions that he wished to resign from the Mission on the grounds that he felt that he had lost the confidence of two men with whom he had worked closely at Ernabella. The two men were not named but we may reasonably assume that they were Duguid and the young schoolteacher, Trudinger, apparently being groomed by the Board to succeed Love as superintendent of Ernabella Mission Station. To establish this assumption, and, more

1 Emmanuel Levinas in “On the Usefulness of Insomnia”, in Robbins, ed., Is It Righteous To Be?, p. 235.
2 SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 11 (A) of 1945, Penhall to Matthews, 8 Mar 1946.
3 See Duguid, "Duguid: Series 1: correspondence": Matthews to Duguid, 5 Apr 1944. There was a complex coterie of reasons for the disagreements between Love and the ‘two men’ named as the likely suspects, Duguid and Trudinger, some of which we have already noted. Differences in ideology or discourse are discussed in the text. It is also likely that significant personality conflicts were involved, which are not necessarily relevant to the discursive discord among the missionaries but may provide some background or context to them. Duguid’s role in the Adelaide Committee, along with his status as the founder of the Mission, put him in a potentially adversarial position vis-à-vis Love which, given Duguid’s combative nature and Love’s noted desire to do things his way as superintendent, was bound to lead to some conflict. With Trudinger, it was another complex of reasons. The younger man had arrived at the mission before Love, and had picked up the language with great facility. Duguid, the Board of Missions and many in missionary circles (and outside) saw the work of the school and its teacher as the most important achievement of the Mission. At times, it was almost characterised as its only achievement: see, for example, ibid., Matthews to Duguid, 18 May 1944. From comments made by other missionaries, it is apparent Trudinger was perceived by some as arrogant and opinionated. Walter MacDougall said of him in 1940, when he was acting superintendent: ‘It is a great pity Mr Trudinger is so young. He thinks he is the greatest thing that has happened to the Abos. The whole of Ernabella is made up of the school. He is a great chap and doing a fine job but has the unhappy
importantly, to trace the unravelling of once substantially unified discourses and cordial relationships among the Ernabella missionary circle between 1944 and 1946, we need to go back to the earliest days of the Mission, back indeed to that liminal space, the karu, where black and white first ‘spoke’ to each other at this Mission. But in what tongue did they speak, and why?

During his 1937 preparatory visits, in his ventures across the Creek, seeking knowledge and a way of speaking to the Other, Love had prepared for subsequent missionaries a rudimentary grammar and vocabulary. Soon after his arrival in February 1940, Trudinger was quickly picking up the language. By April, he was revising and adding to Love’s grammar notes (it seems the syntax forms are more complicated than [Love]imagined"). He described to Duguid the first classes in the creek, with ‘desks made out of old kerosene boxes’ and the children ‘practicing letters with charcoal on their tummies’. Then a crucial claim: ‘I

\[1\] Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 5": MacDougall to Matthews, 19 Jun 1940. Add to this an apparent reluctance on Trudinger’s part to accept Love’s leadership fully and it was inevitable that points of conflict with Love emerged and got progressively worse. As often happens in these sorts of situations, these disagreements ranged from the trivial and pedantic to the significant. As indicated, the significant discursive disagreements, over language policy and missiologial orientation, are discussed in the text. But there were many others. For example in 1943, Trudinger had apparently asked ‘privately’ for blinds to be supplied for the school: Love’s rather stern and pedantic response was that ‘He has been told that private requests for material for Mission buildings are not in order’; ibid., Folder 4/1943: Love to Matthews, 29 Jan 1943. By 1944, Love noted to Matthews concerning Trudinger: ‘You will see that he is going from strength to strength in his wilful and selfish way’; ibid., Love to Matthews, 31 May 1944. It also appears, on a more serious matter, that Love attempted to advise Trudinger, as had apparently Duguid as well as his own father, to exercise more care and discretion in his dealings with Aboriginal females and that this advice was brushed brusquely aside, which irritated and concerned the older and more experienced missionary: see ibid., Folder 1/1939-46: Matthews to Trudinger, 9 Jun 1944. Subsequent events confirmed Love’s wisdom in this matter. Despite the fraught relationship between the two, they cooperated occasionally, working together on the translation of the Bible, the design of the new school, and there was the odd pleasantry: Love lent the young man some texts on Hebrew and Greek when he went to Melbourne to study for the ministry: ibid., Trudinger to Matthews, 5 Sep 1944. In fact, Love towards the end of his superintendency, at least according to the young teacher, virtually ‘anointed’ Trudinger as his successor. While he recognised that the Board seemed determined that Trudinger become Superintendent (after completing his ordination at Ormond College in Melbourne), Love did more than merely bow to the inevitable and seemed, again at least to Trudinger, actively to characterize the succession as ‘understood’: see ibid., Trudinger to Matthews, 4 Sep 1945, although it is possible this was more the young man’s ambition colouring his interpretation. While it may be understood much of this interests the writer of this thesis, it is mentioned only as background to the more relevant ideological disagreements the two men engaged in during these first crucial and formative years of the mission (with Trudinger acting in some ways as a surrogate for Duguid who was an indirect and invisible, but always voluble presence!).

\[2\] Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 1/1939-46": Trudinger to Matthews, 30 Apr 1940.
conduct school in their language.⁵ The policy of teaching in Pitjantjatjara was to be adhered to fiercely by the teacher, and supported by Duguid and the Board. But there were early signs of problems after Love had arrived as superintendent in 1941. The teacher wrote confidentially to the Board advising that as Love had not requested a report on the school he would to send it directly to the Board. He also argued vehemently for closure of the school during a period of his possible absence: the ‘imposition’ of English, he claimed, would be ‘definitely harmful’ and create ‘tragic confusion’. He argued that the whole basis of the ‘gradual introduction’ of the native children to ‘our culture’ was that it was being done with ‘the vernacular as the medium’.⁶

Although not yet an ordained minister, Trudinger was also preaching to the ‘congregation’ on one Sunday evening a month in the vernacular. Love, however, was apparently still preaching in English in July 1942. Trudinger was privately contemptuous of this.⁷ He wrote to Matthews in a thinly veiled criticism of Love: ‘we are told the Australian Aborigines is a born linguist and understands more of our language than we think [but] not one of these [children] speak English and few if any could understand an English sentence or sequence which does not involve either actions making its meaning clear or words which the native has borrowed from us.’⁸ Love’s response to this was that the children would not speak English if they were not taught it, and that a two-language policy was a wiser one. English, he thought, was a necessary tool for the Pitjantjatjara.

