

Kormilda

the way to tomorrow?

Elizabeth Sommerlad



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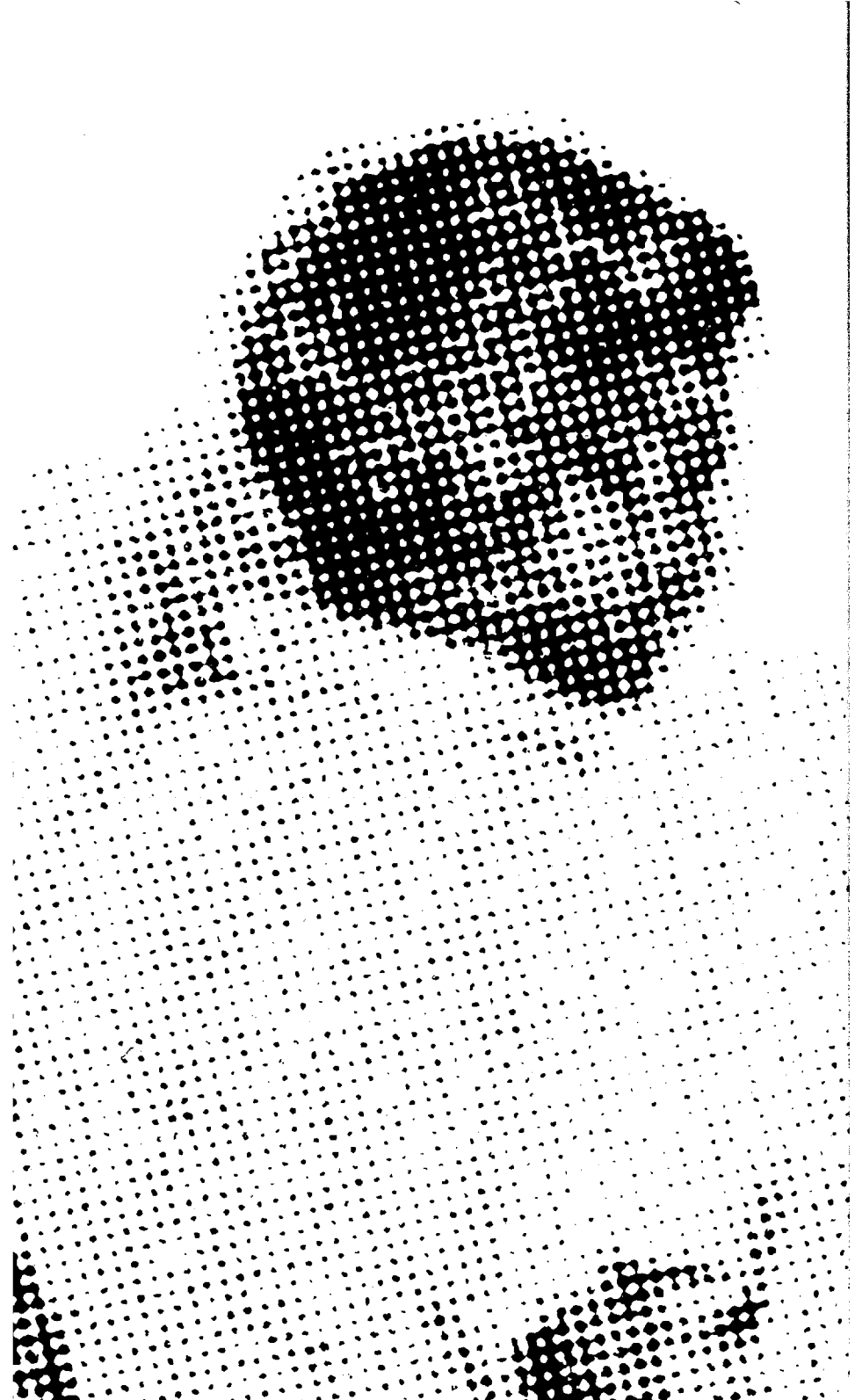
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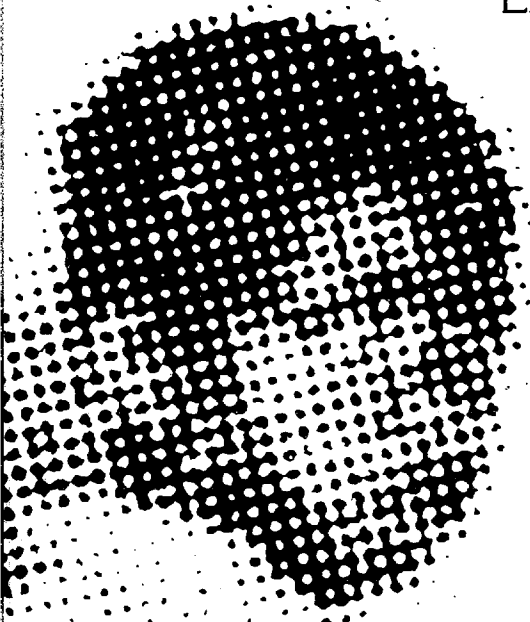


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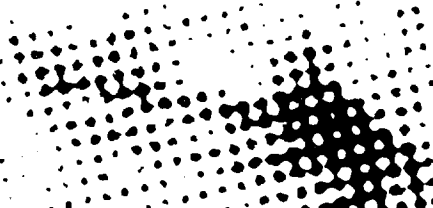
a study in Aboriginal
education

Elizabeth Sommerlad



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Preface

This book has been some time in preparation. It began in 1969 when I was a research student at the Australian National University, searching for a problem of some social significance to study for three years. Conversations with educational administrators in the Northern Territory led to the selection of the adjustment of Aboriginal students in a cross-cultural institution.

Since completing the study in 1972, I have continued to be involved in teaching and research on Aborigines. One project was a study of the community development process at Hermannsburg; more recently I have been involved in programs in continuing education for whites who are working with Aborigines and attempting to understand changing policies and their role in the process of self-determination and to acquire new skills which increase their effectiveness in this new role. My work in the Centre for Continuing Education at the Australian National University has enabled me to keep in touch with Aboriginal people and to develop further ideas which are incorporated in this book.

In 1975, I participated in a study (Duke and Sommerlad, 1976) which indicated that Aboriginal people have already begun to articulate their objectives for education and to choose the model they consider most appropriate to their needs, that of 'deschooling'. Discussions with Aborigines and whites working in an Aboriginal context indicate that most Aboriginal communities are rejecting current provision and seeking a form of education different from that of the dominant society. Their growing concern to reassert their identity and retain cultural values and patterns of behaviour has been accompanied by a rejection of western education, particularly in a form that removes their children from the community for considerable periods of time. They want education that places Aboriginal culture and values at the core, supplementing it by basic skills required for coping with the dominant society — most particularly oral English, reading, writing and numeracy.

Generally, Aborigines want their children to be educated in their home communities. This basic education would be accompanied by a range of vocational training opportunities made available through on-the-job

training and decentralised courses. They recognise that certain skills required by the community can only be learned in institutions of the dominant society and involve interaction with whites, but they emphasise that the community should select the students to follow such courses. The principal criterion for selection would not be academic merit but a strong sense of identity and community commitment. In this way, students would be likely to return to their community to apply their skills for the benefit of the community, and not be alienated from the people.

Many people contributed towards this book. I particularly wish to acknowledge the help of administrators in the former Welfare Branch in the Northern Territory, especially those in the Education Section. They were eager and concerned that a study of this nature should be undertaken, and provided every assistance and encouragement along the way, despite criticisms I levelled against them. Most people working for Aboriginal advancement are dedicated to amelioration. My criticisms are not of them personally, but rather of an educational philosophy that reflects values widely held in the dominant society. It is these values that I challenge.

Many ideas incorporated here emerged during informal discussions of wide-ranging issues with colleagues at the Centre. I wish to thank them for the insights that, often unwittingly, they provided, and for being a sounding board for my own thoughts. Chris Duke, in particular, gave me much encouragement and performed a useful editor's task. But for him I probably would never have finished this book. As a research student in the Department of Psychology, I also received generous help from Dr Middleton in the final stages of thesis writing. I wish to thank Edna Duncan for being so patient with me over the continual changes I made to the text, and for typing the manuscript in record time.

Last, but certainly not least, I am very appreciative of all the staff at Kormilda College who tolerated me for a year. Most of all, I want to say thank you to the pupils at Kormilda who accepted me as their friend and who enabled me to gain a much better understanding of, and intense admiration for, the Aboriginal people.

E.S.

Contents

	Page
Preface	v
1 Introduction	1
2 Aboriginal life in the Northern Territory	21
3 Objectives of education for tribal Aborigines	48
4 Social structure of Kormilda College	59
5 Life in a cross-cultural institution	85
6 Conflict in identity and maladjustment of students	95
7 Case studies	102
8 Symptoms of stress	117
9 Some educational implications	127
10 Alternative models of education	145
Appendices	
1 Home communities of students	165
2 Measuring instruments	167
3 Total enrolments at Kormilda 1968 — 1970	175
Bibliography	176
Index	186

1 Introduction

The concept of Kormilda

Kormilda signifies 'the way to tomorrow' for the elite group of full-blood Aboriginal adolescents who reach secondary education. The problem confronting educationists is to prepare these students for a tomorrow that lies in the white man's world without destroying their Aboriginal identity, which is rooted in the past and is expressed through values diametrically opposed to those of the white society and its stress on achievement.

The problem is not readily solved, however, and Kormilda is about the conflict Aboriginal students attending the College experience in trying to reconcile the opposing value systems. It is about the crisis in identity between black and white that often results in their becoming marginal members of both societies. It is also a commentary on education as an agent of social change that fails to enhance self-identity and potential for growth and development and abandons its learners in a state of confusion and self-doubt.

The problems of identity are not faced only by students at Kormilda; they confront most Aboriginal children living in communities designed to ease their transition into the dominant society through adoption of its values, behaviour patterns and social structures. Such problems are exacerbated in the context of Kormilda College, however, since emphasis is on more rapid and total resocialisation into an alien society.

The concept of Kormilda originated in 1961-2 when the then Director of Welfare, Mr Harry Giese, believed in the need to establish a boarding school in Darwin — basically to remove the potential secondary pupil from the reactionary influence of his or her parents. This notion of removal from the parents is an age-old one, going back to Governor Macquarie's day. The *raison d'être* of Kormilda is therefore not new.

Kormilda is only one of three residential colleges for Aboriginal students in the Northern Territory. It was the first such college to be established and took its first intake of students from communities throughout the Territory in 1967. In recent years, it has become more a regional college as students from distant areas have attended the two newer colleges situated at Alice Springs (Yirara) and Nhulumbuy

(Dhupuma). The majority of students attending Kormilda have received primary education in their home communities, transferring to the College at about thirteen to pursue their studies. Some students attend the local community high school while others follow courses with a strong emphasis on vocational skills at the College itself.

Most of the students enrolled at Kormilda have been socialised into an Aboriginal culture that retains distinct traditional elements and a life-style very different from that of the dominant white society. There are certainly wide differences between backgrounds of students from the various communities; there are nevertheless many cultural patterns in common. Most students have had limited contact with whites before coming to Kormilda and for most of them it is the first time they have had any meaningful contact with Aborigines from distant communities. For most, English is a second language rarely, if ever, used in the home situation. Many of their parents speak only Aboriginal dialects and have had no formal education to provide them with basic literacy skills. Kinship remains an important organisational aspect of the students' lives and each individual has a 'skin' or subsection name, which defines his relationship to others in his clan. Even in western settings avoidance taboos and reciprocal obligations continue to be observed by many. Traditional beliefs about magic exert a powerful influence, even among those who have been exposed to contact with white missionaries for nearly a century. The life-style, too, of students coming to Kormilda is very different from that of the dominant society and many students have to cope with wearing pyjamas and sleeping in beds for the first time in their lives. The ritual involved with life in an institution like Kormilda is very new and often frightening and the students are frequently unprepared.

Changing concepts of education

Education has traditionally been regarded as a major agent of change, particularly in a cross-cultural context. This role has been considered both legitimate and necessary if minority group members are to have educational equality with members of the dominant society. Such a view of education is inherent in the compensatory education programs popular in the 1960s. They were designed to enable 'disadvantaged' or 'culturally deprived' groups to acquire the aptitudes and attitudes necessary for school success. These terms assume the omnipotent position of the middle-class, white, protestant, Anglo-Saxon culture in determining educational objectives and practices. As Bernstein (1970:344) comments:

'Compensatory education' implies that something is lacking in the family, and so in the child. As a result the children are unable to benefit from schools.

It follows, then, that the school has to 'compensate' for the something which is missing in the family, and the children are looked at as deficit systems. If only the parents were interested in the goodies we offer, if only they were like middle class parents then we could do our job. Once the problem is seen implicitly in this way, then it becomes appropriate to coin the terms 'cultural deprivation', 'linguistic deprivation' and so on. And then these labels do their own sad work.

Much of the research in this area has been focused on the search for a single unit of cognitive activity or a simple cultural aspect that can be remedied through action programs to 'upgrade' children from a subcultural group to the major cultural group. For example, 'linguistic deprivation' has frequently been singled out and experimental projects have been carried out in pre-schools in fringe-dwelling Aboriginal communities to improve language capacity and conceptual thinking (Moffit and Nurcombe, 1971)

Ciborowski and Cole (1974:36) argue strongly that searches for specific 'incapacities' and 'deficiencies' are a waste of time: 'what we are faced with is not some specific deficiency occasioned by some specific cognitive and/or cultural unit, we are indeed faced with a highly complex interaction of culture and cognition that exists between the schoolroom and real life experiences of children'. They suggest that rather than seeking causes of failure at school in the individual or in the home, attention should be directed towards the internal organisation and the educational context of the school. The school's subject matter and activities must deal with some of the same aspects of social and physical reality that the pupils confront outside it. Philp (1968:22) also makes this point:

If the child's equipment fits in with the school's expectations of him, with its demands on him, then there is congruence, and other things being equal . . . the probability of learning is high. If, on the other hand, his behaviour patterns are not congruent with the school's expectations, or are so in a limited way, there is much less chance of effective learning.

A result of the recognition that schools have failed to integrate learning that occurs in the home and the community with that in the school has

been the development of community schools. Such schools are rapidly gaining support in Australia, as evinced by Schoenheimer's (1973) reader on *Good Australian Schools and their Communities*. The aims of such schools are very diverse. Some are concerned with encouraging students to plan their own learning and activities. Others are much more ambitious, hoping to introduce new learning methods and also to foster a dynamic relationship between school and community. Swinburne Community School, for example, aims, amongst other things, to reduce the size of the school to enable relationships to become more personal and less formal, to increase the student's sense of belonging to a community, and to provide students with the opportunity to work with adults with widely varying experience and expertise. On the planning level, some state educational authorities are seeking to give the community a meaningful role in the education of their children through participation in the decision making processes at the local level.

In Townsville, a group of Aboriginal parents have established a community school for children to primary level. Parents were dissatisfied with the treatment their children were receiving in state schools and hoped to provide a better education based to some extent on a curriculum that places a positive emphasis on black identity. Members of the community are involved in teaching activities and there is a qualified white teacher, selected by the community, who plays a central role in curriculum development.

In many instances, the notion of the 'school' is abandoned in favour of 'community centres', which provide learning opportunities for all members of the community at all ages and are based on the principle of life-long education.

A more radical line is taken by Ivan Illich who talks about 'deschooling society'. He discards distinctions between formal and non-formal learning and proposes making full use of existing learning settings in society so that education is synonymous with life itself. The individual becomes responsible for his own learning and teachers are replaced by learning consultants who have a knowledge of and can mobilise or develop learning resources that are appropriate to fulfil the individual's learning goals. The 'school-without-walls' is a less radical example of the Illich concept and is based on the assumption that the massive physical structures characterising present schools are not essential for learning to occur and indeed engender all sorts of expectations about the appropriate behaviour of pupils and teachers that are inimical to learning.

A second implication of the rejection of the concept of cultural

deprivation and its emphasis on deficit is that the orientation of the teacher and the school should be towards cultural difference. The task of the school would be to accept the minority child as he is, and his home and community as emotionally and cognitively significant to him. The role of the teacher, then, is not so much that of an agent of change but of someone who is sensitive to cultural differences and who is able to develop appropriate teaching strategies to capitalise on the individual's distinctive learning styles, strengths and orientations. This approach to education has recently been advocated by both Watts (1973) and Tatz and Chambers (1974), who are concerned with developing appropriate teaching strategies for Aboriginal students and also for teaching whites about Aboriginal people.

Jencks has reviewed a large body of literature concerned with inequality in terms of schools, cognitive skills, educational attainment, occupational status and income. His findings refute both the concept of compensatory education and the assertion that reform in schools can achieve greater equality. He writes (1972:255-6):

The evidence suggests that educational compensation is usually of marginal value to the recipients. Neither the overall level of educational resources, nor any specific, easily identifiable school policy has much effect on the test scores or educational attainment of students who start out at a disadvantage . . . Our research suggests that the character of a school's output depends largely on a single input, namely the characteristics of the entering children. Everything else — the school budget, its policies, the characteristics of the teachers — is either secondary or irrelevant.

Jencks maintains that schooling, instead of being evaluated in terms of long-term effects, should be seen as an end in itself. Thus, diversity should be an explicit objective of schools and school system. The ideal system, he claims, 'is one that provides as many varieties of matching children to schools that suit them. Since the character of the individual's schooling appears to have little long-term effect on his development, society as a whole rarely has a compelling interest in limiting the range of educational choices open to parents and students' (1972:257). He concludes his book by asserting that what is needed to produce equality is not ingenious manipulations of marginal institutions like the schools, but the establishment of political control over the economic institutions that shape society — 'Anything else will end in the same disappointment as the reforms of the 1960's.'

Cross-cultural education

In institutions where children of minority ethnic groups are receiving an education it is particularly important that the school program builds on cultural values of individuals both to enhance learning and, more importantly, to enable the student to develop a positive valuation of himself and a pride in his ethnic heritage. The consequences of negative feelings of identity and of an unfavourable self-image are all-embracing and far-reaching. Jessor and Richardson (1968), reviewing all the available research evidence, have summed them up: feelings of helplessness and inferiority, passivity and defeat, an effacing self-image, expectations of failure and belief in negative expectations of themselves by teachers.

Although the focus of this discussion is on educational institutions and the continuity they provide with the home experiences of students so that a positive self-image is developed and learning is enhanced, it would seem worthwhile considering the concept of 'total institutions' since, like the school, they tend to defile the identity of the individual by attempting to resocialise the inmates towards 'acceptable' patterns of behaviour. Goffman (1961:xiii) defines the total institution as: 'a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life'. The central feature of total institutions is that there is a breakdown of the barriers ordinarily separating the three spheres of life: sleep, play and work. First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member's daily activity is carried out in the immediate company of many others, all of whom are required to do the same thing together. Third, all the phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of events being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution.

The total institution has a considerable impact on the personal identity of an inmate and works consistently towards personality disintegration. At entry into the institution, the individual has a conception of himself made possible by certain stable relationships in his home world. It is characteristic of total institutions to strip him of the supports provided by these arrangements and compel him to undergo a series of deprivations, degradations and humiliations. While many of these may not be great in

themselves, they become significant because they occur so frequently and in so many aspects of institutional life.

While it is clear that such total institutions as the prison, mental hospital and concentration camp conform rigidly to this description, residential colleges and to a lesser extent schools are also characterised by many of these features.

Reimer (1971) also draws the analogy:

The school itself, as custodian of ever larger numbers of people, for increasing proportions of their life span, for an ever growing number of hours and interests, is well on the way to joining armies, prisons and insane asylums as one of society's total institutions . . . Only vacationless boarding schools could strictly be called total institutions, but perhaps the strict definition gives too much attention to the body and too little to the mind and spirit. School pervades the lives and personalities of their students in powerful and insidious ways and has become the dominant institution in the lives of modern men during their most formative years.

Various researchers have been concerned with the impact of living in a residential college upon the personal identity of students. Two studies in particular have focused on the problems of identity conflict experienced by members of minority ethnic groups attending residential schools. Hobart (1968) looked at Eskimo education in the McKenzie District of the Canadian Arctic. His analysis of the residential school for Eskimo children showed that the keynote was *discontinuity*. For neither physical facilities, language, food, fellow students, patterning of relationships, time schedules, disciplines, motivations, nor content of curriculum was there any precedent in the home experiences of most of the Eskimo children who attended the school. The impact of this on the identity of students was devastating: the children early lost their appreciation of their parents, their home communities, and the way of life that was lived there, and came to disdain all of these. Many products of such schools were profoundly confused in their sense of identity, were ashamed of being Eskimo, felt inadequate and unable to compete. The most severe consequence of this schooling system was that the students were commonly unable to adjust either to the world of their parents or to the world of the white man: they had been taught to crave values which they could not buy for lack of skills and/or disciplines.

Wintrob and Sindell (1968) conducted a similar investigation among the

Cree Indians in Canada. They found the school system failed to respect the indigenous culture and reflected a policy of cultural replacement designed to wean students away from their families and communities and to encourage them to adopt the values and life-style of urban industrial society. This policy of cultural replacement created intense conflicts in self-image with feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness. In addition there was conflict with parents, who felt that the educational system threatened the integrity of their way of life and caused their children to become disrespectful, disobedient, lazy, and aggressive.

Aboriginal education

The education system for Aborigines in the Northern Territory may be considered in the light of the points raised in the preceding discussion on the general theme of education as an agent of social change. An analysis of the objectives of education for Aborigines suggests that many of them are based on assumptions underlying the model of 'cultural deprivation' whereby many of the cultural values in Aboriginal society are seen as inhibiting educational achievement and advancement towards modern occupational status.

Various studies have shown that Aborigines place strong emphasis on kinship obligations and consider the rights of individuals subordinate to those of the group. The basic economic system traditionally was based on hunting and food-gathering, which required an orientation towards the present in order to survive in the hostile environment. Community life today continues to reinforce day-to-day living with no particular concern for the future. The dreamtime mythologies are rooted in the past and cultivate an unquestioning attitude towards the occurrence of natural phenomena. This profile may be contrasted with that characterising the achievement-oriented individual in western society who succeeds in school. He is individualistic and competitive; he is primarily oriented towards the future and is prepared to defer gratification for future rewards; he considers himself to have control over the environment and to be master of his own destiny. The life-style and values of Aborigines are diametrically opposed to those of the achieving society and, if they are to succeed in white society, one of the basic goals of education must be to 'compensate' for this traditional background and to induce students to change their values.

At the same time, however, the retention of Aboriginal identity is desired and thus a second basic goal of education is to instil in students a

pride in their ethnic heritage and to incorporate elements of traditional culture into the curriculum. The problem confronting educationists is *how* to provide experiences that enable students to cope with a western environment and to develop skills necessary for modernisation without devaluing their pride in their ethnic heritage and losing those values and skills which lie at the core of Aboriginal identity.

For the Aboriginal student, this problem is exacerbated by the fact that it is *white* educationists who decide what the ethnic heritage is, and what elements should be incorporated. Vine Deloria (1969) presents a devastating picture of the impact of anthropologists on the cultural identity of American Indians and their creation of the 'real' Indian so that Indian people begin to feel that they are merely shadows of a mythical super-Indian. Many ideas that pass for Indian thinking are in reality theories originally advanced by anthropologists and echoed by Indian people in an attempt to communicate the real situation.

Most Aboriginal children are educated in their home communities, beginning with pre-school and continuing through to primary and post-primary until leaving age. (Those in the academic stream proceed to Kormilda after primary.) The schools are staffed predominantly by white teachers, although they are frequently helped by Aboriginal teaching assistants. In a few cases, Aboriginal teachers have responsibility for their own classes. The curriculum is not very different from that used in schools for other Australians. Up until 1973, English was the medium of instruction in all government schools. This was despite the recommendations of a Commonwealth Conference on Teaching of English as a Second Language, in 1961 which recommended bilingual education. Thus Territory authorities implemented a program that assumed English as a mother tongue and provided instruction in subject areas in English, while at the same time also teaching English as a second language. One of the electoral promises of the Labor Government in 1972 was the introduction of the vernacular where practicable and several pilot studies are currently under way. The large majority of children in community schools are therefore exposed to white behaviour norms, attitudes and values in the classroom situation. However, they continue to spend a substantial proportion of time in the company of peers and in the home and camp situations where all informal education takes place. The school as an institution has only a limited impact on the identity of these children. Williams (1971) undertook a study of certain norms of behaviour among Aboriginal adolescents, looking at three different settings: home, school and play. His results indicate that behaviour was situation-bound: what

was considered appropriate in the classroom and reinforced by teachers and other whites in the community was not observed in the camp situation where different behaviour norms prevailed. It seems unlikely, then, that education would be very successful in inducing changes in the values mediating achievement behaviour except on a superficial behavioural level in the classroom to conform to the teachers' and others' expectations.

Residential schools located in towns, however, afford an opportunity to resocialise students away from family and community pressures and thus it may be possible for education to inculcate new values and attitudes, which are internalised by students and observed in other contexts such as the camp. Whether it is possible at the same time for students to retain a positive self-image and a pride in their Aboriginal heritage is a separate issue. The discussion of the concept of 'cultural deprivation' and compensatory education programs suggests that a likely outcome is that students would perceive disrespect of the education system for indigenous culture and this in turn would generate feelings of low self-esteem and worth and identity conflict. The retention of pride in Aboriginal identity would also depend on the degree of continuity which the school provided with the home experiences of students.

Kormilda College

Kormilda College was the first residential college to be established in the Northern Territory and a research project concerned with its impact on students was undertaken in 1970. An analysis of life at Kormilda indicated that little serious attention was being paid to the goals laid down as guidelines for the operation of residential colleges, and that rather than providing an environment in which students could develop skills enabling them to have a choice in their future life-style, it represented a concerted attempt at assimilation. Students were placed in an alien environment totally removed from the support of their own families and kinsmen and the only adult figures in their new world were whites. The system aimed at inculcating them with a new set of values, aspirations and attitudes, which were frequently diametrically opposed to those of their own society and which created discontinuity in most respects with their home life-style and experiences. In many respects, the College could be characterised as a total institution, that stripped the individual of the supports provided in his home community. Failure of the school to give any positive valence to Aboriginal identity meant that the individual was besieged with doubts as to his personal identity and self-worth. Although the College was defined

as 'transitional' and it was hoped that it would provide a bridge between the special schools (those in Aboriginal communities) and the community school, a more apt analogy perhaps is that of a ferry, which takes the students across to one side but which provides no means for their return.

Kormilda College has been the subject of vigorous debate and has generated much discussion with protagonists fiercely defending and criticising the underlying concept and its mode of operation. What emerges most clearly from this debate is that the values of the individual largely determine the stance adopted and each side can produce evidence to substantiate its arguments. The proponents point to the increasing numbers of students living at Kormilda but attending high school, while the opponents are more concerned about those who drop out of the College before completing a course or those who are unable to resolve conflict between two cultures. The research findings presented in this book are concerned with the adjustment of students at Kormilda within a more general context of educational intervention in social change.

Recurrent themes

While Kormilda College provides the major focus of this book, it also serves as a peg on which to hang discussion of broader problems of education and more generally of administration in the area of Aboriginal advancement. Some of the themes isolated here will be taken up again in the concluding chapters in a discussion of future educational provision in the tribal Aboriginal context. One important aspect is the ability of the bureaucracy to respond to the needs of the community. The recent trends towards decentralisation, for example, should alert administrators to the fact that the Aboriginal people are in many respects dissatisfied with the life-style we have to offer them in existing communities and wish to seek alternative ways of living that may enable their social structure to be strengthened and become functional once more. Such a decision should be respected by the dominant society and resources such as schools, teachers, and equipment, should be made available to Aborigines in their new environments if they see such a need.

Attempts to involve Aborigines in decisions affecting their own lives have in the past for the most part been token gestures. Consultation has taken the form of brief visits to communities and often a decision is expected on the spot or shortly afterwards. For the most part, Aboriginal councils have had only an advisory function and the real power to accept, modify or veto a community decision has remained vested in the white

bureaucracy. Further, participation in decision-making has often been paid lip-service only, as a fixed number of options or alternatives have been presented and the only real choice presented to Aborigines has been to select one alternative. When Aborigines are presented with a choice concerning the education of their children, it is important that they be given time to consider all possible alternatives and the likely consequences of each.

It is for these reasons that black power is likely to become a meaningful slogan in Australia in the near future. Although the concept of 'black consciousness' underlies the demands of non-tribal Aborigines in the more urban areas, few attempts have been made at consciousness raising among the tribal Aborigines. However, as Aborigines increasingly realise that they are still not in a position to determine their own future, despite all the talk of a new deal for Aborigines and self-determination, the need for unity will become more urgent and they will present a broad front in pressing for changes in society — what Carmichael and Hamilton (1968:39) refer to as 'the process of political modernization'. They use this term to refer to three major concepts: questioning old values and institutions of the society; searching for new and different forms of political structure to solve political and economic problems; and broadening the base of political participation to include more people in the decision-making process.

Black power is seen as one of the most healthy developments in race relations by black minorities in the United States and by the more vocal Aborigines in Australia. It is a call for black people to unite, to recognise their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead and support their own organisations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of white society. It is based on the assumption that only black people can convey the revolutionary idea that black people can do things for themselves. Only they can create in the community the black consciousness that will provide the basis for political strength. Black people must come together to do things for themselves; they must achieve self-identity and self-determination in order to have their daily needs met. This position is well illustrated in a recent publication by Chris Mullard (1974), a black sociologist who was invited by Aborigines in Australia to give a black assessment of what is happening in Aboriginal Australia. His central thesis is that nothing devised or run by whites is or will ever be any good; only black minds can understand 'black reality'; only black hands can properly shape the future.

One of the most important areas for discussion is that of educational equality. There is considerable dissension among educationists and others on this issue. Some feel strongly that the decisions about education should not be left to the community; since their horizons are limited because of lack of formal education and limited contact with the dominant society, they may opt for an educational system and program that would severely disadvantage the younger generation and maintain their state of dependency on whites. These educationists, therefore, see themselves as having a vital role to play in ensuring that Aboriginal advancement takes place through education of the young. The opposing group argues that the community should determine the sort of future it wants for its members and the role of educationists is to help them to consider likely consequences of different courses of action or alternative systems of education and to devise the sorts of educational experience that would best equip children for the life-style they wish to follow. It is believed by this group that, although the Aboriginal concept of advancement may be very different from that of the dominant society, it must be accepted by whites. Recent trends in education in the dominant society are providing greater local autonomy and increased opportunities for the community to determine the learning opportunities its children should have to equip them for life in rapidly changing society. This autonomy should be extended to Aboriginal communities also.

Criticism is also directed against education that is made more relevant to the life-style of the individuals in a particular community by building on its value system, patterns of learning and local content. It is said to restrict mobility of individuals into the dominant society, which is characterised by a different value system and which has power and control of the resources. Emphasis in the classroom on group values, for example, would not enable an Aboriginal child to deal effectively with a society emphasising competition and supremacy of the individual. An education system in harmony with the socio-environmental context of the community is seen to perpetuate the subordinate status of certain minority groups and not to provide equality of opportunity.

On the other hand, the concept of educational equality has led to the provision in Aboriginal communities of school buildings that can be equated with those provided in white communities so that no charge of discrimination can be levelled against the educational authorities. Such 'equality' does not take into account the different educational needs of communities or the settings in which non-formal learning occurs in Aboriginal society or the impact of physical structures in influencing

community participation. The concept of equality, in this instance, may inhibit learning and reduce opportunities for Aboriginal students to achieve in western society. The end result may well be that the application of 'equality' produces more inequalities than existed before that application.

Another general question, raised in the context of Kormilda but having broad implications, is that of training Aborigines away from their own communities. In the last few years, courses for Aborigines have burgeoned in fields as diverse as mechanics, home management, nursing, co-operative schemes, community development and teacher education. These are nearly always held in cities as far afield as Darwin, Sydney and Canberra and often extend over considerable periods of time. On the one hand, participation in such courses may enable the individual to broaden his horizons and to develop social skills and confidence that better enable him to understand the dominant society and to take his place in it. On the other hand, individuals attending these courses are often a long way from home; during the course of study they may become alienated from their own people and reluctant to return home to practise the new skills they have acquired. In some situations, formal training removes the very skills that once made the individual effective in his community. When communities perceive that many of the younger people who have left home to undergo schooling or vocational training have turned their backs on kinship obligations and have not returned to help their people, they are understandably reluctant for their members to attend courses in Darwin and elsewhere and press authorities to provide suitable training and secondary education in their own communities or in regional centres closer to home.

Specific issues of interest

A number of specific issues are discussed in greater depth in this book and provide data for further discussion of the more general problem areas. The first of these concerns the varying goals of education for Aborigines in the Northern Territory and their incompatibility, a question already discussed in this chapter. The focus of the early chapters is therefore on the education system and on the conditions that would be required if students were to develop an ability to live in two cultures stressing different values, skills and patterns of behaviour. An analysis of the social system at Kormilda substantiates the conclusion reached from theoretical concepts and empirical research findings that students who are 'successes'

in the eyes of the education authorities and who have internalised achievement values also have a devalued image of their own identity as Aborigines. As long as educationists continue to regard themselves as agents of social change with the objective of replacing those values in Aboriginal society which 'inhibit' achievement in western cultures, then Aboriginal students are going to find it difficult to resolve identity conflict and to retain a pride in their own identity.

The second specific issue relates to the nature of cross-cultural institutions and their impact on personal identity. It is clear from the description of the way the College operated that it created a cultural gap for the students and that it conformed very little with the goals laid down for residential colleges in the Watts-Gallacher Report, which continues to be the blueprint for Aboriginal education in the Northern Territory.

The third major issue is specifically the adjustment of students at Kormilda and the conflict in personal identity they faced. The intermediate chapters indicate very clearly that students were provided with very few opportunities to resolve identity conflict and support the predictions that many students would suffer maladjustment. Maladjustment may be defined in a number of ways, and here indices such as socially deviant behaviour, psychosomatic symptoms, psychiatric diagnosis and drop-out rates are used to measure the stress experienced by students. The majority of students leave Kormilda before completion of a course and this finding supports other observations that one of the most common adaptations of Aborigines to stressful situations is to remove themselves from the situation. Many changes have occurred at Kormilda College since the observations reported in this book were made. Some of the changes were introduced by new members of staff and others followed as a result of new educational policies and philosophies, partly brought about by changes in government policy with the advent of the Labor Party to power in December 1972 and the subsequent transfer of Aboriginal education from the Welfare Branch to the Australian Department of Education. The analysis of life at the College and the problems of adjustment faced by students refers to 1970. Where relevant, however, description is given of the significant changes since 1970 and the implications of the research findings for current administration of Aboriginal residential colleges. The fact that there is continuing criticism of the Kormilda concept by both Aborigines and whites suggests that internal changes in the social structure have not eliminated some of the basic problems associated with educational intervention in a cross-cultural context.

Orientation of the study

While the study was guided by a conceptual framework with a theoretical basis, I make no claim that the findings are entirely 'objective'. Indeed, I would maintain that research concerned with social issues cannot be objective in the strict scientific sense since both observation and interpretation are guided by implicit assumptions. For these reasons it is desirable to outline some of the values that have influenced my general orientation towards this area of research.

First, I consider that the retention of Aboriginal identity is very important and that any intervention by the dominant society through education, technological innovation or other agents of social change must respect the individual and his cultural heritage. I do not wish to suggest that all Aborigines must remain traditionally oriented or indeed that they must continue to identify as Aborigines. Rather, options should be kept open so that the ultimate choice is that of the individual. Society therefore should strive to provide a social environment in which each individual can realise his full potential and be proud of his own identity. This would mean the encouragement of a plural society in which different ethnic groups can retain their own system of values and patterns of behaviour, which in turn are respected by the dominant group.

Second, I believe that self-determination should be the guiding principle adopted by whites in relation to Aborigines. In practice this must mean that the Aboriginal people are free to decide what future they want for themselves and to have control over the nature and pace of their development. This may well mean that Aboriginal people define for themselves goals unacceptable to whites, but it is important that servicing departments such as Aboriginal Affairs, Education, Health and Social Welfare respond to the needs of the people as they express them rather than implementing programs designed to meet the needs of the bureaucracy or the preconceived ideas about what the people want or need and held to be in 'their best interests'.

Third, in order for self-determination to be meaningful, Aborigines should have opportunities to participate at all levels in decision making on issues affecting their own lives and should have ultimate control over their own affairs. An assumption is made here that participation is good and that it is only through opportunities for responsible decision making that Aborigines can begin to recover their self-respect and develop some feeling that they are masters of their own destiny.

During the period of research I lived at Kormilda in one of the old staff

cottages which was easily accessible to students. As I had no formal duties in the College and no disciplinary function it was easier for me than for other staff members to act as a counsellor and friend to the students, and a number of students took me into their confidence and spoke about their life at home, their anxieties about the promise system of marriage, their future, and things they liked and disliked about the College. My house was open to students and both boys and girls frequently wandered in to look through the Kormilda College Year Books, which held particular fascination with photos of past students and relatives and other books on Aborigines. On several evenings when a father of one of the students was in town, the particular tribal group would gather on the outside lawn and join in tribal dancing while the father played the didjeridu and provided some guidance for the dancers. It was occasions such as these that made me very much aware of the yearning of students for their culture and I was very conscious of the lack of opportunities provided for students at the College to engage in various traditional activities as recreation.

The experience of living at Kormilda College was a particularly exciting one, although it was also very frustrating at times. My concern was mostly related to the attempts by the College to assimilate students and the view of teachers that Aboriginal children were no different from whites and should be taught in exactly the same way. It was generally assumed that they had the same motivations and would respond to the same teaching strategies and teacher expectations and reward patterns if only given the chance. The failure of the College to provide any reinforcement for Aboriginal identity was perhaps the most disturbing element to me since my contact with Aborigines in their home communities had forcibly demonstrated how viable their traditional culture is and how integral a part it forms in their daily lives. The intense pride of students in their Aboriginal identity when they first came to Kormilda contrasted strongly with that of the detribalised Aborigines who are seeking an Aboriginal identity but do not really know what it means or what they are looking for. It is against this background that Kormilda College seemed particularly malfunctioning since it appeared to be devaluing the worth of this identity and to be seeking to replace it with the values of a society that is coming under increasing criticism for its lack of human values and its servitude to technology.

My other lasting memory from my close involvement with the students at Kormilda is the feeling of rejection that has enabled me to empathise with Aborigines in their out-group status with respect to the dominant society. On a number of occasions I was made very much aware of my

white status and my exclusion from the black community. It is a feeling of great frustration and hurt that no matter what personal relationships one makes, or whatever one's actions, black is black and white is white and the boundaries between them, though submerged at times, are very much a reality.