At least part of the matrix of the language policy divisions on the Ernabella mission site was a difference over the significance of the conversion project. To Love, it was crucial to provide the natives with means by which to ensure their survival in a hostile post-war environment. To Trudinger, from an evangelical and orthodox missionary background, the ‘chief aim’ was, as he noted to Matthews, for the children ‘to know of God and the Saviour and then know Him

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⁵ Ibid., Trudinger to Duguid, 5 Apr 1940.
⁶ Ibid., Trudinger to Matthews, 10 Aug 1941.
⁷ See also chapter 8, above.
⁸ Ibid., Trudinger to Matthews, 17 Jul 1942.
for their own.⁹ In a talk reprinted in the mission newsletter in 1943, the school teacher gave an explicitly evangelical justification for the native language policy: ‘we aim to make these uncivilized nomadic people as universally literate as possible [so] that when the scriptures are translated and can be circulated amongst them, they will be able to use them to the fullest advantage...[even] on their Walk-Abouts.’¹⁰ Earlier he had expressed the same thought when advising Matthews in March 1943 that there were now about 40 children who could read and write in their own language: ‘soon every family can have at least one member who can read and write against the time when the Scriptures are circulated.’¹¹

**a special duty to preserve the race from extinction**

Yet even the evangelical missionary at Ernabella was also ally imbued with the Levinasian politics of hospitality:

we simply must find a way by which we can bring these people...Christ’s message of life, and at the same time maintain the physical and social and tribal life of the tribe. To us it seems wrong and un-Christlike that missionaries should purport to bring the so-called life more abundant, and be the conscious or unconscious perpetrators of physical death.¹²

But ‘sin’ seemed always at the heart of the evangelical discourse: ‘the great need is a Holy Spirit conviction of sin’, the young teacher perceived. While devoted to the children, he noted that ‘there is no consciousness of doing wrong, no sense of falling short of God’s glory. No conscience seems to exist with regard to lying and thieving.’¹³ Love rarely if ever wrote privately in these terms, although he might for publication, or in a newsletter to the metropolitan audience. The first sentence of his 1944 statement ‘The Policy for Ernabella’ read: ‘Our Scriptural Commission is to heal the sick and preach the Gospel.’¹⁴ Even here, the priority

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⁹ Ibid.
¹⁰ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No. 16 of 1943, Ernabella Newsletter, December 1943 (copy): citing Trudinger.
¹¹ Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 1/1939-46": Trudinger to Matthews, 3 Mar 1943.
¹² SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No. 19 of 1943, Ernabella Newsletter, December 1943 (copy): citing Trudinger.
¹³ Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 1/1939-46": handwritten circular by Trudinger to ‘Friends’ (distributed by ‘the editor of one of Adelaide’s religious periodicals’) dated April 1942.
is given to the physical over the spiritual salvation. His second sentence is also characteristically non-evangelical: 'To this has been added the special duty of trying to preserve the race from extinction.' It was in the pursuance of this 'special duty' that he saw the importance of English – the language of the dominant and coming culture as he saw it – for the Aborigines.

In September of 1943, at his request, the Board met with Trudinger in Melbourne to discuss language policy. While reassuring Love that the discussions were conducted 'in complete loyalty to yourself and with a recognition constantly expressed that yours was the final authority on the Mission Station', Matthews advised the superintendent that the Board was in 'general agreement' with the native language policy of the schoolteacher. This policy was that 'the people be literate in their own language, until such time as a real need is seen to introduce the systematic teaching of English.' Again, the justification of the policy was that at least one person in each family could read in Pitjantjatjara, pending the translation of the scriptures.

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15 The question of 'loyalty' was becoming sensitive. Love had intimated to Matthews in September 1943 that he felt some 'doubt' in his competence emanating from the Board, and associated this with some possible 'lack of loyalty' on the part of some staff who may not have 'relished my taking over command' or 'taking orders'. The particular staff members were unnamed, perhaps because it may have been unnecessary to do so. Matthews had assured Love that the Board retained its fullest confidence in him: 'We asked you to transfer from Kunnunya to Ernabella because of our entire confidence in you ... That confidence remains.' He added, somewhat naïvely, or even disingenuously, that 'any lack of loyalty on the part of the staff is quite unknown to us and in contacts with them there has never been the slightest evidence of disloyalty.' I use the words 'naïvely' and 'disingenuously' advisedly as my close reading of the Trudinger correspondence with Matthews and the Board of Missions suggests, at the least, a careful but determined undermining of Love's superintendency: ibid., Folder 4/1943: Matthews to Love, 24 Sep 1943, referring to a letter from Love [n.d. but written between June and August 1943]. It should be noted that Trudinger had asked to meet with the Board 'privately', asking explicitly that 'no other missionaries [be] present', to put his case for the language policy and other matters that were in contention with Love: ibid., Folder 1/1939-46: Trudinger to Matthews, 29 Jul 1943. Was this 'undermining' the superintendent by going behind his back or was it legitimately 'defending' the Duguidian language policy of the Mission? Whichever it was, it was apparently done, as Matthews (naively) observed, with a 'constantly expressed recognition' of loyalty to Love and his authority on the mission site. It must be admitted that this so-called 'loyalty' is not evident, at least in the correspondence. Trudinger continued to express, 'privately' to Matthews, his dissatisfaction with the administration of the mission and what he characterised as the 'autocratic control' exercised by Love over other missionaries on the mission site. While he continued to acknowledge formally his 'fealty' to the superintendent, he made clear both his discontent and that his prior loyalties were due 'to God and then to the natives and their cause': see ibid., Trudinger to Matthews, 1 Mar 1944 and 21 Mar 1944.

16 Ibid., Folder 4/1943: Matthews to Love, 25 Sep 1943. The Board also supported Trudinger's requests for a new school; to be allowed more visitors; that the older children who were used as teacher's aids be given exemption from 'housework duties' and notice given (presumably by Love to Trudinger) if these assistants were 'taken off' school duties for manual work, and that he be given 'reasonable time' to study the language. These matters were all ones which had produced some tension between the superintendent and the teacher,
The volume of praise being bestowed upon the school and the teacher by the metropolitan audience was clearly irritating Love at this time. He objected to the claim in an Ernabella newsletter that by teaching native children to write in their own language, the pupils were achieving ‘something aboriginals have never done before in any part of Australia’. At Kunmunya, Love asserted to Matthews, ‘scholars learned to write in English and Worora.’ \(^{17}\) For his part, the young school privately complained to Matthews that he had become weary of ‘reporting’ his achievements to Love: ‘I’m tired of writing [about] myself on a project of which I am the initiator...[Love’s] annual report has much on sheep yards and dog scalps and makes no mention of the translation work (his or mine) or the issuing of a Hymn Book of thirty Pitjantatjara hymns, and little reference to the school work.’ To Trudinger, the fact that ‘seventy children could now read and write in their own tongue’ was seen by Love as ‘not significant’ whereas the superintendent found it important to note that their advancement in English was ‘disappointing’. \(^{18}\) The politics of hospitality on the larger ‘mission site’ were being displaced by the politics of hostility in the staff room. \(^{19}\)

and the teacher had fired off a pre-emptive shot in the battle by taking his grievances directly to a Board which, it must be said, he seems to have assiduously cultivated quite apart from the good impressions generated by his hard work and achievements in the work of the school.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., Love to Matthews, 5 Oct 1943.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., Folder 1/1939-46: Trudinger to Matthews, 8 Aug 1944. Love’s actual wording of this in the Ernabella Mission Report for the year ending 30 Jun 1944 was: ‘I am not satisfied with the progress in the use of English for the native people, but hope for improvement’: ibid., Folder 2/1938-45.