I still follow with great interest the life of many students who were at the College and have made several trips back to Kormilda to talk with old friends and to observe changes which have occurred. Occasionally I receive letters from students or bump into them in the streets of Darwin or in their home communities and they are generally eager to talk about their life and their hopes and anxieties. The life-styles of the students who have left Kormilda vary greatly. Some have continued on at high school and others are training to become teachers, mechanics, recreation officers; the large majority, however, have returned to their home communities and the girls are raising families while the boys are either working in various jobs around the community or have joined the disaffected group of young people who seek no work at all and spend much of their time gambling. Some whites in the communities talk bitterly about the Kormilda students and claim they think they are too good to work at any old job, instead engaging in various forms of delinquent behaviour to pass the time. A number of the girls who spent several years at Kormilda have either married whites or had children by them. This is not very surprising since the girls who rebelled against the promise system of marriage and their inferior status vis-a-vis men came to the conclusion that the only way in which they could realise their ambitions was to marry a white. Such a choice is a prerogative of the individual but one wonders how much the impact of Kormilda influenced these students. It is understandable that parents should see education as the direct cause of their rejection of Aboriginal ways and be reluctant to send their children to the College. While social change is occurring in Aboriginal society and the tribal barriers are slowly breaking down, most Aboriginal parents are not prepared to break down the barriers between black and white, and the relationship with whites is one of the fears they have about the College.

Design of the study

The dearth of research in the field of social change among Aborigines and its implications for the individual placed severe restrictions on the nature of empirical observations. It was difficult to assess the impact of social change when no baseline data were available. The lack of established

measures appropriate for the purposes of the study and the nature of the respondents, and of guidelines to problems encountered in the testing of Aboriginal children, created further difficulties. The research was therefore necessarily exploratory and descriptive, designed to illuminate a particular problem area. In the course of the research, new problems presented themselves and thus new dimensions were continually introduced. While this created difficulties for a tight design, it was considered essential that the inadequacy of theories and the original formulation of the problem did not preclude the collection of data that appeared fundamental to an understanding of this social issue. It was also necessary to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach since the problem under investigation did not fall neatly into any one discipline and disciplines such as psychology, education, sociology and anthropology each contributed insights, methodology and conceptual framework.

It is felt that social scientists have a responsibility to undertake research on such social issues instead of confining their interests to theoretical questions or to the study of traditional societies. Researchers also have a responsibility to communicate their findings both to the Aboriginal people involved and to administrators and the interested public.

Data on the adjustment of students were obtained from a number of sources, which enabled cross-checks to be made on reliability of the results. These sources included: observations of all students over a year on measures of socially deviant behaviour and psychological symptoms; informal interviews with them; casual conversations in the playground, recreation areas, on outings, etc.; formal testing using instruments designed for the particular study; and conversations with teachers, house parents and other significant adults.

The main findings relating to the three specific issues considered in this book are presented in two different forms. First, a number of case studies provide a picture of the conflicts some students faced and of their attempts to resolve them. Second, other results based on statistical analyses of formal measures are described.

The impact of a college such as Kormilda on its students and on the wider Aboriginal society may have unforeseen consequences and thus it is essential that the underlying philosophy and assumptions on which the education system is based be carefully examined. Provision should also be made for a follow-up study of students after they leave Kormilda so that an evaluation may be made and the policy and its implementation changed if the outcome is not desirable. Ideally, an evaluation of this nature would be undertaken by the Aboriginal people themselves; they

should also have an opportunity to determine new directions and priorities for education.

2 Aboriginal life in the Northern Territory

In order to understand the nature and degree of adjustment students needed to make to living in an institution such as Kormilda, it is necessary to have a knowledge of the social, cultural, political and economic factors that have a significant impact on the current life-style of most Aboriginal people in remote communities in the Northern Territory. It is important to note that, despite all the rhetoric about significant changes in attitudes towards Aboriginal people as expressed in policies, Aboriginal life-style has not substantially altered from the days when Welfare first took responsibility for Aborigines in the early 1950s. The picture given here is still, therefore, a valid one.

Aboriginal settlements and missions were seen as the agents of change through which government policies were implemented. Although significant changes are now beginning to occur with a policy of self-determination, the general concept of these 'closed' institutions has virtually remained unchallenged. It is not difficult to understand why Aboriginal people remain dependent on a government system that caters specifically for Aboriginal needs. Although settlements were originally seen as transitional staging posts for full-bloods into the dominant society, the life-style they engendered made it difficult for any individual to acquire the skills necessary for full participation in the larger towns away from settlement life. A discussion of some of the more important socio-economic indicators such as health, housing and employment provides a more global picture of Aboriginal life in a community setting. It is not possible, however, to link these aspects in a causal way, as administrators have tended to do. Rather, they should be viewed within a general 'ecological' framework so that no one indicator is seen as the key to social advancement on which all others are dependent. Those cultural aspects of Aboriginal life discussed have been selected on the basis of their interrelationships with education and the indication they provide of the interplay between traditional and modern forces.

Demographic characteristics

There is no one definition of 'Aboriginal' commonly accepted by all states of Australia and the definition adopted by the present study is that which applied in the Northern Territory legislation at the time the study was undertaken. Unlike most of the southern states, which adopted a more inclusive definition, the category of 'Aboriginal' in the Northern Territory was very restrictive and included only full-bloods and those part-Aborigines who were fully integrated into Aboriginal communities and lived in the manner of full-bloods. Since this research concerned only Aborigines in the Northern Territory, the same narrow definition is adopted in the text. The term 'part-Aboriginal' refers to any person of Aboriginal descent who was not otherwise included in the classification 'Aboriginal'.

The Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory at 31 December 1970 stood at 22,000 of a total population of about 85,000 (Welfare Branch *Annual Report* statistics). The most recent census statistics (1971) indicate an Aboriginal population of 23,252 of a total Northern Territory population of 86,390. The increase in figures is probably due to several factors. These include the changed definition of 'Aboriginal' for census purposes; the increasing numbers identifying as 'Aboriginal' as rewards outweigh the social penalties; and the high natural increase of the Aboriginal population, which since 1965 has been just less than double that of the non-Aboriginal Australian population.

The age composition of the Aboriginal population over the last ten years has varied significantly from that of the Australian non-Aboriginal population. For example, the group under fifteen years of age has been increasing in the Aboriginal population and in 1971 it represented 43 per cent of the total. This age group has decreased relatively in the non-Aboriginal population and in 1971 accounted for 29 per cent of that population. Contributing to these ethnic differences is the high Aboriginal birth rate, which for 1970 was 44 per thousand; the birth rate for non-Aboriginal Australians for the year 1965/66 was nineteen per thousand. (Figures from the 1971 census are not yet available.)

The majority of the Aborigines in the Northern Territory reside in communities that are supported by the Government either directly, or indirectly through the Church missions, or on pastoral properties. These vary considerably in their degree of isolation from the mainstream of white society and in the period of contact with different socialising agents of the dominant society. The terms mission and settlement have now been eliminated and replaced by township, centre, or community.

Physical setting of Aboriginal communities

The majority of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory are located in Aboriginal Reserves, which vary in size from two to 44,800 square miles (see location map). Although Aborigines themselves may enter and leave Reserves at will, permission must be sought by all other persons. One of the largest Reserves is the Arnhem Land Reserve where the majority of Aborigines are settled in eleven major communities and a number of outstations. The sizes of these communities vary greatly, some with as few as 200 individuals and others with populations over 1000. Road access is virtually non-existent and communities are dependent upon barges or planes for supplies. Two communities supported by the missions — Yirrkala and Angurugu — are adjacent to mining areas with substantial European populations, and contact with the dominant society is thereby greatly increased. Other settlements on the coast and off-shore islands have limited access to the dominant society, although considerable trading occurred before 1937 with Macassans and Japanese pearlers. In most of these communities, contact with the mass media is very restricted: radio, television, and newspapers are not usually available. The only regular form of mass communication is screening of films.

A similar situation exists on the eight major community centres in the Giles and Warburton districts of Central Australia. However, roads have been built from Alice Springs to all remote communities, facilitating movement into town areas during the dry season, for both prolonged periods and short visits. Most of those Aborigines who go into Alice Springs stay at Amoonguna, an Aboriginal community on the outskirts of the town, or in the camps that Aborigines have established in the dry bed of the Todd River, which runs through the town. Contact with the dominant society has increased in the Centre with a growing tourist industry, and several communities have taken advantage of this to provide guides, kiosks and artifacts.

Most of the remaining Aboriginal communities are located in areas which have limited contact with the dominant society and with the mass media. An increasing number of clan groups are in fact moving away from existing community townships back to their own land and at the end of 1974 there were more than fifty outstations in the Northern Territory. This trend towards decentralisation is a very significant one and was actively supported by the former Labor Government, which was committed to a policy of self-determination rather than the assimilationist policies of preceding Governments. There are a variety of reasons compelling Aboriginal people to move back to the bush and Coombs (1973), in his

Presidential Address to the Anthropology Section of ANZAAS, maintained that among them are 'land rights' campaigning and the related desire to demonstrate by an Aboriginal presence the reality of these claims; protection of sacred sites; the growing awareness of Aboriginal access to sources of income independent of immediate missionaries or administrators such as pensions and child endowment; the changing philosophy of government and of the white community towards the right of Aborigines to choose how far and at what pace they modify their traditional ways. To these reasons, Egan (1974) has added the disenchantment of Aboriginal groups with the pressure imposed on them by non-Aboriginal society.

Pastoral properties are distributed across the cattle grazing districts of the Northern Territory, although there is a concentration in the area around Alice Springs. The total Aboriginal population on pastoral properties at 31 December 1969 was almost equally divided between approximately 125 groups of fewer than fifty persons and some twenty-five groups of fifty or more. There are access roads to all these properties but, although considerable mobility occurs between them, there is little regular contact with towns.

While the opportunity for contact with the dominant society varies greatly among these communities, an effort is made to provide all school children with the experiences of visiting centres of European population and observing Europeans more. Excursions, sporting activities, eisteddfods, and holiday camps fulfil this function and help to broaden the otherwise limited horizon of Aborigines living in isolated communities.

Official policies for Aborigines in the Northern Territory

The official Commonwealth Government policy for the Aborigines has passed through several phases since control for Aborigines in the Northern Territory passed to the Commonwealth in 1911. However, it is important to distinguish between statements of policy, professions or intention, benevolent or otherwise, and the translation of such statements into actions influencing Aboriginal lives. There is understandable impatience and feelings of helplessness in both Aboriginal and some non-Aboriginal hearts when the rhetoric of policy and principle — protection, assimilation, self-determination, integration, accommodation, separate development — is seen to be unrelated to what actually happens at the community level. Indeed, the very same measures were used in the 1950s

to achieve the successive policies of protection and assimilation. A policy of protection and restriction marked the first era of Aboriginal administration by the Commonwealth. Up until 1953, Territory Aborigines were administered through the Aboriginal Ordinance 1918-1953. An 'Aboriginal' was defined as an Aboriginal native of Australia (full-blood), a half-caste living with an Aboriginal spouse, a half-caste who habitually lived or associated with full-bloods, a half-caste under twenty-one, a female half-caste not married to a white, and a male half-cast over twenty-one who, in the opinion of the Director of Native Affairs, was incapable of managing his own affairs. Amendments in 1936 and 1943 allowed the Director to exempt first half-castes and then Aborigines from the application of the Ordinance.

The first conference of Commonwealth and state governments on Aboriginal Welfare in 1937 was seen as a 'turning point', when assimilation was advocated as a policy, but this applied to part-Aboriginal people only and apartheid was recommended for full-bloods. Rowley (1970:319-21) comments on the assumptions underlying views expressed at this conference.

after the inevitable frontier catastrophe there were certain things to be done, almost on the analogy of mopping-up operations, before the Aboriginal minority disappeared, this time into White Australia by eventual absorption of the part-Aboriginal . . . Science had indicated that Aboriginal features and skin coloration tended to disappear over a few generations . . . Perhaps we can see here the beginnings of the policy of assimilation; certainly it represents 'assimilation' as popularly understood. Here was a policy based on the assumption of a progression, not of individuals who are thought of as persons and ends in themselves but as successive stages in a breeding program . . . Apartheid, as far as possible without upsetting the current needs of employers, was recommended for . . . 'full-bloods' . . . The point was implied only — that nature would . . . inevitably take its course; these full-bloods would give place to the part-Aborigines for whom the policy makers felt they could really decide the future. The 'uncivilised' would be kept on 'inviolable reserves' as far as possible: in the background of history and of these discussions, the implicit assumption is that here too segregation would fail; nature would take its course.

Following the 1951 Native Welfare Conference, the Government decided to revise its legislation since the concept of assimilation rather than

protection needed a new legal framework. The first step was taken in 1953 with an amendment to the Aboriginal Ordinance that made citizens of all half-castes. The Bill redefined 'Aborigines' by omitting all references to half-castes.

In the same year, the Welfare Bill was introduced. It was intended to do away with discriminatory legislation such as that contained in the Aboriginal Ordinance. Half-castes were now free; it was time to provide Aborigines, and others, with assistance that did not highlight them as a group 'but which would help the needy not because a person is an Aboriginal or a white person'. The new Bill introduced the concept of 'wards'. The Administrator could declare a person a ward if that person, by reason of his manner of living, his inability, without assistance, adequately to manage his own affairs, his standard or social habitat and behaviour, or his personal associations stood in need of special care and assistance. The Wards Employment Ordinance was introduced at the same time. This was a complex measure to provide for the employment, wage rates, training, feeding, clothing and housing of Aborigines. Amongst other things, it was meant to 'facilitate the emergence of wards as self-sustaining units in our economic structure'. In practice, it was applied to the pastoral industry only and even then in a very half-hearted manner.

The repeal of the Welfare Ordinance of 1953 came in 1964 when the Welfare Branch was charged with the responsibility of looking after the special needs of Aborigines. It was guided by the policy of assimilation which had been defined at the Native Welfare Conference of 1963 to mean:

That all Aborigines and part-Aborigines will attain the same manner of living as other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians. Under this policy, any special measures taken for Aborigines and part-Aborigines are regarded as temporary measures, not based on colour, but intended to meet their need for special care and assistance to protect them from any ill effects of sudden change and to assist them to make the transition from one stage to another in such a way as will be favourable to their social, economic and political advancement. (*Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, 1962-3:651.)

Whereas mission and government settlements had been seen as ensuring the protection of Aborigines, they were now regarded as instruments of assimilation, which could be the means of processing individuals to make them acceptable in the general community. These closed institutions continued virtually unchallenged despite talk of integration and of choice in the 1960s, until the advent of a Labor Government to power in 1972.

Although settlements were intended to prepare Aborigines to take responsibility for the management of their own affairs, and in a sense to be a training institution, the effect was rather to disable. Individuals developed a dependency on the institution where all their needs were looked after, and this in turn created a state of mind that made it difficult for them to go elsewhere. Training was usually only token in nature, and thus those who did go to the larger towns usually found they could not obtain work or had not developed suitable work skills or habits.

In 1965, at the Ministers' conference on Aboriginal Affairs, the official policy was redefined as 'integration', although officially labelled 'assimilation'. C.E. Barnes, Minister for Territories, said in Parliament that 'the policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent will choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community' (Department of Territories, 1967:iii). However, the real difference between assimilation and integration is difficult to find. Although 'choice' is implied, there is really only one choice offered and that is rate of assimilation. This is because no alternative to a one-Australia future could be conceived, even though toleration of superficial cultural diversity was coming to be seen as harmless and indeed socially desirable (whether for humanitarian, political, aesthetic, or economic reasons is unclear).

The fact that the change to 'integration' was at the superficial level of words only is clear from statements contained in a booklet published by the Department of the Interior (1972:2).

Taking into account the fact that many elements of Aboriginal culture are incompatible with our own, these differences mean that the process of Aboriginal advancement is more complex, and perhaps more painful, in the Northern Territory than in the states. It involves not only the adjustment of an underprivileged group to the wider society, but the education of a people generally ignorant of our language and our social standards. Programs to overcome these handicaps are of recent origin . . . a serious effort to advance Aborigines has been made only in the last two decades and a really major effort only in the last five years . . .

The only firm conclusion that can be drawn from experience with Aboriginal Welfare in the Northern Territory to date is that it will take at least one generation, and perhaps more, to work through the process of adjustment. It would be foolish to expect people who have little background in European ways to act as though they had suddenly acquired them. It would be equally foolish to assume that Aborigines do not want to acquire the skills of our society, but wish simply to pursue traditional life in peace . . . Their lives are in the transitional stage, and it is the responsibility of the Government to help them bridge the gap between their traditional culture and the modern world to which they are inexorably drawn by the pace of development in the Northern Territory.

The last significant statement of the Liberal-Country Party Administration on Aboriginal Affairs was on Australia Day 1972, and was made by Prime Minister McMahon. In introducing his government's policy objectives, he referred to changing conditions in the seventies and a greater awareness of Aboriginal wishes. He presented a five-point statement of objectives as 'a general directive to those responsible for the formulation and administration of Commonwealth policies affecting Aboriginal Australians':

1. The fundamental objectives of Government policy in relation to Aboriginal Australians are that they should be assisted as individuals, and if they wish as groups, at the local community level, to hold effective and respected places within one Australian society with equal access to the rights and opportunities it provides and acceptance of responsibilities towards it.

At the same time they should be encouraged and assisted to preserve their own culture, languages, traditions and arts so that these can become living elements in the diverse culture of the Australian society.

2. The Government recognises the rights of individual Aborigines to effective choice about the degree to which, and the pace at which, they come to identify themselves with that society; and we believe that they will do so more readily and more happily when they are attracted to it voluntarily and when their membership of it encourages them to maintain and take pride in their identity, traditions and culture.

The concept of separate development as a long-term aim is utterly alien to these objectives.

3. We also believe that programmes to give effect to such policy must

evolve in accordance with the effects of action so far taken and the needs of the times. They must take into account the expressed wishes of Aboriginal Australians themselves.

Indeed, programmes will prove ineffective unless Aboriginal Australians are voluntarily involved. The role of governments should increasingly be to enable them to achieve their goals by their own efforts.

4. The Government considers that a balanced strategy directed at the essential problems facing many persons of Aboriginal descent requires a programme of action worked out and administered in collaboration with the States which would —
 - a) encourage and strengthen their capacity increasingly to manage their own affairs — as individuals, as groups, and as communities at the local level;
 - b) increase their economic independence;
 - c) reduce existing social and other handicaps facing them in health, housing, education and vocational training; and
 - d) promote their enjoyment of normal civil liberties and eliminate remaining provisions in law which discriminate against them.
5. The Government also considers that special measures will be necessary to overcome the disabilities now being experienced by many persons of Aboriginal descent. These should properly be regarded as temporary and transitional in the progress towards our fundamental objectives and should be based on the need of Aboriginal individuals or groups for special care and assistance.

Although self-determination had by this stage acquired quite wide acceptance, the choice offered by McMahon was very highly restricted within other, essentially economic, values and priorities. For example, the government policy conflicted fundamentally with land rights claims, seeking a compromise between these and development interests; Aboriginal advancement in economic terms loomed larger than social and cultural self-expression as chosen by the Aboriginal peoples themselves. Thus, as far as Aborigines were concerned, 'choice' was, by implication, to be within a 'wise and practical land policy' designed to mobilise resources that would contribute significantly to Australian growth and development as well as to raising Aborigines to standards comparable with those of the general community.