\(^{19}\) We should note that both Love and Trudinger wanted to give Matthews, and through him the Board, the clear impression that their criticisms of each other were shared by others: possibly a natural defence mechanism in these sorts of situations. Trudinger in his letters to the Secretary often spoke in the plural of ‘our’ difficulties with the autocratic superintendent who does not listen to helpful advice. There is some criticism of Love’s handling of his colleagues in the literature: see, for example, the missionary/tradesman Mr S. Brown in 1943 confided to Matthews that the ‘fellowship’ and ‘atmosphere’ he had enjoyed on other missions was ‘entirely missing’ at Ernabella: ibid., Folder 5: Brown to Matthews, 3 Oct 1943. In his turn, Love attempted to offset any impression that Trudinger may have given that it was Love and Love only against the collective of the staff by forwarding to Matthews letters from two of the staff (one of whom was the aforementioned Brown). I have not seen the letters but their general content may be assumed by Love’s action in providing them to the Board. He would not have done so, he writes, ‘[if you had not] placed me in the position of defendant. It may serve to further resolve any element of doubt you may have had in regard to relations between Trudinger and the rest of the staff, and Trudinger and me...I hope that a kindly conversation may result in a re-adjustment of his attitude, but you, as the Board, had better be prepared for the possibility that he will not re-adjust himself’: ibid., Folder 4/1944*: Love to Matthews, 31 May 1944. Of course, mission sites were not exempt from the normal vicissitudes of ‘office’ or ‘business’ politics, although occasionally one is surprised by the atmosphere of hostility engendered in Christian contact zones, where relationships with the Other in indigenous form are often appreciably more ‘ hospitable’ than those with the Other in missionary colleague form! These problems were not new at Ernabella. Even before Love arrived at the mission, Walter MacDougall, acting superintendent in 1940, advised Matthews that his suggestion of prayer meetings and Bible study for feuding missionaries was not working; they could not agree on what
civilization has come to the people of Ernabella

Love’s response to being told, somewhat peremptorily, of the ‘policy of the school’ was to pen his own version: ‘Ernabella: The Policy of the School’. It was a powerful defence of his position on language at the mission site. He began by saying that after the war, there would be an inevitable increase in the number of white contacts with Ernabella people: ‘civilization has come to the people frequenting Ernabella’. Love put the question of language policy firmly in terms of assisting the Pitjantjatjara ‘meet the impact of civilization’ and the ‘land hunger’ after the war:

I fear that we may have to fight hard to retain the use of the Musgrave Ranges for the aborigines. Already jealous murmurs are heard, asking why blacks should have this good land. The aborigines will have to prove that they are fit to retain their own land. If we can help them to prove it we shall do them a service.

Again, we see the characteristic touch: while ‘on their side’, Love was adamant that indigenous Australians would have to ‘earn’ their place in the new post-war society, even to keep ‘their own land’. Nothing was ever given or taken for free in Love’s moral economy. He conceded the value of the vernacular: ‘We are all agreed that it is a very valuable thing to teach the children to read and write in their own language; they must have the story of Christ in their own tongue, that they can repeat and love to recapitulate...’ He paid tribute to the work of Trudinger in the school. Yet, to survive, the natives needed more:

without English, I cannot see that the school is justified...To me it is depressing to see the children of Ernabella so backward in comparison to the children of our other missions.

Love argued that what was needed was the sort of education that would enable the brightest of the ‘bright boys here’ to ‘stand up and personify the best qualities

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form the meetings should take! MacDougall concluded: ‘I think the best way for the present is to keep them as far away from each other as possible’: ibid., Folder 5: MacDougall to Matthews, 19 Jun 1940.

Ibid., Folder 2/1944: on the back of a copy of the Ernabella Mission Report for the year ending 30 June 1944 is a typed document headed ‘Ernabella. The Policy of the School’ and signed by JRB Love. This is the statement I have used for citing purposes although the original statement was sent by Love to Matthews with his letter of 6 Oct 1943 [see ibid., Folder 4/1943]. Matthews responded to the school policy statement in his letter of 25 October 1943: see below.

of their race, and to prove by their own example that the aborigine has a right to
a place in this land?' However, the superintendent indicated that he did not
want to 'enforce my views on this so important matter' and promised Trudinger
'every cordial encouragement from me to continue it the way he has been doing
in the school.' 22

**a miracle on the mission site**

It is curious that Love's statement engendered little immediate reaction. His
stern judgement of the school and its native language policy - privileged by what
may be called the Ernabella missionary mafia, the Board, Duguid and his
Adelaide Committee, Trudinger and evangelical 'friends of the mission' - must
have cut deeply. Matthews however was as diplomatic as always towards Love,
writing that his statement had been 'greatly appreciated' by the Board: all, he
said, were agreed on 'the aim of our policy, namely, to enable the natives to meet
the impact of our civilization which after the war is bound to be more insistent
and difficult.' On the matter of language policy, Matthews asked Love to work
with Trudinger on determining the 'balance' in the school between the two
languages at issue.23

Such a 'balance', however, was difficult to achieve. Trudinger continued to
express his frustration at Sunday morning prayers and services being in English,
with only the evening service conducted in Pitjantjatjara: 'Even when we have
language fluency [in the vernacular] it is difficult to express some Gospel
truths...but now they are glibly expressed in English...utterly unintelligible to
anyone.' Love's rejoinder that 'they understand a lot more than we think they do'
infuriated the young teacher: 'it is torture to sit through...I cannot attend
another one.'24 He was not alone in his agony. One visitor to the Mission was
also mystified by Love's 'obstinate refusal' to conduct morning prayers in
Pitjantjatjara: 'How can converts be won if there is no understanding?25

22 Ibid.
24 Ibid., Folder 1/1939-1946: Trudinger to Matthews, 1 Mar 1944.
25 Ibid., Wilson to Matthews, 24 Mar 1944. Allan Wilson was a geologist who visited Ernabella on the
invitation of his friend, RM Trudinger. He made a number of critical assessments of Love's administration
of Ernabella, including Love's apparent failure to 'take the advice and helpful criticisms of staff'. His own
Although he never explained himself, it is probable that Love’s preaching in English was a deliberate strategy on his part to conduct the sort of ‘education in English’ that he thought was lacking in the school curriculum. We know from Albrecht’s observations in 1942 that Love was well versed in the language even by then. We also know from the evidence of a visitor in 1943 that Love was explaining Scripture in the native tongue in one-to-one situations with the Pitjantjatjara.26 So it was not from lack of fluency in or knowledge of the local language that Love continued to refuse to use it at service. It is possible that Love may have felt intimidated by Trudinger’s much remarked facility with the native language (Matthews wrote of his ‘genius for language’27) and at least initially was reluctant to preach in Pitjantjatjara. But I think it more likely that Love, a determined and stubborn man, continued to adopt a tactic that accorded with his strategy of preparing the ‘savage’ for the impact of modernity, saving him for civilization as well as saving his soul through the translated Word in his own tongue.

The superintendent and the teacher clashed (as well as occasionally cooperating) on translation work. Love was reluctant to give the younger man the time he wanted to devote to translation, insisting that Trudinger also assist in more general mission work ‘to do justice to the rest of the staff’.28 This brought the response from the ambitious young evangelical that Love’s attitude ‘implied’ that translation work was ‘on a par with the breaking in of horses, or mending gates, or cleaning out the goat yards.’ How could this be as important as ‘research into the mysteries of the language and its texts and chants for an effectual

criticisms of Love should probably be taken in the context of his friendship with Trudinger, whose attitudes they almost exactly reflect. That is not necessarily to say that those criticisms, or some of them, were not valid, although it is tempting to suggest that when subordinate staff complain that ‘helpful advice’ is not taken, it is often because it is their ‘helpful’ advice that is rejected, and it is this that hurts. It is not possible of course to establish any certainty on this matter, but it is my suspicion that this was behind some of the criticism of Love during these years, as well as the genuine ideological or discursive fault lines that existed on the mission site.
27 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 1/1939-46": Matthews to SA Education Department, 4 Jun 1943.