For all its shortcomings, in the eyes of Aboriginal people, and of those who regarded the Aboriginal future as at least potentially open to choice,

the Australia Day Statement did represent a cautious movement towards greater choice, and provided for somewhat more generous and diversified spending on 'positive discrimination'. In his George Judah Cohen Lecture, Coombs (1972:4) described McMahon's emphasis on the need to make the role of governments one of enabling Aborigines to achieve goals by their own efforts, as 'important changes in the stated philosophy and objectives of policy'. He added that much remained to be done before this spirit pervaded the policy itself and effectively determined the pattern of programs undertaken.

Reviewing the policy posture of the Liberal-Country Party Administration immediately before it gave way to Labor, it can be claimed that choice was acknowledged as a desirable principle, and that heeding the Aboriginal voice had emerged as politically desirable whereas, a few years previously, this simply did not feature in considerations of policy and tactics. Admittedly, the accepted channels were controlled and muted: thus in the Territory an Advisory Council of Aboriginal Affairs was approved in April 1971, but the unchannelled and unauthorised Aboriginal voice expressed through the Embassy outside Parliament House was dismissed, violently, in July 1972, not long before the government changed.

The policy of the A.L.P., first presented at its 29th Conference at Launceston in June 1971 and reiterated, with some addition and elaboration by Whitlam in his election address at Blacktown in November 1972, was in essence the expression of principles and purposes evolved and advocated over the previous four to five years by the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs (established after the 1967 referendum, which gave the Commonwealth power to legislate for Aborigines throughout Australia). On the Labor Government's election, the Office became the Australian Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The fundamental principles or assumptions underlying the Labor Government's plans for Aborigines emerge less explicitly from the party platform than from subsequent ministerial statements. Thus in a Prime Ministerial statement in April 1973, Whitlam italicised this passage: 'The basic object of my Government's policy is to restore to the Aboriginal people of Australia, their lost power of self-determination in economic, social and political affairs.'

The concept of self-determination was a fundamental principle in the Labor administration and has been interpreted by field staff in the Northern Territory to mean 'Aboriginal communities deciding the nature and pace of their future development within the legal, social and economic constraints of the wider society' (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1973-

4). Whether self-determination results in significant changes for the Aboriginal people themselves depends largely on where the constraints are imposed. Certainly, the intent of the Government was to challenge some of the widely held assumptions about Aboriginal people and their future in society. The Labor Government was endeavouring to provide a meaningful choice, though, from the record of its first two years in office, it would appear that participation in decision making and local autonomy were subject to constraints imposed by bureaucratic procedures and also by the attitudes of whites towards the perceived mishandling of funds by Aboriginal groups.

Another principle enunciated by the Labor administration was that of Aboriginalisation. On the one hand, this refers to various forms of consultation, the assumption being that the Government's role was now to provide the necessary support programs and respond to Aboriginal needs as articulated. On the other hand, it refers to the employment of Aborigines, in the Department itself and in other areas of public employment.

A third concept was that defined by the Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs as community. It means basing programs more on the community than the individual, thus conforming to traditional norms of Aboriginal society. 'Assisting a community does not mean that we are moving towards *apartheid*; these people will still be full members of our community. *Apartheid* has within it that essential element of compulsion . . . we are most certainly not doing that.' (Dexter, 1973). The distinction is important, since reference to *apartheid* was frequently employed by the previous administration as an argument against the option of retaining a traditional Aboriginal community, and also against such related matters as granting ownership of land to Aboriginal tribes. This concept of community has found its most immediate expression in decentralisation, whereby small clan groups are moving away from existing settlements and missions and are being given positive support in the way of grants and special services to establish their own community groups in their own tribal lands.

The fourth major concept was recognition of Aboriginal culture. This embraces the protection of sacred rites, the encouragement of art exhibitions, tours, performances, etc. and the introduction of Aboriginal arts, craft and other expressions of traditional culture centrally rather than peripherally into the curricula of predominantly Aboriginal schools. It also refers to the introduction of Aboriginal subject matter into the curricula of all Australian schools. The use of vernacular in the school

system is an important manifestation of this principle; although it was first recommended in 1951, it was not until 1972 that any attempt was made to implement it.

The final broad principle was white accommodation to Aboriginal concepts. This means positive acceptance of and respect for differences and modifications to the administrative procedures, attitudes and norms, and perhaps also the legislation of the dominant society to accommodate these differences within it on a basis of full propriety and equality.

These then were the principles underpinning policy adopted by the Labor Government towards Aborigines in 1972. It seems likely that many of the changes that have resulted will in the future secure for Aborigines the right, unaffected by changes in government, to participate in decisions affecting their own lives. The formation of the Woodward Commission to determine how land rights in the Northern Territory could be implemented means that, when these rights are recognised, Aboriginal people will have a security for their identity as Aborigines and the possibility of living a different life-style from that pursued by the dominant society.

Socio-economic environment

In order to understand life in an Aboriginal community, it is necessary to look at it as a system made up of different sub-systems such as health, education and employment; these constitute not a tangle of causal chains, but a field in which multiple, mutual influences are constantly at work. The social scientist may be interested in any one sub-system, in which case he promotes it to the central role and turns the rest into 'environment'; a 'systems' approach, however, does not place any one aspect above another as the dependent variable — interest is in the relationships between sub-systems. This approach is elaborated in Emery and Trist (1973).

A systems approach is adopted by Schapper (1969:162) in writing about the interdependency of different elements in policy. He is mainly concerned with the self-perpetuating cycle of dependent poverty and speaks of the six basic needs of man as being freedom from want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness and a need for self-determination.

The failure of one of these six basic needs to be satisfied will result in continued personal dependency. Basic needs are interdependent. None precedes another, or is more important than another, or is a substitute for another. Absence or freedom from any one of want, disease, ignorance, squalor or idleness makes self-determination impossible.

Freedom from all these without the right to self-determination is virtually to be in goal or apartheid . . . In everyday terms Aborigines need health, houses, employment and education. Health, houses, employment and education are needed all at once because they are interdependent.

They are interdependent because they are a part of the ecological environment, and because the total institutionalisation of settlements means they are closed systems not affected greatly by an external environment. It is precisely for this reason that administrators felt that they could exert a strong influence over Aborigines, since they had control over most aspects of their daily lives. There is enough evidence to show, however, that settlements produced the reverse effect so that rather than being prepared 'for admission to the general society', Aboriginal people were kept well away from it. Tatz (1972:14) makes the same point when writing about the politics of Aboriginal health:

I am saying that what nourishes their disease pattern and inflates their death rate is the *total institutionalisation* of Aborigines on settlements and missions; *our* ending their semi-nomadism, which saw them in a far healthier state than now; *our* imprisonment of them in their own excreta, the lack of water, electricity, adequate housing and facilities, for environmental sanitation; and their inadequate feeding, wage levels, job occupations, general education and sound health education. Each of these aspects is very much within the control and management of administration. The whole welfare program is, in fact, predicated on the ability of governmental 'social' engineers to produce environmental, social, cultural and technical change. For those at the receiving end, there is not much to choose between paternalism of the assimilationist or the segregationist variety . . .

A recent symposium on health care for Aborigines (Hetzl et al., 1974:xix) endorsed the principle that

the current disastrous health situation is a by-product of the complexity and diversity of an Aboriginal society under the pressure of European society. It is a total community problem and not primarily one of individual health. A strategy to meet this problem requires a comprehensive approach aimed at drastic improvement in education, housing, and economic opportunity as well as health services.

Under the new policy of self-determination, an active attempt is being made to implement a community development approach. The former Superintendents of Aboriginal settlements have given way to community advisers whose role is to help the community define its needs and locate the resources to meet them. However, although the policy implies that Aboriginal people are able to determine the nature and pace of their own development, in reality they continue to be subjected to political, economic and legal constraints, which maintain them in a state of dependency. The current administration is endeavouring to break up the total institutional nature of communities but, because of their isolation from the dominant society, Aborigines are still very much under the control of a government bureaucracy. Until Aborigines have some political power and can muster numbers behind them, it is unlikely that they will be able to determine their own future. This lack of power contributes to their depressed minority status and, on all socio-economic indicators, they lag behind the more affluent dominant society. Councils often seem to have little control over the expenditure of funds and are not able to determine their own priorities. Communities are expected to make rapid decisions about the size of schools when they have not had an opportunity to develop any viable economic enterprises or while they are thinking about moves towards decentralisation. In some respects, a model of community development might have been easier to adopt while the Welfare Branch had full control over such areas as health, education, employment, etc., since it was in a better position to determine its own priorities and ensure co-ordination. Under the present administrative arrangements, however, the various functional departments have responsibility for Aborigines and they tend to establish their own programs and budgets without seeing the real need for co-ordination at the local level.

Housing

Housing facilities for Aborigines vary enormously from community to community and even within one community. Nearly all communities, whether settlement, mission or pastoral property have a camp section in which families live in roughly constructed corrugated iron huts or in some cases tarpaulins suspended over poles and reinforced with bushes. Sometimes there is only one water tap for this group and a shared ablution block may be situated on the other side of the camp.

Because houses have not been adapted to the way of life of Aboriginal people, overcrowding is common and families live in squalor and dirt. In

most communities, sanitary conditions are poor and it is not uncommon for toilet blocks to be in disrepair and totally inadequate for the population using them. The problem is aggravated in Central Australia, where washing facilities are meagre and the likelihood of disease is augmented by the presence of many dogs helping to keep people warm during the cold nights. A study by Francis et al. (1971) clearly indicates the extent to which poor sanitary conditions on a settlement in Central Australia contributed to morbidity rates.

In most government settlements, an attempt has been made to provide some housing and until recently three designs corresponding to the level of 'integration' into white society were adopted. The first of these is the King-strand, which consists of two rooms with an open shelter and is built of sheets of metal. If a family shows that it is able to look after this house then it may progress to a stage two house, which is the same basic design but with the open verandah enclosed to make an additional room. It is not surprising that Aborigines prefer to live outside these 'houses' and use them mainly for storing possessions since in the heat of the day they are impossible to sleep in. Stage three houses are of Housing Commission standard and very few had been built since few families had shown the skills necessary to be able to maintain such a western-style house. There has been no adaptation of the style to the life-style or environment of the Aborigines likely to use them and there is a vicious cycle of families being allocated such houses, adapting them to their own purposes, and thereby reinforcing the belief that housing of this standard should not be made available until families show they can look after them. Such houses are considered a 'reward' for those who have demonstrated they can live like whites, and on some missions these houses are allocated to Aboriginal 'christian' families by the Superintendent so that they might be a model to others.

Because Aboriginal people have not been involved in design of houses or their location, those houses have been quite unsuitable to their life-style. Most 'town' plans have houses neatly laid out in conventional straight rows, quite oblivious to the traditional patterns of clustering among extended families (see the article by Downing, 1974 on the spatial relationships between family camps). In some communities, notably Methodist missions, a rule stipulated that those moving into newly constructed houses must be nuclear families only and that they would be removed if more relations moved in.

As a rule, the houses of white staff are away from the Aboriginal camp and in some places Aboriginal people are not allowed near the white

compound. An attempt has been made on one mission at least to integrate housing for Aborigines and whites, and this is occurring *de facto* in other communities as Aborigines take up staff positions and move into houses originally built for white staff.

Under the Labor Government, housing was an important area of policy and there was a commitment to housing all Aborigines within ten years. To meet this goal, Housing Associations under control of local Aborigines have been established in most communities and are responsible for determining the housing needs through a self-help program, which also provides employment. Consultants and accountants have been appointed to these Associations and theoretically should provide designs which meet the needs of the community. However, many problems have been encountered with these Associations and in several communities the rate of building is so slow that after two years the only houses completed have been those for white staff employed by the community.

The sub-standard housing conditions in which most Aborigines live would appear to be inimical to school achievement and thereby reinforce the interdependency between education, housing, health and employment. Most curricula adopted for use in Aboriginal schools presume a fairly wide and similar experiential background as that of white children, but it is obvious that Aboriginal children lack books, educational facilities and other experiences that mediate achievement in western terms. While Aboriginal children live in a complex society and rich natural environment, the skills they acquire to adapt to this life-style are given no credence in the present educational system.

Health

The Australian Aboriginal population scores significantly lower on health indicators than the non-Aboriginal population. Indices such as life expectancy, crude death rate and infant mortality clearly indicate the different standards of health between the dominant society and the Aboriginal population. The pattern of sickness among Aborigines is in fact closer to that of the developing areas of the tropical world. Moodie (1973) has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of Aboriginal health and he writes (p.119):

Accepting that Aboriginal mortality rates may be a poor indicator of levels of health (in terms of the prevalence and incidence of physical illness and disability) they nevertheless point to broad health patterns, particularly in relation to physical, economic and social environment.

One of the most significant features of the Aboriginal mortality patterns lies in the age and cause distribution relative to Australian norms — high rates for death in early childhood, and in particular the high death rates in the second year. Such deaths may be caused by specific diseases, but the pattern itself points to more fundamental causes: the inability of the Aboriginal community to cope very well with the rearing of children through a period which has become the safest period of life for white Australians.

The direct medical causes of mortality and morbidity are respiratory infections, gastroenteritis, malnutrition and protein deficiency (Moodie, 1973; Maxwell et al., 1968). Hookworm is endemic and contributes to lethargy and apparent lack of motivation (Cawte, 1968), while ear and eye infections are widespread and in many instances severely impair hearing and eyesight (Maxwell and Elliott, 1969). Moodie (1973:244-6) draws from his analysis of quantitative data on Aboriginal health a qualitative picture of Aboriginal health among tribal Aborigines. It emphasises the important health problems at various ages and is one of possibility for the individual but certainty for the community.

A baby is born under some medical or nursing supervision, to a full-blood mother who has already had several pregnancies. The mother has come from an economically-poor and unhygienic environment to which she will return within a matter of a few days with her new-born baby. The baby is of low birth weight and has less-than-optimal stores of nutrients due to maternal malnutrition and possibly prematurity at birth. Alternatively, if the baby is large, it may still have low stores of some nutrients and will have undergone physiological stress and possibly injury as a result of a difficult labour. During the first month the baby will gain weight rapidly as a result of adequate breast feeding unless it is one of the 6 per cent who die during this period from a combination of pre- and post-natal nutritional deficiency, birth, and infective stresses. The baby will continue to grow rapidly over the next few months, and reach one of his health pinnacles at around four months. Thereafter his growth rate will decline, due to a partial failure of the quality and quantity of his mother's breast-milk supply, and the onset of a long period during which he will acquire repeated respiratory and gastro-intestinal infections from his environment, particularly from his siblings and other children. If his mother's milk supply fails, he may acquire *additional* infections via prepared milk feeds and may,

theoretically at any rate, be deprived of specific substances in breast-milk aiding specific immunity. Another 4 per cent of babies will die before the end of the first year. Termination of lactation, whether through infant death or failure of lactation, will hasten the subsequent pregnancy which will replace the child lost, or supplant him in his mother's care with another infant likely to face even greater nutritional stresses.

In the second year another 3 to 4 per cent of children will die from the accumulating infective and nutritional stresses. If he survives, the child will become anaemic, underweight, and his capacity to digest lactose will be impaired. As the child explores his domestic environment, he will start acquiring the local bowel parasites which will chronically infest him at least until his late childhood. He will be bitten by mosquitoes transmitting a variety of virus infections, some of which will make him sick, and sometimes leave a permanent handicap — physical or intellectual. Flies, fingers, and close contact with others will bring him trachoma, gastroenteritis and respiratory infections. Repeated infections will greatly tax his immunity-producing mechanisms. He will roll into fires, fall onto sharp objects, and risk drowning if he lives near water, and learn by personal experience how to survive the physical hazards of his environment.

If he survives to school age, his chances of further survival are good, but during middle and late childhood he will remain below optimal health due to anaemia, worm infestations, recurrent infections, sub-optimal nutrition, and risks permanent disability from deafness, or severe injury. Exposure to tuberculosis, leprosy, yaws, or rheumatic fever may result in a subclinical infection at this age with the possibility of developing the disease in later childhood or in adult life. Up until the age of puberty his mental health and personality development will benefit from a warm, generally permissive family atmosphere but there may be some conflicts generated by his contact with white Australian cultural values (at school) which he cannot resolve at home.

Much more than any white child he must learn to lead a 'double life' according to different concepts and values at home and at school. Although he may become adept at changing gear mentally, each set of values will undermine the systematic interrelationship of the other set. If he chooses eclectically from both sets of values (to gain maximum advantage from each set), the result will be a collection rather than a system. The psychological stresses built in at this stage may not become manifest until his values are put to the test — at the stage when he

seeks socialisation in the wider community and starts to acquire adult roles.

In later childhood and early adult life his physical health will improve as parasite loads wane, and he eventually benefits from the broad pattern of immunity to virus and some bacterial infections acquired in infancy, and is able to fend for himself to a degree in meeting his nutritional needs. He has reached his second pinnacle of physical health, but only after a prolonged 'survival-of-the-fittest' battle which will have left him with some residual defects — retarded growth, permanently damaged organs (heart, lungs, kidneys, intestinal mucous membrane, ears, eyes, teeth, bones and joints, or cerebral cortex). Nevertheless, he will probably feel healthy, and apart from the infrequently visible scars of past illnesses he will appear healthy. The invisible scars, physical and psychological, and if he is unlucky in the chronic infection lottery, the effects of tuberculosis or leprosy, will be added to the degenerative diseases and occupational injuries, and the cumulative effects of alcohol and tobacco, to hasten severe incapacity or early death. The fact, revealed in the mortality statistics, that the survivors of the severe health hazards of infancy and childhood still have higher age-specific death rates than Australian whites at all ages thereafter does not suggest that the 'fittest' are physically fit. However, some allowance must be made for the quantity and quality of medical care available to adult Aborigines in the north — care which in these circumstances may not postpone the sequelae of diseases and disorders acquired in childhood or commencing in adulthood.

There are a number of factors contributing to the high mortality and morbidity rates among Aborigines. Moodie (1973) includes four: high incidence and prevalence of infection in Aboriginal communities; high threshold for motivation to seek treatment; difficulties in obtaining treatment; suggested increased susceptibility to severe and overwhelming infection arising out of synergism between malnutrition and infection. Traditional attitudes towards sickness constitute another factor. Hamilton (1974) comments on the approach to sickness of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. 'The belief of Aboriginal people is that all ill health is caused not by their own personal practices, nor by "germs", but by the intervention of agencies not usually amenable to individual or family control. In Central Australia all the more serious illnesses are believed to be the result of evil influences lodged in the body.'

Tatz (1972:5) maintains that bureaucracies, while acknowledging the Aboriginal health problem, nevertheless contribute to its causes:

The Aboriginal penchant for grog, their stubborn adherence to what is seen as a 'bad' traditional way of life, their general perversity in refusing or rejecting enlightenment and, worse, their ingratitude, are clearly the factors at work. Causality, in short, lies in *their* culture, customs and cussedness. There is no acknowledgement that 'our' system of services can be, or is, deficient in any way.

Dr Kirke (1971:17-18) effectively repudiated the bureaucracy's 'its their fault' syndrome. Despite the search for specific genetic causes of Aboriginal morbidity, he wrote, 'there is no conclusive evidence that most problems are not acquired as a result of environmental conditions'. The differences between Aborigines and whites, medically, were those related to the environment. 'The real point is that Aborigines do not suffer from weird or little understood diseases peculiar to themselves.' Tatz (1972) echoes this view in stating that what nourishes the Aboriginal disease pattern and inflates the Aboriginal death rate is the total institutionalisation of Aborigines on settlements and missions. Such aspects as poor sanitation, lack of water and electricity, inadequate housing and facilities for environmental sanitation, inadequate feeding, wage levels, job occupations, general education and sound health education, are all very much within the control and management of the administration. Bureaucracy, however, is resistant to innovative action and devises strategies for coping with challenge to the status quo.