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understanding of the people's heart and mind? Could not this matter be made definitely clear [to Love]?" wondered Trudinger to the Board. Frustration was clearly building on the mission site. Cooperation on the work of Gospel translation was difficult. Trudinger was privately contemptuous of Love's efforts: 'his 'draft' [of the Gospel of Mark] is a travesty of Pitjantjatjara...in parts unintelligible to natives.' While Love was keen to complete the St. Mark translation, Trudinger was sure that it would take longer than Love thought, and it would be preferable to produce something more 'elementary and more immediately useful to the natives' such as a Primer Reader of Bible stories, a small Catechism, and an expanded Hymnal. Cooperation on the joint translation was clearly difficult. In 1945, Trudinger complained of a 'false impression' given in the Presbyterian Church newspaper The Messenger that Love's earlier translation of St. Mark was being 'revised' by Love and Trudinger. The teacher asserted that the result of their joint venture was in fact not 'a mere revision' but 'an entirely new translation':

Mr. Love and I have got on amazingly well in our translation but on the understanding, voiced at the outset, that generally he is the authority on the meaning of the text to be translated, and I have the better knowledge of the language we are translating into.

He conceded that both men had been 'complementary' to each other in this work, and that 'one without the other could not have produced a translation worthy of being printed.' In the event, one might say that it was perhaps a miracle of sorts that a translation by Love and Trudinger of the Gospel of Mark into Pitjantjatjara was published in the year of their Lord 1945.

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29 Ibid., Folder 1/1939-46: Trudinger to Matthews, 1 Mar 1944.
30 Ibid., Trudinger to Matthews, 14 Dec 1944.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., Trudinger to Matthews, 7 Jul 1945.
33 Ibid.
34 Last week I completed the typescript of St. Mark in Pitjantjatjara, to send to Rev G. Anderson by mail leaving here this week via Finke. Mr Trudinger and I have worked on the revision of this through the year, to get it away by the end of the year. The job is done': Love, "Logbook": 30 Dec 1945. The whole area of the dynamics of the translation project, as well as the representations involved in 'converting' the English Bible (itself translated at least once, and that not from the 'original' texts) from a coloniser's language to a colonised one, is a fascinating one: see Anna Johnston, "The book eaters: textuality, modernity, and the London Missionary Society", Semteia (2001): 13-28. Roland Boer notes incidentally in his perceptive examination of early attempts to translate the Bible into Pitjantjatjara that 'Bob Love and Ronald Trudinger seem to have fought bitterly over most of their time together in the 1940s': see Boer, Last Stop, pp. 173-179.
the great compromise

The Board of Missions was eventually forced to accommodate the strongly expressed views of its superintendent on language policy. A compromise was reached. While the native language was to retain its priority, the Board was now convinced that ‘we must do more to prepare these children for the inevitable conflicts with the white population’ and directed that English be taught as a ‘secondary’ language. The Board also suggested that at the ‘tortuous’ English services, at least a prayer should be offered ‘in the vernacular’, and that, pending the translated book or books of the New Testament, that translations of ‘familiar Bible stories’ be made available for ‘the natives’.35

Yet just as this ‘great compromise’ was constructed, the controversy over the vernacular was revived by an intervention by Duguid towards the end of 1944. Love’s comment in the June 1944 Ernabella Report that he was ‘not satisfied with the progress in the use of English by the native people’ was the apparent trigger for Duguid’s reaction.36 Duguid, after all, was the father of the native language policy and it was probably inevitable that he would enter the lists against his superintendent on this issue. It might also be remembered that the underfeeding controversy was brewing at this time so the feisty Duguid was undoubtedly bristling for a fight, although he went about it in a curiously indirect way. He asked the Board of Missions to get answers from Love to four questions he asked.37 Matthews then was given the unenviable task of being the intermediary in this contretemps between the former partners in the imagining and establishment of the mission station. Duguid first asked: ‘as the natives at Ernabella have not been taught English, what does Mr Love wish to convey by writing: ‘I am not satisfied with the progress in the use of English by the native

35 Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 1/1939-46": Matthews to Trudinger, 9 Jun 1944. Trudinger did complain to Matthews a year after the ‘great compromise’ (my phrase) that little had changed: ‘every Sunday morning service... is entirely in English’ and a Board directive that more native hymns be made use of had been ‘refused’ by Love on the ground that (according to the teacher) they did not have the ‘dignity’ of ‘English hymns’: ibid., Trudinger to Matthews, 7 Jul 1945.
37 These questions were contained in a letter [Matthews to Love, 25 Sep 1944] that I have not been able to locate but is referred to by Love in his response of 2 Nov 1944 [see next note]. Duguid’s uncharacteristic indirectness here may be an indication of the deteriorating relationship between the founder of the mission and his superintendent.
people?" Love, in response, reiterated his view that ‘knowledge of English is essential for [the native people’s] progress, in meeting the new conditions of life and contacts with white civilization outside the Mission.” Again, he reflected on his experience at Kunmunya where he claimed that children learnt English easily and quickly:

Yet, after 3 years here, I found almost no progress in this direction, on the part of the children. The young men and women have had to acquire their English as they worked with the rest of the staff, after leaving school. There is a fault somewhere. The average intelligence of the children seems to be equal to that of the tropical tribes. Where is, or was, the fault? I was not satisfied that the children had been getting the right opportunity to acquire a working knowledge of English.”

Duguid then wanted to know how many children on the mission site could read and write in the native tongue. Love’s response, again, was pointed and powerful:

All the children who attend school are gradually learning to do so. This is excellent. To ask two further questions, ‘What can they read?’ and, ‘To whom can they write?’ is to reveal the fact that the gate of knowledge remains closed to the schoolchildren of Ernabella, does it not? This is not to disparage the valuable work done. It is to point out that the children have a right to more.”

The last two questions related to the use of the native language at services: ‘How often is a service conducted wholly in the native tongue?’ to which Love answered, curtly: ‘One Sunday afternoon per month, by Mr. Trudinger.’ And to the query: ‘In what way and in what degree are regular services conducted in the native tongue?’, Love explained:

The remaining Sundays, New Testament lesson and address in the native tongue, by me; singing of one of Mr. Trudinger’s hymns in the native tongue; a reading and psalm in English also. Daily morning prayers: a short prayer in the native tongue, followed by the Lord’s Prayer in English.

Love added, in wry acknowledgement of the difficulties between the superintendent and the teacher: ‘the Lord’s Prayer in the native tongue will be

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39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
spoken when Mr. Trudinger and I can arrive at a rendering that will satisfy us both.\footnote{Ibid.}

In a 'review' of five years of school work, RM Trudinger in June of 1945 expressed satisfaction that the 'original policy' to 'introduce the Christian Gospel...as quickly and as thoroughly as possible' without interfering with 'the tribal habit and habitat of life' had been adhered to 'despite considerable opposition'. The teacher directed another pointed reference at his superintendent's attitudes when he listed the achievements of the school over the period: over two hundred attendees, eighty with some literacy in their language, no deaths or serious illnesses: these results were, he claimed defensively, carefully choosing his words, 'far from disappointing'.\footnote{See n. 18 above.} He anticipated that by 1947 'every family would have a copy of a Gospel and a member able to read it.' He defended the use of the native tongue as the medium for conversion:

> whatever the advisability of English instruction in other realms, the spiritual, being a deep, sacred matter of the inner mind and soul, is only apprehended through the native's habitual thought medium. There is no Divine premium on English.\footnote{Ibid., Folder 2/1938-46: Report on the Ernabella Mission School June 1945 (RM Trudinger).}

To the young evangelical, the primary purpose of the education of 'natives' was to bring forth 'the first fruits of the Gospel teaching here'. It was not 'the making of semi-civilized sophisticates'.\footnote{Ibid.} Despite the 'great compromise' of 1944, the battle lines between discursive combatants on the mission site remained drawn.