Since Labor came to office in 1972, an attempt has been made to introduce changes in the delivery of health care on Aboriginal communities. At the administrative level at least, the general approach to health is moving closer to a community development rather than a clinical model and the need to build on Aboriginal cultural patterns of health care is slowly being recognised, if little acted upon at this stage. Attempts are also being made to develop for Aboriginal health workers realistic training programs that do not take the individual away from his home community for long periods of training.

Employment

The range of employment opportunities for Aborigines is restricted, whether on reserves, pastoral properties, or in urbanised areas. This is a result both of their lack of appropriate work habits, attitudes, and skills, and of the economic structure of the Northern Territory. Aboriginal communities generally have schools, small hospitals and other services

associated with small townships. At the time of the research, a training allowance scheme was in force and each community had a semi-flexible establishment of 'trainee' or assistant positions to which it could recruit Aborigines of all working ages, both those continuously resident and those who came to it from elsewhere, permanently or temporarily.

For this employment, trainees received a 'training allowance' graduated according to the skill and the responsibility for their jobs. The 'skills' acquired by Aborigines qualified them for work in their own communities only and thus any individual who wished to move into urban areas to obtain employment discovered that this level of training was not accepted by other government and educational bodies. One of the election promises of the Labor Government was to obtain award wages for Aborigines. The training allowance scheme has recently been phased out and since the end of 1974 all Aborigines are either working at award rates or receiving social service benefits.

Most settlements and missions are dependent on heavy government subsidies and rarely make a large contribution to their own social or economic independence. Some, however, are not closed economies, but derive an income from such industries as fishing, forestry, cattle raising, and sale of artifacts. The Labor Government was encouraging Aboriginal enterprises including brick-making, fishing, a furniture factory, cattle projects and arts and crafts, and they represent a significant trend towards establishing some degree of local autonomy and self-sufficiency. The establishment of towns in mining areas, forming centres of European population, also provides the opportunity for offering a range of services such as the provision of fresh produce, sale of artifacts, and building.

In most settlements and missions, on-the-job training is provided in such fields as forestry, saw-milling, building, machine and plant operating, vehicle maintenance and repair, catering, and butchering. Off-settlement courses exist for women in nursing, home management, teaching, canteen procedures, secretarial work, care of lepers. For men there are courses in sanitation and hygiene, welding, butchering, building, carpentry, and mechanics.

Jobs are available in the mining industry itself, and companies have expressed a willingness to employ Aborigines. However, the lack of skills required for operating complex machinery has restricted this avenue of employment in some companies, notably Comalco at Nhulumbuy; Gemco, on the other hand, has successfully trained several Aboriginal employees for responsible operating jobs at Groote Eylandt (Rogers, 1969).

Pastoral properties also provide employment for Aborigines as stockmen and domestics. At 31 December 1969, 1481 men and women had worked for some period during the year, although comparison with figures from previous years reveals that the numbers of Aborigines employed in the pastoral industry have been decreasing.

Figures for Aborigines working in urban areas, and the nature of their jobs, are not available, although their lack of education suggests that employment is generally restricted to unskilled and semi-skilled occupations.

In seeking to raise the aspirations of students and provide them with basic work skills, education must take into account the existing economic structure and range of employment opportunities. It would seem that this factor is often ignored and numerous cases can be cited of young men and women who left the community to further their education or to follow special courses, only to find that there were no employment opportunities utilising their new skills once they returned home. The necessity to ensure that aspirations do not outstrip their potential for attainment is recognised by Lengyel (1961):

Individuals, once formed, must be accommodated by the community in a manner which at least roughly corresponds to their expectations, otherwise they will become the dissident and disaffected elements which constitute a permanent source of social friction. Hence educational development must be integrated with other measures to promote economic and social progress ideally in such a manner as neither to outstrip nor to hamper evolution.

Socialisation and social organisation of Aborigines

Anthropologists have documented the traditional life of Aboriginal groups before sustained contact with Europeans. While it is clear that settlement life has exerted a considerable influence on these traditional values, the cultural life of Aborigines is still very different from that of the dominant society and Aboriginal identity continues to be viable with a strong cultural base. Contact with Europeans has destroyed the traditional dependence of Aborigines on the ecological environment and many aspects of their social structure which served that dependence have become dysfunctional, thereby contributing to the disintegration of traditional Aboriginal society (Albrecht, 1970). However, the life-style of Aborigines today still reflects their former hunter-gatherer technology and acts as a barrier to modernisation.

Socialisation of Aboriginal children remains informal and a child learns by actually participating in the life of the community. The group takes responsibility for the care and socialisation of the child, and kin not only satisfy his physical needs but also take an active part in instructing him in the knowledge, skills, values, and norms of the group. Child-rearing up to the age of puberty is very permissive and few restrictions are placed on the behaviour of children. To counteract this permissiveness in childhood, order is formally maintained by the authority of the elders who control the rites of initiation and acceptance into the totemic life. Initiation ceremonies mark the passage from boyhood to manhood; they generally take place around the age of puberty. Education has had some impact on this aspect of Aboriginal culture and ceremonies may be deferred until the long summer vacation to avoid interference with schooling. With the disintegration of Aboriginal culture in many communities, the authority of the elders is not so effective and problems of discipline abound.

Traditional Aboriginal society was polygamous and continues to be in many tribes. A girl is promised at birth to a man who is in the prescribed kinship relation and she is usually taken as a wife at the onset of puberty. In areas where there is greater contact with the dominant society, the promise system has broken down, although the importance of kinship or subsection for marriage is often retained. In other areas, a husband may wait until his promised wife has completed her schooling but this compromise is not always made as education sometimes produces defiance in girls and a refusal to comply with the promise system of marriage.

Within the family there has been a change in economic roles following settlement in communities. The male has become the principal wage-earner while the female's traditional role as a food-gatherer has been replaced by domestic duties at the relatively simple level that camp life demands. Rose (1965) argues that the increased economic responsibilities of the male, together with the decline of woman's responsibilities will reduce the incidence of polygamy since extra wives are now an economic burden rather than an asset to any particular man. It seems likely that as more girls receive an education and acquire skills for modern occupational status, they will move increasingly into the work force and a new pattern of relationships between men and women will probably evolve.

Despite the incursion of European mores into traditional patterns of culture, socialisation in Aboriginal communities appears to be directed towards the retention of the old order. This view is expressed by the

Berndts (1964:158):

Husband and wife are expected, ordinarily, to become parents, and to rear sons and daughters who will repeat in all essential features their own progress from childhood to adulthood. The whole emphasis in this process, through the initiation rites, for example, is not on being different from previous generations, but on being the same . . . Even so, these Aboriginal societies are, or were, tradition oriented. They stress the value of keeping to forms laid down in the past, rather than building on them with a view to creating something different, or new.

This socialisation process serves to stress the individual's subordination to the group and is reinforced by the system of social organisation exemplified by the kinship system (Berndt and Berndt 1964:91).

In Aboriginal Australia kinship is the articulating force for all social interaction. The kinship system of a particular tribe or language unit is in effect a shorthand statement about the network of interpersonal relations within that unit — a blueprint to guide its members.

Kinship systems take a variety of forms, but in general, under these systems, it is usual for a person to classify, to address, to refer to, and to deal with every other Aboriginal within his social universe by some kin term, whether or not that person is demonstrably related by blood or marriage. The systems are more than simply a set of rules for the application of the appropriate terminology to one's relatives or quasi-relatives. They are also associated with a set of normative statements about the behaviour that ought to be evinced in any relationship described by a pair of kinship terms, and the reciprocal obligations required. As the Berndts observe (1964:107),

. . . there is in every community an arrangement of obligations which every growing child has to learn. In this network of duties and debts, rights and credits, all adults have commitments of one kind or another. Mostly, not invariably, these are based on kin relationships. All gifts and services are viewed as reciprocal. This is basic to their economy . . . Everything must be repaid, in kind, or in equivalent.

The system has repercussions for the money economy operating in Aboriginal communities today. The temporarily affluent are expected to

share their money with immediate kin; it thereupon diffuses throughout the community via the kinship networks. The constant discharge of kinship obligations prevents the individual accumulation of cash, inhibits achievement motivation directed towards the reward of more pay, and removes from individuals the necessity to work.

Aborigines still hold traditional supernatural beliefs, which have an important influence on their behaviour. The basic Aboriginal belief which underlies the whole religious structure is called totemism. This has been defined by Elkin (1954:133) as 'a view of nature and life, of the universe and man, which colours and influences the Aborigines' social groupings and mythologies, inspires their rituals and links them to the past. It unites them with nature's activities and species in a bond of mutual life giving, and imparts confidence amidst the vicissitudes of life'. Associated with totemism is a multitude of taboos that are still observed and are reinforced by fears of sorcery and witchcraft. Such taboos occur in most spheres of behaviour and govern interpersonal relations, placing rigid restrictions on communication between certain reciprocal pairs of individuals. While these may be suspended in the classroom, they continue to be observed in the camp situation.

In the following chapters, some of the important values held by Aborigines are compared with the values held to underly achievement behaviour in the dominant society. It would seem that the current education system is not in harmony with the patterns of child-rearing or the traditional attitude to adolescence as a very formative period when boys become initiated and girls go to their promised husbands. To remove children from their communities at this stage of their lives might be expected to have a significant impact on the social stability of the community. It is clear that in this and other ways the incursion of the Europeans and their activities into the traditional domains of Aboriginal society has brought changes. Nevertheless, Aboriginal life-style continues to differ radically from that of the dominant society. Educators must take cultural differences into account in devising the school organisation, curricula, and ultimate goals.

Language

Aboriginal dialects are still spoken by the majority of Aborigines, and even among school children English remains a second language. Dialect is always spoken in the camp and a large proportion of the adult population is unable to communicate in English. Since several Aboriginal languages

are usually spoken in any one community, most individuals speak one such language and are able to understand one or more others. However, there is an increasing tendency for the language of the majority group to replace other Aboriginal languages.

The large number of Aboriginal languages (over seventy are still spoken in the Northern Territory) and their purely oral transmission place severe restrictions on the use of the vernacular as the medium of instruction in schools. At the time of the research, the official education policy stipulated that English should be the language of instruction and it was first introduced in the infant school. The Labor Government, however, introduced teaching in the vernacular with English as a second language and a number of pilot studies are currently in progress.

Students who attend residential colleges are drawn from communities throughout the Northern Territory and English is therefore the only common language. The use of English as the medium of instruction in earlier phases of schooling facilitates transfer to a college where it is impracticable to retain the vernacular.

Leisure and social activities

The leisure and social activities of Aborigines reflect both traditional and western life-styles, although there is considerable variation between communities in the range available. Traditional activities are still a vital part of the life-style of Aborigines in many communities, particularly the more isolated settlements and missions. Although Aborigines no longer rely on hunting and fishing as the sole source of food, they continue to pursue these activities, generally in the western working pattern, on weekends. In areas where game and fish are plentiful, children spend time after school and during the holidays hunting and fishing. In most instances, western technology has replaced traditional artifacts: rifles, fishing lines, traps, and nets are commonly used and some individual families and tribes own motor boats and landrovers.

Dance and music continue to form an integral part of Aboriginal social life, and many ceremonies are still observed, although they have undoubtedly lost some of their original religious significance. The younger generation often does not actively participate, but individual members are usually involved in the social setting. Initiation and other ceremonies are often cyclical in nature and continue over a period of months: song and dance are both social and religious activities that fill in evenings around the camp fire at night. In the more detribalised areas and on pastoral

properties, ceremonies are still performed, but they are often deferred until the off-season of work. Much leisure time is spent sitting around the camp talking, or gambling with cards and marbles.

Many settlements and missions have social clubs and other western-type activities, which are organised by both Aborigines and whites. Money raised by social clubs is used for various community activities. Sport is very popular and team game competitions are frequently arranged between different Aboriginal communities. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides are organised in some communities and provide opportunities for young Aborigines to combine both traditional and western skills. Film screenings are a regular feature of community life on settlements and missions, and these represent the major form of mass communication with the western world. In some communities dances are held for the younger people, although approval is not always forthcoming from the older Aborigines who see such activities as undermining their authority. Occasional visits to settlements and missions are made by professional entertainers and these provide some variety in the usual range of social activities.

3 Objectives of education for tribal Aborigines

The goals of education adopted for Aborigines in the Northern Territory must be interpreted against the background of policy at that time, since education was seen as a major social change agent which could hasten the advancement of the Aboriginal population into the dominant society. One set of goals stressed the attainment of 'modern occupational status' and the internalisation of values mediating achievement behaviour, while the second major set stressed the importance of the retention of Aboriginal identity. This chapter enunciates in greater detail these general goals and the potential incompatibility between them.

Early development and aims

The development and underlying philosophy of education for Aborigines in the Northern Territory reflects the general phases of policy adopted at the national level. During the protectionist period no need for formal education was recognised and the only attempt at providing Aborigines with basic educational skills was carried out by missions. With the adoption of assimilation as a policy, however, it was clear that absorption of Aborigines into the general Australian community could be achieved only through the development of effective educational programs. However, it was not until 1950 that the Commonwealth Office of Education took responsibility for Aboriginal education, and from that date there was a rapid and widespread growth in schools.

The 1950 policy on Aboriginal education emphasised the need for bicultural and vernacular teaching but both the Commonwealth Office of Education and the Welfare Branch, which assumed responsibility for Aboriginal education in 1956, chose to ignore these. The Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration continued to control and administer Aboriginal education until the Australian Department of Education assumed responsibility for education throughout the Territory in 1973. The devolution of responsibilities to the functional departments concerned is an important facet of the Labor Government's policy in Aboriginal Affairs. The need to transfer education from the umbrella Welfare Branch to the Department concerned with education for the

dominant society was advocated by Tatz (1964) in his thesis on the administration of the Welfare Branch, but it required a change in government before any such administrative changes were made.

The policies and aims underlying education for Aborigines in the Northern Territory at the time of the research reported here are contained in the Watts-Gallacher Report. This was tabled in 1964, following an investigation by two educationists into the curriculum and teaching methods in use in Aboriginal schools. The goals stated in this Report correspond to those represented in the revised policy of assimilation or 'integration' adopted in 1965 as the national policy. This Report continues to be the major blueprint for Aboriginal education despite recent changes in government policy.

The Watts-Gallacher Report

The basic principles underlying Aboriginal education are set forth in the Watts-Gallacher Report (1964:53):

1. Aboriginal children should have full equality of educational opportunity with all other Australian children.
2. The education of Aboriginal children must take cognisance of the European and Aboriginal cultures and must be developed in such a way as to help the Aborigines to achieve their own integration of Aboriginal and European beliefs and ways.
3. The Aboriginal culture must be recognised and respected by all teachers and instructors.
4. Curriculum content and methods of instruction should be so planned and organised as to ensure to the fullest extent the transfer of school learnings to village living.
5. Education, as an instrument of social progress, must be conceived as a continuing process, and emphasis should be placed on the development of appropriate programmes for all age groups. Every effort should be made to lessen the dichotomy that exists between the old and the young.
6. Education must be a basic concern of all settlement and mission staff members. Whatever their specific field, their primary function must be seen as educational, directed to the continuing development of the Aboriginal people.
7. There should be recognition that the education of Aborigines, at this stage of social change in the Northern Territory, is a special field of education and that all who work in this field need special training if

educational planning and action are to be fully effective.

Although these basic principles apply to all Aborigines, it is clear that there are wide differences among individuals in their stage of acculturation. Therefore, if equality of educational opportunity is to be achieved, educational programs must make allowances for individual differences. The Watts-Gallacher Report recognises two groups of individuals for whom the goals of education differ: a. the educationally advanced children; and b. the children still very close to tribal beliefs and tribal patterns of living.

The same basic priorities within the educational program hold for both these groups. The most essential needs are: to develop social, cultural and moral attitudes, and to aid children towards personal and social development; and to master certain basic skills and acquire essential knowledge. The advanced group, however, is expected to make more progress in spheres of the school's academic program such as the ability to communicate in English, arithmetical understanding, and a greater depth of understanding of their own culture and of western culture. Students in this group are considered to have the ability to master the fundamental elements of a primary school education and to advance to secondary education, ultimately to play a significant role within their own establishments or to make a responsible contribution within the general community. While there is a need for the less advanced group to develop similar skills and understandings, the realities of their backgrounds and characteristics modify and reduce expectations of their performance. The curriculum is therefore constructed so as to ensure meaningful learning and to foster the possibility to transfer of school learning to the village situation. In basing the system on these two distinct categories of students, Watts and Gallacher seem to hold the mistaken belief that nobody in group a could ever be in group b, and vice versa.

Some objectives of education for Aborigines

While the principles outlined in the Watts-Gallacher Report provide a general orientation or philosophy of education, some specific objectives were made more recently by the then Director for Aboriginal Education in the Northern Territory (Gallacher, 1969:101): 'Indeed, an underlying assumption of our philosophy of education is that a major task is to lead the Aboriginal people to an acceptance of the need for, and the deriving satisfaction from, gainful occupation.' In order to achieve this objective, however, Gallacher asserts that education must seek to change certain

'cultural factors' or values which inhibit the academic achievement of Aboriginal students at this stage of their advancement in the dominant society. While there are many values that the education system seeks to inculcate, some of these are more basic than others to achievement in the western world and are consequently given higher priority in education.

A second fundamental objective of education is the retention of Aboriginal identity, and educational policy stresses that 'the newer learnings (attitudes, values, skills) should be developed in ways that will enhance self-esteem, self-confidence, and pride in Aboriginal heritage' (Gallacher, 1969:102). It is not certain, however, that these two basic goals — the attainment of modern occupational status and the retention of Aboriginal identity — can be attained, in practice, simultaneously under the existing system of education.

In theory, it is possible for members of a cultural group to acquire new skills and behaviour patterns without substantially altering their self-image and it would appear that the Aboriginal people themselves have been doing this from their earliest contact with the white man. However, when education is placed in the hands of a group of teachers such as those employed by the Commonwealth Office of Education from 1950 to about 1972, it is unlikely that the self-image of Aboriginal children would go unscathed. Moreover, research among other ethnic groups has indicated that if the values, attitudes and skills to be changed are central to their ethnic identity, then it is likely that a substantial change will occur in this identity.

Hughes (1958:27) makes this point in relation to the St Lawrence Eskimos:

It is one thing if a group of people are only using and assimilating as their own the manufactures and external paraphernalia of the outside group with whom they happen to be in contact. It is quite a different matter if they begin to feel that they no longer want to be thought of or to think of themselves as belonging to their original group, but rather conceive that they are *part* of the outside group. At such a point, a watershed has been crossed in the process of psychocultural change.

Other research in the culture contact area also supports this contention that values are a critical element of ethnic identity and the more salient they are to the life style of the individual or group, the more likely it is that changes in values will accompany changes in identity (Chance, 1965; Wintrob and Sindell, 1969).

The extent to which education can be successful in changing certain values of Aborigines which are inimical to achievement in a western context, and at the same time encourage the retention of Aboriginal identity, depends firstly on the saliency of those values to the Aboriginal people in their present environment.

Values related to achievement behaviour

The first value which education seeks to change is that of time. Gallacher (1969:100) states that the emphasis in education must be placed on future orientation: '... to introduce them to our time values poses a problem of considerable magnitude, and regrettable though it may be ... this is one of the tasks with which education must sympathetically concern itself'. This contrasts markedly with the concept of time held by Aborigines which Elkin (1964) maintains is oriented to the present, and reflects their daily search for food. However, contrasted with this emphasis on the present in the fulfilment of daily needs is the importance of the past in the system of Aboriginal beliefs that governs the life of the individual. Stanner (1965:216) has observed that 'any anthropologists who have worked with Aborigines commonly note that a supposed past — the whole doctrine of the Dream Time — is said to, and to all appearances does, weigh upon the present with overmastering authority'.

It would appear then, that emphasis in traditional Aboriginal culture is on the present and the past, whereas the achievement-oriented individual in western society is characterised by future orientation. Associated with this future time value is that of saving. Gallacher maintains that an integral aspect of the western way of life is to forgo immediate pleasures and to think ahead so that the future might be more secure. In relation to the Aborigines, therefore, 'Our education programme must bring to the Aborigines a realisation that his current way of life necessitates a concern for the future and, in particular, a saving for that future.' (Gallacher, 1969:100).

A second value with which education must concern itself is relational. Gallacher (1969:101) asserts that stress on the individual is one of the dominant hallmarks of western culture and a spirit of competitiveness must be imbued in the Aboriginal: 'Again regrettably, but realistically, we must, as educators, find methods by which we may sow the seeds of competitiveness — to a degree at least — if the Aboriginal child is to win for himself recognition in our highly competitive society.' Among Aborigines, emphasis is on a dominant collateral orientation which calls for the primacy of the goals and welfare of the laterally extended group.

The precarious balance between the ecological environment and survival necessitated an elaborate social organisation whereby the needs of one individual or group could be satisfied by another group or individual. The whole kinship system which permeates all aspects of Aboriginal behaviour and philosophy emphasises the group.

Berndt and Berndt (1968:6) maintain that this aspect of social relations is of extreme significance in understanding Aboriginal life:

Aboriginal societies usually are, or have been, fairly small scale; and traditionally their members are dependent on one another in both economic and ritual pursuits. In such circumstances, the kinship system, with its associated behavioural patterns, constitutes a more or less effective blue print. In social living, it is always useful to know what to expect from others, and what they in turn can expect — kinship provides such a guide. In all aspects of life, it is the major articulating force, a basis for social interaction.

Such a kinship system mitigates against competitive behaviour, and co-operation among individuals dominates patterns of interaction. The individual must subordinate his personal requirements to the common good of the group. While it is not axiomatic that kinship systems lead to co-operative behaviour, observations by educationists (Gallacher, 1969; Duncan, 1969) and anthropologists (Berndt and Berndt, 1968; Elkin, 1964) suggest that among the Australian Aborigines co-operation between members is a fundamental aspect of social organisation. A recent empirical study by Sommerlad and Bellingham (1972) confirms that Aboriginal school students show more co-operative behaviour than white students of a similar age and socio-economic status. Emphasis in Aboriginal society therefore appears to be on the co-operative, collateral orientation, while the achievement oriented individual in western society stresses individualism and competitive striving.

A third major cultural value which faces educators in their program of change concerns the man-nature relationship. Gallacher (1969:102) refers to this value as a 'method of learning' and notes the norm in western society of taking advantage of the natural curiosity of children. Intervention is required, and

methods used by teachers, therefore, must attempt to arouse in the children the desire to know 'how' and 'why', must familiarise them with the scientific concept of causation and must make them active and

eager in the pursuit of understanding the wider world which they must be equipped to enter.

A discussion of Aboriginal belief systems and values reveals that the Aboriginal philosophy is 'one which regards man and nature as one corporate whole for social, ceremonial, and religious purposes' (Elkin, 1937). The life of the Aboriginal is concerned with maintaining harmony with nature, rather than in the exercise of authority or power over it. Elkin (1938:211) writes about this incorporation of nature into the social system:

The life of the food-gathering Aborigines, is, as we have noticed, a matter of adjustment to and utter dependence on nature, its species, objects and phenomena. They cannot adjust themselves to these nor control them by applied science, for they know but little of the laws of nature. Moreover, they recognise that they cannot control the contingencies of life nor maintain the regular and normal order of man's seasons and products by material arts and crafts. They have, however, an alternative which prevents them from being helpless and listless, namely, to regard nature as a system of personal powers or beings who can be brought into their own moral and social order, an order of which they, as members of society, have intimate knowledge. They do this in mythology by the process of 'personalising' and then, just as they take definite attitudes towards one another, so do they act towards these personalised objects and species; they regard them with respect and adopt various ritual attitudes towards them.

This preference of Aborigines for the value orientation emphasising harmony with nature contrasts with the belief in the ability of man to master the environment that mediates educational achievement in the dominant society.

Some of the findings from recent empirical studies of part-Aborigines in contemporary society are contrary to anthropological descriptions of Aboriginal value orientations. Peak (1966), Watts (1970), and Eckerman (1971) have all undertaken research on the achievement behaviour of part-Aborigines living in urban areas. Watts (1970) studied the achievement values among two groups of part-Aborigines differing in degree of contact with the dominant society and two groups of whites selected for comparison. No differences were found between groups on preference for individuality or dominance over nature. There were significant differences on the other two values: the group of Aboriginal girls with a greater degree

of contact were less future-oriented than both groups of white girls, and the two Aboriginal groups were more doing-oriented than the white groups. Eckerman (1971) also looked at achievement values among part-Aborigines living in a settlement in Queensland which had a history of eighty years of contact with Europeans. Contrary to anthropological descriptions of the value orientations of Aborigines, she found that these Aborigines chose the future time and the individuality orientations, and had no marked preference for any orientation on the man-nature value. Peak's (1966) study of achievement motivation among part-Aborigines in New South Wales showed that achievement motivation, achievement values, and educational and vocational aspirations were all a function of social class rather than of ethnic group membership. However, these three studies were all concerned with part-Aborigines who no longer led a semi-traditional life, and who may therefore have held values different from those of the Aborigines in the present study. A recent study by Kearney and Fitzpatrick (1974) indicates that level of acculturation is associated with significant differences in psychological variables. The variables observed indicated that the Aborigines who were classified as having a high level of acculturation had a more futuristic time orientation and experienced less group cohesion and less ethnic identity than the less acculturated group. However, there were no differences between them on the man versus nature orientation.

Importance for Aboriginal identity of orientations on achievement values

The analysis of values influencing achievement behaviour indicates that certain orientations of Aboriginal culture are not merely diametrically opposed to those of the achievement-oriented individual but also form the very core of Aboriginal identity. Successful attempts to change such orientations are therefore likely to deprive the individual of the integrating basis of his identity and personal existence. It would seem that kinship (the collateral orientation on the relational value) is one such value that lies at the core of Aboriginal identity and 'in all aspects of life, is the major articulating force, a basis for social interaction' (Berndt and Berndt, 1968:6). Calley (1968:18) comments on the clash between western and Aboriginal orientations on the relational value:

It seems likely that direct attacks on Aboriginal family structure by European interests seeking to turn Aborigines into dark-skinned

replicas of middle class Europeans will be even less successful than they have been in the past. Most Aborigines I know want to preserve their Aboriginal identity and to a large extent, they see this in terms of a way of organising interpersonal relations that differ from the European way. . . . To him [the Aboriginal], what marks being an Aborigine is a willingness to help kin and be helped by them, to live in close day to day contact with them, to emphasise interpersonal relations.

The time value is probably not as important as the relational value for Aboriginal identity today. The Aborigines no longer maintain a total dependence on the ecological environment and thus a preoccupation with the present is unnecessary. While a present orientation may continue to be functional for the community life experiences of Aborigines, it is unlikely that any change to a future orientation would strike at the core of Aboriginal identity.

The traditional belief system of Aborigines continues to influence behaviour today and even the younger generation at school believes in the powers of sorcery and witchcraft (Cawte, 1968; Dawson, 1969). However, it would seem that it is possible to adopt a mastery over the environment orientation achievement behaviour while at the same time retaining traditional beliefs. Jahoda (1968:170) claims that 'contrary to a commonly held notion, there is no logical contradiction between scientific knowledge and many forms of superstitious belief' and that there is ample evidence to show that among Africans such beliefs survive education up to and including the university level. Thus any attempt to change collateral orientation to an individualistic, competitive orientation is likely to have a deleterious effect on Aboriginal identity.

Changes in values through the adoption of new reference groups

A second reason why the two objectives of Aboriginal education might not be attained concerns the way in which new values are adopted by the individual. Theorists have introduced the concept of reference groups to try and explain this phenomenon. A reference group (or reference model) is a group (or individual) to whom a person looks for guidance on his own behaviour, attitudes, and values. If he copies its behaviour or internalises it (so that he behaves in a similar manner without even thinking about it) or believes that it is the right way to behave, then that group (or individual) is said to be his reference group. A person may or may not be a member of any given reference group. If he is a member, whether or not he wishes to remain one, then the group is called his membership group (Newcomb,

1956; Merton, 1957). For example, an Aboriginal who is totally assimilated in white society would use whites as a reference group or a guide to his own behaviour, but his membership group would continue to be Aboriginal society even though he might identify as an Australian.

Reference group theory and the findings of other research studies suggest that when an individual identifies with a reference group that is characterised by achievement values, then he also comes to adopt these values as his own. Thus an Aboriginal might come to internalise the values of western society either by using the dominant society or individuals within it as his reference group or alternatively by using other Aborigines who are characterised by the achievement syndrome. If other Aborigines constitute reference models for an individual then his membership group and reference group coincide and conflict would be minimised. If whites are his reference models, and the membership group is thus different from the reference group, it might be expected that conflict would be augmented, particularly when that reference group also holds a negative image of Aborigines. Studies by Taft (1970), Western (1969) and Lippman (1973) all indicate that Australians do hold unfavourable attitudes towards Aborigines and charges of discrimination have repeatedly been levelled against whites by Aborigines in the Northern Territory.

In most communities, the significant models for Aboriginal students are other Aborigines, whether parents, kinsmen, or tribal elders. Some of the teenagers identify with western heroes such as film stars, pop singers, and fictitious super-heroes such as Batman, but it is unlikely that this reference group would embody the achievement values that education seeks to inculcate. Moreover, there appears to be a negative sanction on the internalisation of western values or behavioural norms and on close relationships with whites in the community. Williams (1971) for example notes that opposition to European missionary staff was a salient characteristic among teenage boys and any individual who annoyed or frustrated a staff member was considered a hero, while Nurcombe (1971) notes a pejorative term used by the older men to address Aboriginal youths wearing bright European shirts or similar manifestation of European culture.

In a residential college, however, students are removed from family and community influences and may be continuously exposed to an environment that embodies new value orientations. In such a situation, students may lack any feeling of security and therefore be more disposed to look for new adult figures with whom to identify, thereby obtaining some guide as to appropriate behaviour in an alien institution. If the only models are whites, then it is likely that they will constitute a reference group for the

individual and transmit new values.

If the presence of models embodying the new values encourages Aboriginal students to adopt them as a reference group, it is unlikely that they will also retain a pride in their identity as Aborigines, since the school system, the wider community and significant whites in their own immediate environment all conspire to negate Aboriginal values and culture. They constitute, in fact, a negative reference group for the individual who, in adopting some of its values, also comes to realise that his new reference group holds a devalued image of Aborigines.

Kormilda College is one such institution; the education authorities hoped to induce changes in the values of students by providing an environment that reduced the influences of Aborigines as a reference group. A study of the students at Kormilda therefore provided an excellent opportunity firstly to determine whether those students who changed their value orientations to those education sought to inculcate were at the same time able to retain a pride in their own identity as Aborigines; and secondly to determine which sorts of situation provided at Kormilda maximised the likelihood that the students would identify with models embodying the new values and develop social and scholastic skills that facilitated their acceptance into the dominant society.

4 Social structure of Kormilda College

At Kormilda the school organisation and social structure were such that the establishment of meaningful relationships between Aborigines and whites was precluded and therefore the internalisation of those values education was seeking to inculcate was inhibited. Before developing this theme, however, it seems desirable to touch briefly on the organisation of schools in the Northern Territory and the reasons underlying the establishment of Kormilda College. It becomes readily apparent that the life-style at Kormilda did not correspond to the aims of residential colleges which were laid down in the Watts-Gallacher Report.

Structure of the educational system

At the time the present research was undertaken, there was a dual system of education operating in the Northern Territory, with both the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration and the South Australian Department of Education taking responsibility for the education of all children in the Territory. The majority of Aboriginal children attended the special schools of the Welfare Branch, which were situated on missions and settlements and pastoral properties, predominantly in isolated areas. Since 1960, there has been a considerable battle to transfer education from the Welfare Branch to an educational authority responsible for educational provision for all children. The argument adopted by Tatz (1964:294) and other administrators was based on the Haldane Principle: that better results are achieved when a department concentrates on questions related to a single service than when a department's work is 'at the same time limited to a particular class of persons and extended to every variety of provision for them'. Although a Select Committee on the Educational Needs of the People of the Northern Territory recommended as far back as 1962 that education should be removed from the Welfare Branch and make a part of the Northern Territory Administration, the Minister for Territories made a decision before the report was released, that Aboriginal education should remain within the Welfare Branch. It was not until 1973, with the creation of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs under a Labor Government that

education was transferred to the Australian Department of Education, in line with a policy of devolving all responsibilities to the functional departments concerned.

Up until 1973, the non-Aboriginal population, together with some of those Aborigines who lived in urban areas, attended community schools that followed the syllabuses of the South Australian Department of Education and were staffed predominantly by teachers from that Department. However, since Aboriginal education catered for primary and vocationally-oriented post-primary students only, those Aborigines who reached academic secondary school transferred from special schools to the community schools and hence came under the control of the South Australian Department of Education.

Organisational structure of special schools

The system of school organisation adopted for Welfare Branch special schools was multi-purpose, since it catered for the two basic groups of students, advanced and less advanced. All students first completed three years in an ungraded infant school. At the end of this period, as a result of varying levels of acculturation, students had achieved different levels of school performance. At this stage they were categorised as falling into either the more advanced group, which represented a minority of students, or the less advanced group. The categorisation was made by the teacher of the infant school, together with the head teacher and the district inspector, on the base of academic achievement and emotional and social maturity.

The less advanced group entered the general stream where the principle of ungraded structure continued. The students in this group transferred from the infant school at eight-plus years and spent the following three years in the intermediate class, then passed to the senior class for an additional two years. On completion of primary schooling, children in the general stream transferred for three more years to the post-primary school established on their own settlement or mission, or to a district post-primary school. Post-primary education involved lessons in basic subjects, but emphasis was placed on domestic science for the girls and manual training for the boys, in an attempt to provide students with skills for future employment and societal roles.

The students in the more advanced group entered the upper stream following completion of infant school. Since they were expected eventually to progress to community schools for secondary education, the school organisation and curriculum were designed to facilitate this transfer.

Because the community schools of the Northern Territory were governed by the South Australian Education Department, Grades 3 to 7 in the upper stream were based on a consideration of the goals of that system and of the characteristics and achievements of the Aboriginal children. While there was divergence in some areas between the South Australian Grade 3 curriculum and that recommended for the upper stream Aboriginal children, the two programs progressively came together until by Grade 6 the major remaining difference was the inclusion of features of Aboriginal culture. This graded program helped to ensure that Aboriginal children destined for secondary education had in common with their future European classmates certain interests, understandings, knowledge and skills. However, in order to minimise the adjustment necessary in transferring from settlement and mission schools to the high schools, the last year of primary (Grade 7) was spent in a transitional residential college in a centre of European population.

Transitional residential colleges

The establishment of a transitional residential college for Aboriginal students followed recognition of the factors militating against the educational success and social adjustment of Aboriginal students if they were brought directly from their home communities into mixed hostels within the community. The Watts-Gallacher Report (1964:51-2) outlines these factors:

1. There would be an extremely sharp contrast between their lives in the village at home and the life they would need to follow in the hostel. Customs, conditions of living, language, and the values and beliefs of staff members and other children would be quite foreign to them; in other words, they would be placed in an entirely new world.
2. At this stage, only very small numbers of children can be expected to complete primary school and attempt high school work. This would mean that some schools would send into the hostel only one pupil. Even if a number of Aboriginal children from various centres were in the hostel at any one time, there would be represented a number of tribes, between whom there are wide differences. Homesickness and loneliness would be intensified in this situation where the children would feel insecure and be lacking in self-confidence.

The above two factors could be expected to lead to varying degrees of maladjustment; in turn this maladjustment would seriously jeopardise their chances of academic success. Indeed, experience with a

number of Aboriginal children who have been brought into hostels to attend community schools has confirmed this expectation.

3. By virtue of their life and experience in isolated centres, the children's horizons are extremely narrow and their concept development in a number of areas, when compared with that of European children, is very limited. Direct transfer from a special school to a community High school would make it difficult for any help to be given to these children with a view to widening their understanding and providing them with a firmer foundation for academic work.
4. Teaching methods in special schools are governed by the teacher's understanding of the children's backgrounds and of their language differences. There would not be the same appreciation of their differences in a community school and if the children were transferred directly from special schools to community school, we would expect them to be adversely influenced by the considerable change in teaching methods and relationships with their teachers.

The transfer from special school to transitional school and thence to high school is thus seen by Watts and Gallacher as the ideal way in which the children can gain confidence and develop attitudes conducive to educational and social progress. Their Report states (p.52):

In view of these four factors, we believe that there should be established in Darwin, in the first instance (and later in Alice Springs), a transitional residential school, which would provide a bridge between special schools and the community school. The transitional school would be staffed by specially selected teaching and domestic personnel. Aboriginal children could transfer to this school from their special schools for a period of approximately one year during which time they might be led to develop acceptable social habits and social skills and to adjust attitudes and values. Throughout this period, they would receive wise personal guidance from Staff primarily concerned with their welfare. In addition, teaching staff could concentrate on providing those experiences which contribute to language development, to fuller concept development, and to widening the horizons of the children so that they might be brought to a stage where they could, with expectation of success, enter the normal school situation.

It would be expected, of course, that, in the transitional school, the children would be offered wide opportunities for participating in the full range of community and recreational activities open to children resident in town.

Kormilda College in Darwin was the first such transitional residential college to be established and drew students from settlements, missions and pastoral properties throughout the Territory when it first opened in September 1967.

It should be noted, however, that the concept of Kormilda was first suggested in 1961, three years before the Watts-Gallacher Report was tabled. It seems likely that their analysis of education and their recommendations about future educational provision were within an existing framework which included the establishment of some form of residential college. Since the establishment of Kormilda College, two other similar transitional colleges have come into operation. Yirara College in Alice Springs caters for children from the desert country and took its first intake in 1973. Dhupuma College on Gove Peninsula and housed in the buildings of the former Eldo rocket tracking station has been a residential college for the communities of north-west Arnhem Land since 1971.

Kormilda College

This analysis is based on observations made during eleven months' residence at Kormilda College in 1970. The material presented is therefore valid for that year only, and no attempt is made to indicate subsequent changes which have occurred in the social system since they have no bearing on the data on personal identity and adjustment of students that were obtained in this period and that are considered to be a function of the social system then operating in the College.

My role as researcher during this period was that of a participant observer. In certain situations I was considered by students to be a member of staff, by virtue of being white and of having staff accommodation in the College grounds. However, care was taken to disassociate myself from the staff hierarchy and to refrain from any form of censure or discipline. Students were encouraged to think of me as a counsellor. While this role created some dissatisfaction among a few staff members, it enabled a personal supportive relationship to be established with students.

Students of the College

Students in the College fell into two groups: those attending Kormilda for the first time who had entered Transitional Grade 7 Primary, which is the last year of primary school; those who had already completed Transitional Grade 7 and were currently attending the community high school while continuing to reside at Kormilda College.