**industrial training or the nomadic life**

During 1944, as if it were not enough to have ideological dissension on feeding, rations, payment of wages, and language policies, Love became involved in prickly discussions with Matthews and the Board of Missions regarding appropriate employment for the young people of the mission station. The underfeeding controversy now underway had brought a number of these interrelated issues to the surface. Matthews had put to Love the idea of adding
annexes to the school to train adolescent boys and girls. Love responded negatively to the idea, on the grounds that this 'industrial training' ought to be kept separate from the school and its work. However, Love took issue with the Secretary on the important question he had raised:

You see the great failure of aboriginal missions to find an occupation that the mission-trained men and women could earn money on the Mission. What industry do you visualize for Ernabella? Please do not think me just an obstructionist. Far from it. I want to do every thing possible to elevate our people here. On the other hand, I believe that de-tribalisation will mean extinction. How far do you wish to go in the way of bringing the young people away from their life as nomad hunters?... shall we try and take these youths away from their tribal discipline, and coax them to live at the mission and be fed by the mission? Love conceded that 'it is a difficult problem' to which he had 'given much thought' and he proposed they 'continue the discussion' at a later date. In his reply on behalf of the Board, Mathews said the Board agreed with Love on the question of detribalisation: 'the Board desires Aborigines to be saved and not die out'. But more should be done for adolescents. While the Board agreed that they should retain their nomadic life for as long as possible, important questions had been raised:

if the young are going East and forsaking the nomadic life, and losing their hunting skills, the only people who are concerned to save them, to put something into their life which will meet the unrest or the craving for change or whatever it is which takes them to stations or places east of Ernabella, are the Missionaries at Ernabella. Therefore must not the Mission at Ernabella not try to supply some work- interest or life-interest as means of keeping the young men, particularly, satisfied with the nomadic life and life on Ernabella Mission Station....[But] what if not they are not satisfied with nomadic life? Where do we begin to meet their needs? What are those needs?

The Board wondered whether Ernabella could be more fully developed as a sheep station to provide employment and 'interest' to the young Aborigines, especially the males who, after their period of initiation when they were 'lost' to the Mission,

45 'My own concern is for the adolescents, male and female; there seems so little we can do for them to bridge the area between their own tribal life and the new life': ibid., Folder 4/1944: Matthews to Love, 8 Jun 1944.
46 Ibid., Love to Matthews, 31 May 1944.
were able to return to normal life within the tribe and the Mission? Did they retain their skills in hunting? Could the Mission teach them other things?
Matthews explained to Love that the Board and he were simply asking questions: 'Perhaps they are the wrong questions. But they are asked to discover the best policy for Ernabella as a Mission Station and the best means to carry it out."

Matthews was sufficiently concerned about the problem of 'adolescent employment' and Love's apparent position on the matter to write to Dr. Ronald Trudinger, the teacher's father who conducted a medical patrol of Ernabella in 1944, that 'Love contends that there is no industry we can establish at Ernabella to absorb the young men especially.' However, Matthews insisted that 'we should arouse the creative faculty in them.' He thought it may be easier to initiate 'work' among the young indigenous females, as 'they are not secluded as the men are' [referring to the male initiation period] and suggested that the mission 'should start some hand-craft work among them.'

**the future of Ernabella**

The Board wanted to know what Love's 'model' was for the future of Ernabella. To answer the Board, Love penned his 'Policy of Ernabella' in 1944. Prefacing his remarks with the observation we have already noted that the missionary had a 'special duty' to save the race 'from extinction', he put forward a complicated vision that held two seemingly incompatible goals together in what Matthews came to see as a sort of unstable tension. He wished to retain the traditional nomadic life for the native at Ernabella: 'All people at Ernabella are nomadic.'

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48 Ibid.
49 Dr. Trudinger (my grandfather) was a Australian medical missionary of considerable experience in the Sudan and some in Central Australia, assisting on occasion with the 'medical patrols' at Ernabella.
50 Ibid., Folder 2/1939-1946: Matthews to Dr. Trudinger, 4 Aug 1944. The suggestion regarding craft-work was in fact adopted, initially from the late 1940s under June Trudinger (Mr. Trudinger’s wife from 1948, and my mother), and then with considerable success from 1954 when Winifred Hilliard came to the Mission beginning her long and distinguished service as the art and craft manager/advisor until 1986: see Hilliard, *The People In Between*; see also (compiled by) Ute Eickelkamp, 'don't ask for stories': *The Women from Ernabella and Their Art* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1999); and now see David Kaus, *Ernabella batiks in the Hilliard Collection of the National Museum of Australia* (National Museum of Australia Press: Canberra, 2004).
None stay here for a long time. Let them continue to be nomadic.\textsuperscript{52} He wished to continue the feeding regime extant at Ernabella; rations to the needy, food and goods exchanged for scalps, reliance on bush tucker when available, and mission assistance during drought and famine. At the mission and in the hills of the Reserve, they would be protected from the corrosive effects of white civilisation. As regards employment, he did not think that Ernabella would be able to employ permanently more than a comparatively small proportion of the people:

\begin{quote}
They do not want to be permanently employed. Let them go off to the bush again, and give them opportunities to take their share of the work done for the good of each. My present system is 3 months work, then off bush.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

Love asked, can a nomadic hunter be a Christian? Along with his affirmative answer to this, he cautioned, especially in regard to Matthews’s adolescents:

\begin{quote}
Their years of adolescence are under the charge of their tribal elders rather than of the missionaries. I think we must acquiesce, for some years to come, at least, and never seek to break the authority of their elders: but in due time to win the elders, too, to the way of Christ. I think I could work up enthusiasm and have a large number of men and women baptised soon. And what would be the good of that? This plan is not spectacular...but we may, by restraint and Christian example, gradually guide the tribe upward, gradually to drop some of the coarser features of tribal life, instill a hope of higher living, and not bring the tribe crashing down into destruction and extinction by making them dependents of the Mission, feeding them all in return for a show of conformity to religious teaching.\textsuperscript{54}
\end{quote}

The other side of Love’s vision, balancing the idealism of his ‘nomadic’ and sheltered future for the Aborigines of the Musgraves, was a tough-minded and realistic view that the indigenes had to develop the means to withstand the potentially fatal impacts of the encroaching European civilization. One means lay in learning English. Another lay in utilizing their land sufficiently in order to ‘earn the right’ to retain it against what Love knew to be a voracious and ruthless civilization. It was in this context that Love came to believe, after the Board, that the development of a sheep industry was the appropriate economic ‘model’ for

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
the mission, but always subordinate to while complementing the hunter-gatherer economy of the Aborigines.55 Love’s ‘model’ for Ernabella was for the retention of the traditional economy only as far as possible and only for as long as possible. He always conceded that the impact of white civilization was inevitable and that the black man would need to adapt to that impact if he was to survive. In a letter to Matthews just before his departure from Ernabella in 1946, he wrote:

If the people are to survive, they have to be prepared to adapt their lives to the impact of civilization, [and] under the guidance of the Mission, to hold their country for themselves. Failing this, the country is in danger of being alienated, and the native people dispossessed.56

a pastorale of productivity

About this time, as Love and Matthews were debating the future prospects of the mission, and as if to proclaim the possibility of Love’s vision, shearing was in full swing and the superintendent enthused that ‘Ernabella is a hive of activity’. The woolshed was ‘the best in the country’; the wool was dirty but plentiful (‘it is wonderful what sheep have produced on 2 inches of rain’); all the staff were sharing in the extra work; ‘several of our [Aboriginal] men are shearing and shearing well’; after school, the woolshed was invaded by happy schoolboys: ‘the work will be their most likely source of civilised living in years to come’. The scene is represented by Love in a letter to Matthews as a pastorale of purposive activity, interrupted only occasionally: ‘a kangaroo came hopping by, and all shed hands rushed out to try to catch and kill it.’ The whole exercise, as well as being ‘our annual revenue producing time’ was also ‘our most useful training time for our men, who are very proud to be earning some money, to spend at their own choice.’57 Over eighty bales were produced at the end of the exercise, and Love declared it a huge success: ‘I look forward to the day when we shall not employ any outside labour for this work, but let our native men do it all, as they

55 Love eventually advised the Board that Ernabella should carry about 5,000 sheep. He also thought the blocks between Ernabella and the Reserve should be stocked and worked from the mission station, solely for the ‘future living of Aborigines’, with profits retained within the mission for its improvement. Love encouraged the Board to continue to make every endeavour ‘to settle this question of the three blocks – and to have them held in perpetuity for the Aborigines.’ He saw the sheep industry as being ‘the salvation of the people from an industrial point of view’: ibid., Folder 4/1946: Love to Matthews, 14 Feb 1946.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., Love to Matthews, 25 Sep 1944.

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will in time...[the] men are getting more and more skilled and realizing the value of steady work on a well-paid job.\textsuperscript{58}

\textbf{not the good shepherd but merely a keeper of sheep}

Despite the shining optimism of this sunny 'pastorale', storm clouds were gathering for Love. The contradictions and complexities within the discourses on Aborigines that flowed between the metropolitan centres and the isolated mission station and its different missionaries were beginning to take their toll. There had always been problems with staff members. The schoolteacher was not the only one with grievances. Stephen Ward had been at Ernabella from 1939 to 1943. He had been employed to look after the stock. He felt a parental affinity with the people: 'I have a very very soft spot for these people. They recognize that, as children do, and I can do almost what I like with them.' He had felt the powerful influence of Duguid in the first year or two: 'I seemed to be battling against Dr. Duguid so much.'\textsuperscript{59} He confided to Matthews in 1940 that Ernabella had 'really very few troubles' except for the ones 'that have their source in Adelaide'.\textsuperscript{60} Then, in 1941, came Love with his tight, stern administration, with lines of responsibility clearly delineated and closely monitored. It was eventually too much for Ward. In his 1943 resignation letter to the Board, he wrote sadly:

\begin{quote}
May I say that when first coming here, my chief thought was that I might be able to tell these people the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I find that I cannot do that. I have come to be merely a keeper of sheep, and I have no wish to stay longer.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

\textbf{The crow sends the rain}

Another who found 'a missionary vision' lacking at the mission was Mr. R. Henderson, who was appointed as a missionary assistant (tradesman) from 1945. His early suggestion of a weekly prayer meeting for the staff was apparently rejected. By 1946, he was pessimistic regarding the prospects for

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.; Love to Matthews, 11 Oct 1944.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., Folder 5: Ward to Matthews, 19 Jun 1940.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., Ward to Matthews, 24 Mar 1940.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., Ward to Matthews, 25 Jan 1943. Matthews, in advising Love of Ward's resignation, noted that it was not unexpected given his 'hopes of direct evangelistic work among Aborigines.' Perhaps wanting to make further a point to Love, he added gently: 'Our first concern always is not the sheep, but the Aborigines, but we are thankful to have the sheep': ibid., Folder 4/1943: Matthews to Love, 12 Feb 1943.
christianization of the native: ‘the knowledge of God as the One who forgives and finally merits judgement on sin is, I am sorry to say, yet to be learnt. I think we are still at the starting point despite the previous years of labour.’ While he acknowledged that ‘Mr. Trudinger has done his best to ever maintain his testimony’, he feared that ‘the conviction of sin’ on the part of the native ‘is yet future’. As final evidence of indigenous incomprehension: ‘Not long ago my house girl who has been here since Mr. Taylor’s day told me that the crow sends the rain.’

Some saw in the brush and spinifex structure that was Ernabella’s first ‘church’ a (bad) sign of the times. One tradesman at the mission called it ‘a disgrace to ourselves and an insult to God’ and complained to Love, who pointed out that the structure was only temporary. This man also complained to Matthews about the Sunday services being in English: ‘Can we be said to be preaching the Gospel...when what is said does not convey one single idea to those present?’

A moderate-evangelical divide had developed at Ernabella mission. By 1945, the evangelicals were strengthening their forces behind Trudinger. The Board had positioned him as the successor to Love and even Love himself, tired and disillusioned by 1945, seemed so resigned to the fact that he had suggested the school teacher to the Board as ‘the man for the position’. It was looking very like the evangelicals were winning the day at Ernabella.

**enforcing loyalty pledges**

Matters came to a head during 1945 as the repercussions of the underfeeding controversy continued to reverberate through the Ernabella missionary community. Duguid had not been satisfied at Love’s responses to his ‘four questions’. The Adelaide Committee, chaired by Duguid, had asked to meet with the Board, and Matthews and two other Board members had flown to Adelaide. Matthews communicated the Committee’s concerns to Love. These included matters such as sheep quality, whether numbers at the school were dropping, and whether numbers of scalps had fallen. The most sensitive issue raised was

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62 Ibid., Folder 5: Henderson to Matthews, 31 May 1946.
63 Ibid., Brown to Matthews, 10 Jan 1944 and 16 Jan 1944.
64 Ibid., Matthews to Wright, 3 Dec 1945.
the language policy. Concerns had again been raised about the use of English at services. The Board had even been asked if it was prepared to order the discontinuance of daily services in English. It refused to do so. However, Matthews indicated that the Board had re-affirmed its policy that as the missionaries at Ernabella became more proficient in the native language the daily services should be increasingly in the native language: 'That is how the Board interpreted its discussions with you during your furlough.' Matthews concluded awkwardly that he thought 'the Adelaide Committee wants to be helpful and constructive' and yet 'it is difficult for us all to know how we can be most helpful...'