Although *all* students in the upper stream (academic group) of primary school in Aboriginal communities were theoretically eligible to attend Kormilda, an attempt at selection was made. Head teachers in all Welfare special schools throughout the Northern Territory were invited to nominate individual students whom they considered both academically capable of pursuing secondary education and able to adjust socially and emotionally to a different life-style. Limited guidelines were given by the College concerning the academic standards that students should have attained if they were to be considered for selection. An attempt was made to obtain a relatively homogeneous group in the Transitional Grade, with respect to range of abilities, age, and social maturity. An analysis of these criteria among students in Grade 7 in 1970 indicates that the selection procedures were inadequate; the academic ability of students varied greatly and the performance of many individuals was below that of students in post-primary classes (results from an intelligence test administered to all students are discussed later in this section); the ages ranged from twelve to fifteen; the social adjustment of students revealed wide variation, and a few individuals were very withdrawn and suffered from severe homesickness. Several factors might have contributed to the inadequate selection of students: first, academic standards differed greatly among schools, and head teachers probably had different conceptions as to the minimum levels students should have reached to fulfil the academic requirements of the College; second, there appeared to be a degree of prestige among head teachers, derived from the number of students selected for Kormilda, which may have led to the nomination of some students who were not capable of the work; third, education authorities might have selected some students who did not have the required academic qualifications in order to fulfil projected enrolment figures; fourth, there appears to have been some idea that students who were more western-oriented than their peers should be rewarded by being given a chance at Kormilda, irrespective of academic ability. This last attitude pervaded the Welfare Branch's dealings with and selection of Aborigines for various positions: the cleaner looking, the better dressed and the more polite an Aboriginal was, the more chance he had of selection.

The original plan for residential colleges envisaged that students would spend two years at Kormilda and then transfer to hostel accommodation or foster families in the general community, while continuing to attend high school. However, only two individuals had left Kormilda (to live with a teacher) and the remaining senior students continued to reside there.

The failure to attain this objective arose from difficulties experienced by the Welfare Branch in locating suitable families, and the absence of adequate hostel accommodation in Darwin.

Although the concept of a residential college applied only to students in the upper stream proceeding to high school, Kormilda College also became a regional centre for post-primary students. The students in this group had followed courses in the general stream in home communities, but the lack of facilities there for post-primary education necessitated their provision in a regional centre. Students in post-primary came from pastoral properties, missions, and small settlements, which differed considerably in the educational facilities provided for primary education, and thus academic ability, age, and social adjustment of students varied greatly. Some students were unable to read or write, while others had attained an academic standard superior to that of a few individuals in the Grade 7 and high school group. The post-primary course was three years and all classes were held at the College. While the majority of students entered first year, some began in second and third years because of their advanced age, and others were transferred across grades when numbers in particular classes became depleted as a result of dropping out.

The range of academic ability of students at Kormilda was very wide. A battery of tests assembled by the Australian Council for Educational Research for use with English-speaking white children in schools throughout the nation was administered by the Welfare Branch Research Section to all students at the beginning of the year; it included tests for English comprehension, reasoning, mathematics, and the Junior A Intelligence Test. The latter is a verbal test and highly culturally loaded. While it does not purport to measure innate ability, it provides some indication of the ability and readiness of students to follow the curriculum developed for the community primary schools. No norms for Aboriginal students in the Northern Territory are available at the present time and the IQ results for students at Kormilda, whose ages ranged from thirteen to nineteen, were based on white norms for age twelve. The mean IQ on this test for students in Transitional Grade 7 was 81, with a range from 66 to 91. This result suggests that the majority of students were academically unprepared to cope with the formal subjects in the final years of primary and at high school. The mean IQ for post-primary students at Kormilda was 72, ranging from 65- to 108. Eleven students had a score of 65- which is the lowest score possible.

Although students were selected by white staff to attend Kormilda, parents were required to authorise their children's attendance. It was not

always certain that parents realised that they had a choice in the matter, particularly if pressure was applied by white teaching staff. A social worker in Alice Springs substantiated this assertion in evidence he gave before a Parliamentary Committee investigating the establishment of a second residential college: 'Even with the process of asking parents to send their children to college tremendous pressures can be brought to bear upon them by authority figures, such as teachers, welfare and mission staff, and I have seen this done with the best intentions.' (Downing, 1971:33). Accusations have been levelled at the superintendent of one particular mission that he forced students to return to Kormilda after the holidays, against the wishes of both parents and students. In other situations, however, the head teachers have been criticised for failing to encourage students to return to the College. Parents were asked to contribute \$15 each term towards pocket money, but they were otherwise uninvolved in any aspect of the school organisation.

The first group of students was in residence in Kormilda College in September 1967, but 1968 was the first full year of operation. In 1968, thirty-one pupils entered Transitional Grade 7 or high school, fifty-five post-primary; for 1969 and 1970 the figures are thirty-nine and fifty-five, and forty-three and forty-three. The distribution of students across grades for 1970 (including repeats) was Transitional forty-five, first year high school twenty-two, second year high school fifteen, first year post-primary forty-three, second year post-primary thirty and third year post-primary thirteen. A further breakdown of 1970 students as to home community and category (mission, settlement, or pastoral property) is given in Appendix 1.

In addition to post-primary, Transitional Grade 7 and high school students, young Aboriginal men and women following trainee teaching assistant and office worker courses also resided at the College. The teaching assistants both lived and received instruction at Kormilda, while the office workers attended classes at the Adult Education Centre in Darwin.

Staff of the College

The thirty-four staff at Kormilda College included professional, administrative, and industrial personnel. Only one staff member, a trainee recreation officer, was an Aboriginal, although some of the domestic staff were non-whites. Half of the staff members lived in the College grounds, some with families, and the remainder worked there during school hours but lived in the general Darwin community.

The professional teaching staff at Kormilda included the head teacher, three teachers for post-primary, four manual training instructors, and one domestic science teacher. Special teachers took classes for speech and music on a part-time basis. Supplementary professional staff included the principal, two recreation officers (male and female), a trainee Aboriginal recreation officer, a nursing sister, and two house parents (male and female).

The qualifications of professional staff varied considerably. Five members of the teaching staff were trained at the Australian School of Pacific Administration, which conducted a two-year teacher training course for those who intended to work in Welfare Branch special schools. Others received their qualifications in State Teacher Training Colleges and either transferred to the Welfare Branch or were on secondment for a limited period. All teachers appointed to special schools attended an intensive in-service course for a week before taking up their appointments'; this included courses on Aboriginal culture and the aims of education for Aborigines in the Northern Territory.

Appointment to the position of principal was on the basis of teaching rather than administrative qualifications and carried a ranking senior to that of the head teacher. The man who held this position in 1970 had completed a two-year teacher training course in Queensland, and had spent a number of years in Welfare Branch schools throughout the Northern Territory.

The qualifications of recreation officers were not specified since a variety of training experiences were deemed suitable for this job. Their main task was to organise out-of-school activities for students, but counselling was also one of their functions, and they were expected to refrain from disciplining students in order to develop a less authoritarian and more personal relationship with them. The recreation officers appointed during 1970 both had teaching experience and physical education qualifications. The positions of house father and mother similarly did not require specific qualifications, and were filled by a white married couple at the time of the present research. The industrial and administrative staff totalled fourteen, including the matron and a number of domestic staff who were part-coloured.

The 1970 staff:student ratio is not readily apparent from the figures. While there was a high ratio for formal education during school hours, this was not maintained during the period after school. There were only two house parents and two recreation officers who were officially on duty when school finished at three o'clock, and they were responsible for the

entire school population of 168 students. This number was reduced to two on two days a week because all staff were entitled to two free days per week and the recreation officers, unlike the house parents, were not temporarily replaced by teaching staff.

A few members of the staff residing at Kormilda took an active part in the College activities after school and on weekends, and some of the teachers were involved in the coaching of sports teams. This was all done on a voluntary basis. However, staff members were paid for the organisation of night classes on week nights; these covered a wide range of activities and included homework for the academic classes.

There was a rapid turnover of staff at Kormilda College, and of the entire professional staff in 1970 only the principal and three technical instructors had been at the College the previous year. The pattern of staff turnover probably reflected a similar situation among other Welfare-staffed schools, although it had greater significance at Kormilda where there were no families or adult kin to provide emotional support and security. Various reasons were given to account for the high turnover of staff — some members resigned to return to other states when their period of secondment expired; others transferred to Welfare Branch schools in other communities. It is possible that dissatisfaction with the school system was the major single cause, but further research is required in this area. Discussion with teachers at Kormilda during 1970 indicated that those on secondment or those who had previously taught in schools in the general community were the most dissatisfied with the school organisation.

Social organisation of the school

The social organisation at Kormilda was hierarchical one, with the principal at the apex. However, a higher echelon of officials (Welfare Branch) had ultimate authority and could dictate procedures to be followed, even when they were contrary to the recommendations of the principal and staff who were in daily contact with the students. Two committees were associated with the College; the Kormilda College Committee, consisting of representatives of three different sections of the Welfare Branch and the principal, the major concern of which was with the general functioning of the College; and the Friends of Kormilda Association, composed of Rotarians who attempted to involve the community in the College. No Aboriginal was associated with any aspect of the school organisation, whether in a consultative or decision making capacity.

Disregarding the body of administrative officials outside the school, the principal had ultimate authority over internal matters regarding the College. The head teacher was responsible for the school organisation, including curricula, teaching methods, and discipline, but his authority did not extend outside school hours. The teaching staff was professionally responsible to the head teacher, and all remaining staff (administrative, professional, and industrial) to the principal. However, a few of the teaching staff who lived at the College also performed a supervisory function and they were responsible to the principal when acting in this capacity.

The multiplicity of roles played by several members of the staff was a predominant characteristic of the College organisation. For example, in 1970 house parents had not been appointed when first term began and resident staff fulfilled this role for two months at the beginning of the school year, continuing to relieve house parents for two days each week. The role of house parent required constant disciplining of students and left little time to provide positive reinforcement for good behaviour. Teachers who took this role as infrequently as one day a week attracted the hostility which was normally directed towards the occupant of this unpopular position, and when such attitudes became personalised, they were directed towards the individual in other role positions. Other roles taken by staff members involved conflicting attitudes towards the behaviour of students: a teacher who disciplined students in the classroom and reinforced certain patterns of behaviour, might change roles and become a friend out of school, sanctioning behaviour that was unacceptable in another setting. Consensus on norms was lacking among staff on many issues, and behaviour that was condoned by one individual was punished by another. Williams (1971) found that Aboriginal children were able to minimise role conflict through observing different norms in three different behaviour settings, home, school and play. Kormilda students could not always resolve role conflicts thus since behaviour settings were not always clearly demarcated, the normative behaviour required was often not known by students, and staff members differed in the behaviours they sanctioned. Moreover, the authority of staff was not exercised only when they were playing a specific role, but extended to all roles involving interaction with students: any staff member could discipline a student at any time for any behaviour, thereby greatly increasing the likelihood that the misdeeds of the student would be punished.

The complexity of interchange of roles taken by individual staff

members should in theory have increased the flow of communication in the school organisation (Likert, 1961). Kormilda College, however, was characterised by communication blockages. Decisions made by individual members of staff were frequently not communicated to other members. For example, students who were refused permission by one staff member to leave the College as a punishment, might be permitted to do so by another who was unaware of the previous decision. Relieving house parents were similarly unaware of rules and regulations imposed by the permanent house parents since no formal statement of rules existed. A day-book was instituted in the middle of the year to help overcome this problem, and decisions made by staff concerning individual students were recorded for all staff to consult.

Teachers directly concerned with particular programs or classes were frequently not informed of meetings arranged to discuss issues relevant to them, or of alterations in time-tables, changes in class enrolments, or extra-curricula activities planned. Some friction resulted from differences between class teachers of academic subjects and those responsible for manual training over the relative importance of their particular spheres of education.

Only one attempt was made to discuss the aims of the College, and to analyse the existing social system so that reasons for the high drop-out rate might be uncovered. This meeting was called in September 1970 by the Director of Welfare following a period of intense unrest among students in the College. It often appeared that there was no underlying philosophy guiding the administration of the College, and staff members differed radically in their conceptions of the educational goals at Kormilda.

The students were generally not involved in the College administration. Rules, regulations, and desired behaviour patterns were not laid down, and since punishment was inconsistent, the whole milieu was characterised by uncertainty. School assemblies could have provided an effective means of communication, but rarely was an address given or an attempt made to encourage a corporate College spirit. A Students' College Council composed of elected representatives from the senior classes and teaching assistants was established to discuss discipline, recreational activities, and other important issues, but it only functioned for half of second term and no attempt was made to help in its re-establishment when the students returned for third term. Other student committees were ostensibly created to help control various activities in the College, but they did not function in any meaningful way.

The failure to provide any effective and regular communication between staff and students intensified feelings in the students of powerlessness in an alien environment. The lack of Aborigines on the staff had the additional effect that relations between students and staff were seen not only in terms of authority, but also in racial terms. Other criticisms could be and were made concerning the detailed administration of the College. It is not thought necessary to canvass these since the important criticism do not concern details of administration but the basic assumptions on which it was founded and the purposes it was intended to achieve.

Physical setting

Kormilda College is situated at Berrimah, an outer suburb of Darwin, eight miles south of the town centre. It is surrounded by bush and is close to the harbour foreshores. Most of the existing buildings were constructed in 1941-2 as part of a 1200-bed Army General Hospital, later being used as an air defence control centre and an army and air force transit camp. After the war it was used by the airline Qantas as a transit accommodation centre, and was taken over by the Commonwealth for use as a residential college in 1967.

All the buildings in use in 1970 were temporary, pending construction of dormitory blocks and classrooms. The increasing numbers of students had necessitated constant modifications of existing structures and the condemning of many of the existing buildings as unfit for further occupation created additional difficulties.

The living quarters of the girls consisted of five temporary demountable dormitory blocks, each accommodating twenty students, with two in each room. Showers and toilet facilities were situated in an adjacent building. The boys were accommodated in a number of dormitories, shifting each time sections were condemned or converted to classrooms. A number of rooms containing two beds each were in continual use, but large dormitories housed the majority of the boys. Showers and toilets were situated at the end of each dormitory block. Aboriginal teaching assistants and girls following the office worker's course were also accommodated in the College grounds in demountable blocks, and some flats were available for those teaching assistants with families. Housing was also available for some of the industrial and professional staff. Single staff and some married couples and families lived in demountable houses situated in the College grounds, adjacent to the girls' dormitories. Other married staff lived in the outside Darwin community.

Classrooms for post-primary and Transitional Grade 7 were situated in

the College grounds. These were converted from a number of single rooms and were essentially of a makeshift nature, with inadequate partitions between classrooms and in some cases without fans or any other means of moderating Darwin's hot and humid climate. The mobility of classes was illustrated by the senior post-primary class, who spent the first month in a large open hall shell with no walls; they were next located in a temporary classroom, and finally in a third converted dormitory classroom with no overhead fans. Additional buildings at the College included a manual training workroom, domestic science room, clinic, craft room, large open hall, and tuck shop. Towards the end of the year, a recreational room, library, and language laboratory were also set up. Outdoor recreational facilities included basketball and volley ball courts, a tennis court, and an oval.

Students ate their meals in a large communal dining room and an adjacent caravan, and were placed at tables seating from six to eight. At the beginning of each term, students chose their table companions, and composition of tables generally reflected Aboriginal language groups, segregated by sex. Noise was kept to a minimum by house parents, and silence was imposed when there was too much talking and excitement. Mealtimes were regular, and those who arrived after other students were seated were sometimes turned away without a meal. The evening meal was at 5.30 p.m., and for the first two terms this was the last food eaten before breakfast the following day. In third term, as a result of complaints of hunger by students and a number of thefts of food from the kitchen and tuckshop, a late supper was introduced before bedtime at nine o'clock.

House parents and the matron were responsible for the dress of students, and for supervising the laundering of clothes. The girls were responsible for washing their own personal play clothes and socks each day and high school students also washed their own school uniforms. Although students were permitted to wear their own clothes around the College after school, an attempt was made by staff to maintain a minimum standard of dress. Interference by staff in this area aroused considerable antagonism in students who regarded personal appearance as the prerogative of the individual.

Time structure, sequence and nature of activities

A residential college with a large group of students and inadequate facilities and staff for supervision is compelled to follow a rigid structure in order to maintain order and control. The weekdays at Kormilda College were characterised by an unvarying sequence of activities, each occurring

at a regular time. Students were permitted to leave the dormitories in the morning only after house parents awakened them at 7.15 a.m. and from that time followed a sequence of showers, breakfast, cleaning up of the playground and dormitories, school, sporting activities, showers, dinner, homework and night classes, recreation period, showers and bed. On weekends there was greater variation in the time structure and sequence of activities, although it was still characteristic for a large group of students to perform the same activity at any one time. Students spent part of Saturday morning cleaning their rooms and were then given free time until lunch, although no-one was permitted to leave the College grounds. Saturday afternoon was taken up with sport, and all students either played or attended as spectators. Following return to the College and the evening meal, students received their pocket money and watched a film until bedtime and lights out.

On Sunday, students went to their respective churches in the community and on return wrote letters home to parents. After lunch, there was a rest period which was followed by the afternoon's organised activities. These varied from week to week but always involved mass participation, with a possible division of the sexes. Sunday evening was taken up with a church service which was organised and conducted by the students themselves, and a short film or slide-showing usually followed. An early night to bed, with time for reading, completed the weekly routine.

The prime function of the recreation officers at Kormilda College was to organise activities for students after school and on weekends. Sport was the predominant leisure activity and students were given opportunities to participate in a variety of sports, with emphasis on team games. In order to encourage integration with other members of the general community, many students played with different sports clubs in Darwin. Most boys' teams, however, were composed predominantly of Kormilda College students, although whites and part-coloureds also belonged to these clubs. This was a result both of the large number of Kormilda students concentrated in one or two clubs, and also of their superior sporting ability. Some of the girls were individual members of outside clubs and played with teachers from the College and from the high school. Several sporting teams were restricted to Kormilda College students, however, and thus the opportunity of mixing in the community was reduced. The College also participated in a succession of inter-school and community sports where emphasis was on athletics.

Other regular activities at the school were provided in night classes for

post-primary students while those in the Transitional Grade and at high school completed homework. In the first term these activities included art and craft, gymnastics, and dance drama, and students were allocated to different groups for one or two nights each week, spending the remaining evenings amusing themselves in the College grounds. Some passed their time reading in the library, which functioned for a short period during the last term. Night classes in the last two terms consisted of supervised activities such as team ball games. In the evenings after night classes, films were frequently shown and these covered a variety of subjects including careers, Aboriginal culture, entertainment, general information, and sport. A dance was usually organised by the recreation staff once a term, and students themselves arranged informal gatherings of this nature. Students were also encouraged to participate in musical and other events in the Darwin Eisteddfod, while the Darwin Show attracted entries from College students in the art, needlework, and cookery sections. Extra-curricular activities at the College for senior students included a first-aid course, and the boys were also given the opportunity to join the Air Force cadets.

On Sunday afternoons, activities such as visits to the local swimming pools, springs, or beaches, were arranged. In the dry season, an afternoon at the beach was occasionally followed by a barbecue. Various outings were made by the College to different forms of entertainment, including theatre, open-air concerts, and a fireworks display; on a few occasions professional entertainers performed at Kormilda College itself. Senior students were permitted to go into Darwin on Friday nights and most went to the cinema which was the local meeting place for Aborigines. This liberty was granted by the Director of Education after a period of intense unrest at the College when numerous students were absent without permission. Part of the unrest was due to the presence of trainee teaching assistants and office workers, several of whom were younger than the senior school students yet had more privileges.