Love immediately levelled his weapons at the Duguid-led Committee and accused it of having gone outside its 'proper function of auxiliary to the Board of Missions.' He advised Matthews that, on receipt of his letter, he had insisted on a loyalty pledge from his staff at a meeting at Ernabella. Love had suggested at the meeting that if any of his colleagues felt unable to give him their 'loyalty and cooperation', they might seek 'a more congenial field of labour'. The staff had apparently assured Love of their eagerness to co-operate, even, he added pointedly, Mr. RM Trudinger. Love then proceeded to answer all the queries put to him, and elaborated, again, on the matter of the use of English at services:

Here I think we come to the chief difference between me and some others. We're back where we were last year when I met the Board...I repeat: The people must have the Gospel in their own tongue. They are getting it. English is indispensable. Without English the school would be futile. I repeat: this is not to decry good work done, but to insist on its inadequacy.

the burden is passed

Love now fired off a last plea to the Board of Missions: 'Now, brethren, will you decide by whose experience, knowledge and judgement you shall be guided in the

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66 Ibid., Love to Matthews, 28 Mar 1945.
67 Being an obvious 'suspect', Trudinger apparently had indicated to Love that he had not been present at the crucial meeting of the Adelaide Committee on December 8, and Love noted that 'he has been loyal since receiving the instructions of the Board last year, carrying out the instructions to teach English': ibid.
68 Ibid.
management of Ernabella? But in fact he had had enough. Soon after penning these words, Love decided to retire from the mission field. He notified Matthews and Duguid (on what he noted characteristically was the 30th Anzac Day) that he would make this term his last. He calculated that he had done ‘about 30 years of work for the Aborigines.’ His wife had been with him for 23 years. The time had come ‘to hand on the burden to another man’ and he wished to spend the rest of his life ‘working for my own race’. He was giving long notice so ‘the work of Ernabella may go on without any break in continuity.’ His work was done. The ‘work of Ernabella’ would go on, attempting to find the difficult balance Love had been seeking, between protecting the Aborigines from the usurping white world while preparing them for entry into it.

The Board, according to Matthews, heard the decision with ‘surprise and shock’ and with ‘great regrets’, and expressed the hope that Love would reconsider his decision. It passed a Resolution to this effect. Matthews told Love that ‘a heavy-hearted group of men’ had passed it: ‘we knew that you had come to your decision because of two people with whom you have been closely associated in the work at Ernabella.’ He also noted that some on the Board wished to ‘get rid of these two if they were ‘to cost us our Superintendent’ at Ernabella. However, this did not get majority support:

What we all felt about it was that we all disassociated ourselves from those who, in your judgment, regarded you as a failure at Ernabella. We were all emphatic, and indeed some were angry, about such a judgment. We all felt further that these two had no right to direct the work and policy of the Board and resented that they should have such power as to cost us a Superintendent in whom the Board had the utmost confidence.

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., Love to Matthews 25 Apr 1945.
71 Ibid., Matthews to Love, 4 Jun 1945. In the curious and cumbersome way in which communications were conducted between these mid-century missionaries, Matthews swiftly follows this response to a defining moment in the life of the Mission with the granting of a wish by Love to change the mission truck from dual back tyres to single back tyres!
72 Ibid., Matthews to Love, 30 Jul 1945. The ‘re-constitution of the Mission Stations under the Board’s control’ referred to in the Resolution was in fact a strategy partly designed to reduce the interventionist power of the Adelaide Committee, which was now perceived as a major factor in Love’s resignation. In his response, Love noted this ‘with relief and full agreement’: ‘Only in this way will you be able to get the work of the Mission carried on’: ibid., Love to Matthews, 10 Aug 1945.
73 Ibid., Matthews to Love, 30 Jul 1945.
Again, Matthews passed on the Board’s wishes that Love’s decision would be reconsidered and withdrawn. Love responded gracefully that he had read the 30 July letter with his wife and found it difficult to answer. He was deeply grateful for the expression of confidence. He acknowledged that ‘the immediate cause’ of his resignation was his ‘inability to win the complete confidence and full cooperation of two men’ but that behind it lay a realization that he was tired, the physical demands of the job had become too heavy, and that he and his wife ‘have done about as much as we can in this field.’ He was loath to leave the Board ‘with any unfair burden’ but his decision was final.

In the event, Love left Ernabella earlier than he had intended. The Presbyterian Church of South Australia honoured the exemplary missionary with election in 1946 to its highest post of Moderator. This was the position Duguid had held some eleven years earlier and which he had utilized, with Love’s support, to push through the establishment of Ernabella Mission against the resistance of Flynn’s forces. He bid ‘an affectionate farewell’ to the Secretary of the Board of Missions, HC Matthews, whom he had known for many years, and who was himself retiring from his post. Love’s final words to Matthews catch the man and his discourse:

\[
\text{I hope you have many happy years down by the sea, to watch the ships come and go, carrying future missionaries going out to duty and coming home to their own people for refreshment, and to turn over many happy recollections.}^{75}
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\[\text{JRB Love had been ‘out on duty’ and now he was going home ‘to his own people’.}^{76}\]

\[^{74}\text{Ibid., Love to Matthews, 10 Aug. 1945.}^{75}\text{Ibid., Love to Matthews, 12 Mar 1946.}^{76}\text{JRB Love was not destined to see out the full year of his Moderatorship. He died after a short illness in 1946.}\]
Conclusion

Using in particular the life and thought of the missionary JRB Love, and the mission site itself of Ernabella, as the principal points of reference, this thesis has examined the discourse and praxis of Central Australian missionaries in the 1930s and 1940s. The treatment of the missionaries has been approached from the perspective of what I have called, following Levinas and Derrida, a politics of hospitality: that is, that some missionaries approached the indigenous Other in a spirit of hospitality and generosity, despite the larger context of a ruthless colonial dispossession and appropriation of indigenous land, and that in turn indigenous people 'welcomed' the missionaries.

I have argued that while the mission sites of Central Australia contained significant elements, as we have seen, of conflictual, power-laden and paternalistic relations designed to control and re-form the indigenous body, the evidence of both discourse and praxis calls for a reassessment of postcolonial and postmodern readings of mission sites as places predominantly of domination and hegemony. In line with this argument I have also read the contact zones that we have looked at as shedding light on the question of power relations between white and black. We are still too often dazzled or angered by the presumptions and power of the colonial enterprise to see that power relations on these sorts of sites could be more diffused and complex than was once thought, and that the dynamics of power could and did run both ways. I suggest that the existence of these separate (although not necessarily equal) sets of power relations on the mission site may have allowed the quotidian negotiation of a politics of hospitality, already present at the initial face to face encounter when it was understood by the indigenes that the missionaries had not 'come to kill'.

I have also argued that the orthodox missionary imperative of salvation was, in a sense, 'converted' by significant Central Australian missionaries from a notion that carried a principal freight of Christian or spiritual salvation to one that focused more on a physical 'saving' of the indigenous body and the indigenous collective, and that we are forced to take cognisance of the urgency and priority
the Central Australian missionaries, even theologically conservative Lutherans such as FW Albrecht, put on 'saving' the indigenous body and tribe. One of the early Hermannsburg missionaries succinctly articulated these notions when he described the mission's objective as the salvation of the Aborigine 'in time and in eternity'. The discourse of missionaries such as Love and Albrecht, and that of important contributors to the language and practice of the Central Australian mission site such as Duguid, differed significantly from the more general settler discourse (partially typified in this study by John Flynn) by representing the Aboriginal Other as someone for whom to take responsibility. These men felt profoundly that dispossession had created a powerful moral imperative to 'save' the Aborigine, whether it was Albrecht's cry of 'have we a right to dispossess the Aborigine?' or Love's justification of the dispossession but his coruscating sense of the obligation conditional on that dispossession.

According to Emmanuel Levinas, responsibility in its most elementary, originary form begins in the encounter with 'the face of the Other'. The other is encountered 'neither as a phenomenon nor as a being (to be mastered and possessed) but as a 'face'', something unknowable; in Levinasian terms, infinite in its alterity. The alternative to this transformation of vision, the avaricious gaze turning into generosity, is theendeavour to absorb or appropriate the other, constructing what Levinas calls an economy or imperialism 'of the Same'. The originary language spoken at the encounter is a 'discours before discourse, a founding conversation', a language or relationship with the other that maintains the distance of infinite separation 'yet without this distance destroying this relation and without this relation destroying this distance. It is in this 'earlier' sense of discourse that Levinas can say that 'the face speaks' [le visage parle]. This originary language or relation is characterised by non-comprehension and non-reciprocity; it is a founding speech, it is speech with 'the stranger, the destitute, the proletarian'. The other is 'always, in relation to me, without

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1 Louis Schulze, cited in Radford, "Aspects of the Social History of Hermannsburg", in Hardy, Megaw, and Megaw, eds., The Heritage of Namatjira, p. 68.
3 See Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 39.
4 Ibid., p. 41; see also Robbins, "Visage, Figure", p. 138.
5 Levinas, Totality and Infinity, p. 75.
country, stranger to all possession, dispossessed and without dwelling. I am responsible to the other, responsible for him even to the point where I must ‘feed him with bread from my own mouth’. Above all, I am responsible for him in the sense that the other cannot be left to die alone, which is to say that I must stay with him and always do more until there is no more to do.

I have found the Levinasian construction of originary encounter hauntingly resonant of the ‘face to face’ encounter of the Central Australian missionaries with ‘their’ Aborigines. I am not suggesting that a historicization of an ethics of responsibility is unproblematic, or is on all fours with Levinas’s more abstract and philosophical articulation of the face to face encounter. To suggest that we can transfer the Levinasian encounter fully to an analysis of the historical conditions and context of colonial, early to middle 20th century Central Australia would be to invite sentimentality as well as understate the complex and contesting forces at work on the mission site. The ‘missionary struggle with complexity’ was often a losing battle. Missionaries were also at times inevitably, even willingly, complicit in the introduction of European colonizing and imperialist practices that tended towards the oppression of a subaltern people. The politics of hospitality also included strains of the politics of dominance and hegemony. The avaricious gaze did not turn always or fully into Levinasian generosity. The imperialism of the self, the desire to master and possess, was a political and historical condition that often came with a European mother’s milk. The desire to re-form the female indigenous body, for example, to wrench it from kinship and cultural complexities that were little studied and less understood by missionaries, to keep it ‘clean’ and safeguarded from male abuse, both black and white, was a central concern of these white, middle class, Christian, male protectors of female virtue and purity. White missionaries were ineluctably

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7 Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, p. 142. See also Oona Ajzenstat, *Driven Back to the Text*.

8 Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, p. 175.


caught in the matrices of discourses of racial hierarchies and differentiations, of
blood and whiteness that characterised the white Australian settler culture. In
relation to the troubled question of the removal of ‘half-caste’ children, Love
himself seemed unable to break free of these Foucaultian discourses that
structured or ‘programmed’, in a sense, what he said and thought about
Aboriginal people.

Given all these qualifications, there remains a part of the Central Australian
missionary experience which, when read metaphorically and provocatively,
resonates with the Levinasian language of hospitality, of the incapability of
‘reaching out to the other with empty hands’, of the sense of the other as
unknowable, as unaccountably different, with the ‘speech between the strangers’
often incomprehensible due to the ‘space’ between them, of the inability of
cultures to understand each other, of the sense of being guests in their own
homes, of inviting someone who has already invited them, ‘the subject both a
guest and a hostage, someone who is, before every invitation, elected, invited,
and visited in his home as in the home of the other, who is in his own home in
the home of the other’,\(^{11}\) of seeing the prohibition of murder in the face of the
other, of feeding ‘dispossessed men without food’ as an originary ethical impulse,
of being unable to leave the other to die alone, of the avaricious gaze turning into
generosity, of the gesture of reparation, of the conversion of salvation.

These words, too, from a hermeneutics of Levinas, also resonate, as if from the
mouth or pen of an exemplary missionary: *Face to face with this other who
suddenly appears before me – this stranger for whom I, too, am and shall always
remain a stranger, this being who by the appeal of his naked and vulnerable face
solicits, even condemns, me to take responsibility for him, and calls me into a
relation where strangeness and intimacy, distance and proximity coexist.*\(^{12}\)

Emmanuel Levinas once wrote that ‘it is through the condition of being hostage
that there can be in the world pity, compassion, pardon, proximity – even the

\(^{12}\) Richard Stamelman, “The Strangeness of the Other”, pp. 120-121.

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little there is.\textsuperscript{13} The word 'hostage', though it might strike us at first as strange in this context, embodies something of the nature of the identification a missionary like Love had with Aboriginal people: almost against his own instincts, his desire to be with 'his own people' in their civilised whiteness, he was hostage ('condemned') to a strong, almost inexorable, sense of obligation and duty, of responsibility born as much of an awareness of what 'his own people' had done to 'the blacks' as of his Christian faith. He was captured, as were Albrecht and Duguid in their different ways, by the obligation to save in time as well as eternity, and held fast by the burden of that responsibility. And the weight of the burden was augmented by its vicarious quality: the responsibility was taken on behalf of a nation of which Love was (strangely) both representative and a representative.

There is finally one more matter to deal with in this thesis. My father, Ronald Martin Trudinger, did (eventually) succeed JRB Love as the superintendent of Ernabella Mission Station in 1949, the year that I was born and began the first of my eight years on that mission site. RM Trudinger had been the first white teacher at the Mission. He was the one who had first met the Pitjantjatjara in that liminal space, the creek, the karu, where both black and white had begun learning from and about each other. The sense of responsibility that this thesis suggests was present in the Central Australian missionary experience was, in the event, a layered and finely balanced phenomenon, often incorporating discordant strands, paternalism, social and cultural superiority, bewilderment and incomprehension, a complex of desires to possess and control and exercise power. The possibility always existed that these discordant, ethnocentric and egocentric elements might come to predominate, that responsibility could turn into something else, perhaps more resembling its opposite. That this happened, on other mission stations, in other ways, is uncontested. In any case, the facts are that in 1957, after a hurriedly convened sub-committee at Ernabella of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, which included Dr. Duguid, my father was forced to resign his superintendency and, later his ministry, and leave the Mission. This followed his admission to a number of serious allegations involving

\textsuperscript{13} Levinas, \textit{Otherwise than Being}, p. 117.
sexual misconduct with Aboriginal women at Ernabella. He served three months in a Port Augusta gaol for an offence under a South Australian Criminal Act. He then commenced another life in Sydney with his wife and family, and later in England. As far as I know, he never spoke openly about this part of his experience at Ernabella to anyone. It was as if it had been erased from memory. By such means, and others, he survived a downfall so humiliating and public that it would very likely have broken a more sensitive man. It is probably idle to do so, but on occasion I wonder if my father ever thought in his later life of the exemplary missionary and whether, if he had taken the advice offered by him, things might have turned out differently.

In 1987, and in a number of subsequent years before he died in 2002, my father returned to Ernabella on the invitation of senior people in the indigenous community, and assisted with translation and gardening projects. This invitation demonstrated something that has been displayed many times in the history of over two hundred years of the face to face encounter of European and indigenous Australians, that is, the capacity of Aboriginal people for toleration and forgiveness, the capacity to generate a politics of hospitality with the white people that far outweighed, on any reckoning, the meagre and isolated bundles of similar virtues occasionally offered to them by these Civilised and Christian intruders.
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