One of the aims of the Friends of Kormilda Association was that families should take students to their homes for weekends or for an occasional outing. A very small number of students were involved in activities of this nature, and no regular pattern was established. High school teachers took an active interest in some of the girls as a result of contact through sport, and outings were occasionally arranged for them.

Finally, the forbidden but ubiquitous preoccupation with gambling should be mentioned. Boys and girls alike spent much of their free time during the afternoon and late at night gambling with cards. Whenever

students were caught at this activity, the cards were destroyed and the money confiscated and placed in a general funds accounts. The money used in gambling came from a variety of sources, including pocket money and money sent by relations from home or borrowed from kinsmen in the College. Students were required to hand in money in excess of \$1 and this could be withdrawn for shopping excursions. However, many students failed to observe this rule and some received as much as \$20 at a time from relations.

Principal behaviour settings

The concept of 'behaviour setting' is fundamental in Barker's theory of ecological psychology, the central tenet of which is that the environment coerces behaviour in accordance with its own dynamic patterning (Barker, 1968:4). A behaviour setting has both structural and dynamic properties: it is the total extra-individual pattern of behaviour and milieu which has its own geographical and temporal loci. Any behavioural setting is differentiated by the persons acting in it into many specific situation or behaviour regions having their own characteristic geographical and temporal attributes and personal relations. Oeser and Emery (1954) adopted an ecological framework for their study on social structure and personality in a rural community and their data demonstrate that behaviour settings determine the personality characteristics of the persons participating in them.

The behaviour settings that occurred regularly at Kormilda can be classified into a number of basic units. Two criteria determined the selection of basic units considered in the present study. First, there were the settings involving interaction with whites. Distinctions were made between interaction with white peers and that with white staff, and between types of interaction with this latter group. Second, there were the behaviour settings that elicited behaviour such as initiative, decision making, and the exercise of responsibility.

Interaction with white peers

In discussing behaviour settings, those in which high school students participated are considered separately from those in which Transitional Grade 7 and post-primary students participated.

High School Students: Information concerning the behaviour settings in which Kormilda students attending high school participated, and the time spent in interaction with white peers, was obtained from observations

over a three-week period in the third term of 1970 spent at Darwin High School and from teachers' reports.

A principal behaviour setting at high school was the classroom. Discussion with teachers indicated that, while Kormilda students were in close proximity to whites, almost no interaction occurred. A second behaviour setting was the playground during recess and lunchtime. Observations throughout these breaks over the three-week period revealed that only two boys interacted with white peers. All other Kormilda students sat together in a corner of the playground and talked only among themselves. Bus travel to and from school constituted a behaviour setting, and observations indicated that no interaction occurred between the Aborigines and the few white students who took the same bus. Sporting activities provided a number of behaviour settings in which students interacted with white peers. However, an analysis of these shows that most students played for teams representing Kormilda and almost no personal interaction with whites occurred. Kormilda College, as a sports club, rarely participated in the social activities associated with sport. Boys who belonged to community clubs did not have much opportunity to interact with white peers because most of their members were Kormilda students. Finally, no students visited the homes of white peers, nor did students from high school come to Kormilda. Kormilda students did not attend social functions such as the school dances, and were not involved in the majority of extra-curricular activities, although some of the students belonged to the choir and participated in the annual concert.

Post-Primary and Transitional Grade 7 Students: No interaction between these Aborigines at Kormilda and white peers occurred on a regular basis and thus there was no opportunity to develop friendships with white peers. On the initiative of one teacher, the Transitional classes spent a few days during third term with the Grade 7 classes at a community primary school and the visit was later reciprocated by Kormilda. Such an exchange enabled students to mix on a personal level and to develop transitory friendships. Boys and girls in Post-Primary 1 and Transitional Grade entered teams in an inter-school sports competition, which entailed matches at different schools each week. No interaction occurred between the Aboriginal girls and their white adversaries, however. Students who participated in sporting activities associated with clubs outside Kormilda experienced a similar lack of interaction with white peers as has already been described for the high school students.

The only club or organisation outside the College to which all Kormilda students belonged was the church. Students were obliged to attend a

church of their own denomination each Sunday and outings were occasionally arranged for them. However, the church service itself did not involve any interaction with members of the congregation and students left on special buses immediately the service was over. Students of one denomination attended Sunday school and outings were occasionally arranged for this particular group.

Interaction with white staff

The principal behaviour settings involving regular interaction between students and white staff at Kormilda, together with the average length of time for each unit of interaction per day, were: classroom 5.5 hours, dormitory 1.25 hours, night classes 1 hour, meals 1.25 hours. In all these settings, staff members were in a position of authority. Such behaviour settings elicited submissive behaviour and the authority of whites was generally accepted. However, some behaviour settings occurred in which such authority on the part of whites was not accepted, leading to acute unrest. For example, during the film screenings on Saturday nights, the students objected to interference by the principal, who often threatened to end the entertainment because of the over-exuberance of students. Such behaviour was characteristic of film nights in their home communities and the authority of staff was not acceptable in this setting. Students often used abusive language against staff in situations of this kind and occasionally assaulted them.

There were five hours of leisure time per weekday in which contact on a more meaningful personal basis could be established with staff. Only two staff members were usually on duty during these hours and most of their time was taken up with supervision of students. Other teachers, however, took a personal interest in certain students and spent a considerable proportion of their free time interacting with them. Because such interaction did not occur on a regular basis, and the majority of students were not involved, it is impossible to specify an average amount of time spent in this way. Some indication of its extent can, however, be obtained from the following facts. There were ten boys in whom three male staff members showed a particular interest by inviting them home for meals, taking them shopping, or spending time talking with them in the College grounds. One female teacher had a strong interest in four of these boys who were in her class; she also interacted with most of the other students in arranging sporting activities. Interaction on a personal basis also occurred between a small number of students from the high school and some of their teachers. The most frequent settings included sports practices and matches where

teachers from the high school and from Kormilda played in the same teams as students, picnics that the teachers arranged for a few of the girls, and occasional evenings in the homes of teachers or at the pictures.

Behaviour settings requiring responsibility, initiative or decision making

Every Sunday evening, students held their own church service. The responsibility of its organisation was taken in rotation by groups of four students. Normally, it involved selection of hymns and offering a prayer and a bible reading. There was great variation in the degree of acceptance of this responsibility and many of the students, particularly the boys, intensely disliked the service and risked punishment by not attending. However, it was an important behaviour setting, being the only one that required some initiative and responsibility to be taken by students without the direction of staff.

The supervision of dormitories by prefects was another behaviour setting where responsibility had to be exercised. While several prefects did not discharge their duties and were frequently guilty of the transgressions they were supposed to prevent, the setting nevertheless provided an opportunity for students to learn patterns of behaviour required for the responsible direction of others. However, the exercise of authority by Aboriginal prefects was not always perceived as legitimate by other students. This lack of acceptance may possibly be attributable to the fact that dormitory prefects were selected by the principal rather than by the students themselves.

The College Council was a body of representatives elected by the students and trainee teaching assistants. It was established during second term in order to advise on punishments that should be given to senior students breaking the new rules associated with the free night on Fridays. The functioning of the Council provided an important behaviour setting in which students could discuss relevant issues and make decisions affecting the lives of students in the College. However, the Council was not reconvened in third term and its short duration did not enable any behaviour patterns to be established.

Election of office bearers occurred in two other situations in the College. Girls who played softball elected their team captains, and certain classes elected class captains. The duties of most of these office bearers were nominal only, but a few were expected to exercise some form of responsibility. Such elections served to introduce the notions of voting and of the election of the individual with the most votes.

Shopping excursions into Darwin were made once or twice each term

and provided students with the experiences of decision making and interaction with whites, and helped develop feelings of confidence. A College rule required that a staff member be present for every five students on such excursions, and many students relied on staff to assist them in their shopping, thereby abrogating some of their own responsibility. A few of the teachers took students into town with them on personal errands, and senior students were permitted to go shopping alone on Friday nights. When shopping excursions were arranged, money was drawn out of pocket money accounts by clerical staff, with the result that students did not have the experience or the responsibility of performing this task themselves.

In third term, prompted and encouraged by one staff member, the four senior girls in post-primary moved into an unoccupied flat in the College grounds. They were given the responsibility of planning meals, budgeting, buying food, cooking and all the associated household duties. This behaviour setting enabled the girls to develop the confidence and to acquire the skills that are prerequisite to integration in the dominant society. The experiment was abandoned before the end of term, however, after one of the girls became pregnant.

The tuck shop at Kormilda College was an important behaviour setting. Although a staff member was always present and in charge, responsible students were selected to help serve in the shop, and were provided with the opportunity for learning how to handle money efficiently and to deal with requests.

The low staff: student ratio at the College, and the limited amount and type of interaction with whites precluded the establishment of personal supportive relationships between the majority of students and white peers or staff. Students attending school at Kormilda itself had no regular contact with white peers, and even those at high school did not communicate readily with other white classmates and had no personal relationships with non-Kormilda students outside the classroom. Whites were in a position of authority in most settings. It was most unlikely that education within the context of this residential college would have had any impact on the traditional value orientations of Aboriginal adolescents.

Research findings and their implications

Two different issues were identified in the preceding chapter as a major focus of research: first, whether the adoption of achievement value orientations was compatible with the retention of Aboriginal identity; and second, whether it was possible for changes to occur in values as a result of

schooling at Kormilda. The data given here seems to suggest that the answer to both questions is no.

The results of testing (Appendix 3 provides a brief account of the measurement techniques adopted) supported these predictions. First, the relatively few individuals (sample size of twelve) who were characterised by an achievement orientation profile on the majority of values had an unfavourable attitude towards Aborigines and were significantly less predisposed to their membership group than were those who retained a non-achievement value orientation (sample size of sixty-two). The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean scores, t-value for attitude to Aborigines* for high and low scorers on value schedule.

	Total value score				
	high		low		s.d.
	$\bar{x}$	n	$\bar{x}$	n	
Attitude to Aborigines	17.08	12*	22.40	62	6.10
	t	5.096 $p < .001$			
	*	two Ss dropped out before administration of attitude scales.			

The results support the contention that in identifying with whites and adopting achievement values, individuals would also come to have a devalued image of other Aborigines. This was because no Aborigines embodying achievement values were available as models to the students and also because whites hold unfavourable attitudes towards Aborigines. Thus, in choosing whites as a reference group, Kormilda students also internalised negative feelings about their own membership group. At this stage, then, it would appear that the two goals of education, namely changes in values to an achievement orientation, and retention of a pride in Aboriginal identity, were incompatible.

Second, although it is difficult to obtain a definitive answer to the question of changes in values as a function of residence at Kormilda, the results suggest that the College had little impact on the students in this respect. This conclusion was reached firstly by comparisons between groups of students who had spent varying lengths of time in the College, ranging from one to three years.

The mean scores on the combined score of the two scales are presented in Table 2. Analysis of variance indicated there was no significant relationship between length of time spent at Kormilda and achievement values.

Table 2: Mean scores and F values on values by classes

	P-P.1	P-P.2	P-P.3	Trans.	HS.1	HS.2
x	11.85	11.42	13.33	11.68	12.27	12.09
n	20	21	6	25	13	10
s.d.	1.30	1.98	1.96	1.49	1.42	1.70

$F = 1.5188$

The failure to find any differences in their value profiles was surprising since it was expected that the high drop-out rate of students would have resulted in a concentration of students with high achievement value orientations in the senior classes, thereby inflating the scores on this variable. It is possible that intake years differed significantly from each other in achievement variables as a result of different selection procedures, or of differences in previous educational experiences. The same conclusion was implied in the failure to find any changes in values over a year among those students who entered the College in 1970. It was considered that Kormilda may have made its most significant impact on students in their first year of attendance. However, while some changes did occur, they were not always in the direction from a traditional orientation to an achievement orientation.

These results provide empirical support for the contention made previously that the objectives of education could not be attained under the present social structure at Kormilda. The results also clearly indicate that an education system based on western values inimical to those of a particular minority group cannot be successful in enabling students to build on their own cultural experiences. Professor Elkin, as early as 1937, made this point (p.471):

Some attention in school life should be paid to the real values in Aboriginal life, such as kinship, totemism, ritual and mythology, so that these will not lead to a furtive existence or be repressed, or perhaps 'shamed'. Only to take stock of the native life as a handicap to present day adaptation and not to emphasise and use its valuable elements is surely an error in educational policy.

The results indicate that one of the key values in the process of alienation from other Aborigines was the relational value. The importance of kinship ties with their interpersonal network of role obligations cannot be overemphasised, and any attempt by the individual to adopt an individualistic, competitive orientation must imply a rejection of Aboriginality. Gallacher (1969:102) has expressed the need for researchers to identify those elements of Aboriginal culture that may be consonant with our own values and those that may be antagonistic, and it would seem that the collateral orientation among Aborigines is one of these significant elements. The question therefore arises as to whether it is necessary for Aborigines to develop an individualistic orientation and a competitive spirit. Recent educational theories, which reject the culturally disadvantaged model and maintain that cultural values of ethnic groups should be used constructively to engender motivation, all indicate that it is not necessary. Further support comes from studies of other cultures that provide parallels with the Aboriginal kinship system. In Japan, for example, the family rather than the individual has tended to be the traditional unit. Success for oneself was considered a sign of excessive immoral egotism and one lost one's selfish feelings in the pursuit of goals benefiting the family (De Vos, 1968:361). Economic development in Japan depended not only on individuals being ready to take chances to further their individual aims, but also on the co-operative, concerted effort of many people distributed throughout the society who were imbued with a relatively high sense of mutual trust and a sense of social responsibility.

The Chinese social system similarly is characterised by its focus on extended kinship networks: 'The central feature of traditional Chinese society as a whole was that the individual's loyalty towards the family transcended all his other social obligations and that the family was the determining factor in the total pattern of social organisation.' (Yang, 1959:167). The family in this context included not only the nuclear family but also the wider network of collaterals. While the Chinese revolution has considerably broken down the family organisation and attempted to substitute the state as the centre of loyalty, it is still important to note that 'rewards' in Chinese society for achievement accrue to a collective body (whether family or state) rather than to the individual. The economic success of Chinese families who emigrated to other parts of the world before changes occurred in family loyalty indicates that an over-riding concern for co-operation and subordination to group interests does not inhibit their achievement within societies stressing a highly individualistic and competitive orientation.

These studies suggest that culturally determined syndromes psychologically different from the achievement syndrome proposed by McClelland (1963) and Rosen (1959) may lead to economic development and modern status without being directly individualistic and competitive in nature. De Vos (1968:363) supports this assertion and states that

McClelland's concept of need achievement has the virtue of seeing some internally motivated processes as antecedent to goal-directed behaviour, but his emphasis on achievement as something generally counterposed inversely to a strong need affiliation is ethnocentric. His hypothesis concerning underlying patterns of socialisation makes good sense in a Western setting but does not necessarily hold for other societies.

The concepts of individualistic and collateral orientations can also be discussed in relation to Angyal's (1966) holistic theory of personality, which reinterprets the relational value in more psychological terms. Angyal claims that all human activity shapes itself according to a broad double pattern: the trend towards increasing autonomy (which parallels the individualistic orientation), and the trend towards homonomy (akin to the collateral orientation); far from being irreconcilable opposites, these two trends can be viewed as aspects of one trend.

At the cultural level, the person's conception of the larger unit to which he belongs, or to which he strives to belong, varies according to his cultural background and personal orientation. The superordinate whole may be represented for him by a social unit — family, clan, nation — by an ideology, or by a meaningfully ordered universe. 'The important fact is that the trend towards homonomy, the wish to be in harmony with a unit one regards as extending beyond his individual self, is a powerful motivating source of behaviour' (Angyal, 1966:15).

The fact that homonomy and autonomy can co-exist suggests that advantage should be taken of the motivation engendered by a dominant homonomous trend among the Australian Aborigines in order to achieve those autonomous goals required for integration in western society. Angyal claims that an individual who derives identity from the group and whose behaviour is determined by superindividual goals may in fact be able to do things of which he would be incapable when pursuing purely individual aims. Thus, rather than placing emphasis on increasing autonomy or individualistic orientation, education should perhaps create a social environment such that teamwork and co-operation are

appropriate forms of behaviour and advantage can be taken of the motivating forces of homonomous behaviour to achieve other goals relating to learning. Recent statements by educationists indicate that there is an increasing tendency to encourage co-operative behaviour among white students in the classroom and a decreasing emphasis on competition and individualistic striving. This suggests that those Aborigines who wish to integrate within the dominant society will share a collateral orientation in common with European classmates.

All this has important implications for education of Aborigines. While the present results indicate that the collateral orientation lay at the core of Aboriginal identity and that adoption of the individualistic orientation was accompanied by increasingly less favourable attitudes to Aborigines, other research indicates that stress on co-operation and subordination to group interests do not inhibit achievement behaviour and the attainment of modern occupational status. Congruity between home and school experiences is important and it would seem that learning might be increased if students could transfer their homonomous trends to the classroom (Philp, 1968). It would appear then, that educational objectives for Aborigines in the Northern Territory are based on the wrong tenet. Rather than Aboriginal cultural values being seen as factors inhibiting education and therefore to be changed, they should be seen as building blocks and used by the education system to engender motivation and thereby increase learning.

5 Life in a cross-cultural institution

The second specific issue to be discussed concerns cross-cultural institutions and their impact on personal identity. Research in a variety of contexts has indicated that where the life-style and experiences of the individual bear little relationship to the life-style demanded by the institution, then identity conflict and maladjustment are likely to ensue.

Hobart (1968:100) is particularly concerned with the degree of continuity between home and school and has suggested a number of aspects of the school system which may or may not provide continuity with the community life experiences of the students:

1. The physical setting, including food, clothing and housing arrangements.
2. The language spoken in the classroom and on the school grounds.
3. The norms which are formally or informally enforced and the value hierarchy which is explicitly taught or implicitly communicated.
4. The social organisation of the school, including the patterning of interpersonal relationships and the complexity of the organisational hierarchy.
5. The skills taught in the classroom and in the playground and assumed to be important by the teachers, or peers, or both.
6. The personnel of the school, including both teachers and students.

To these may be added:

7. The time structure and sequence of activities.
8. The leisure activities available in out-of-school hours.

Hobart (1968:103) investigated differing degrees of discontinuity in the education systems for Eskimos in the Mackenzie District of Canada and Greenland. He describes the social system of one school in Canada to which children are brought after the age of six from Arctic settlements without schools of their own:

The keynote of this school is *discontinuity*. Neither in terms of physical facilities, nor language, nor food, nor fellow students, nor the patterning of relationships, nor time schedules, nor disciplines, motivations, nor content of the curriculum is there any precedent in the pre-school experience of most of the Eskimo children who go there. The extent of dislocation is further maximised by the fact that children come at an early age, and that the school is a total institution, effectively seeking to break all continuities with the child's pre-school life.

Interviews with students from this school revealed numerous individuals who were profoundly ashamed of being Eskimo, felt inadequate, and were unable to cope. Hobart reports (p.104) that the most maladjustive consequence of this schooling system was that its students were commonly unable to adjust either to the world of their parents or the world of the white man. Weaned to 'the good life' of the hostel, they were unable to go home and live the way of life available in the home community. They had been taught to crave values which they could not buy for lack of skills and/or disciplines. Another study of a group of people from the same district by Clairmont (1963) revealed that men and women who were products of this type of schooling actively rejected tradition-oriented subsistence activities, preferring unemployment to sullying themselves with activities traditionally Eskimo.

In Greenland, on the other hand, continuity is a fundamental principle of the school system. One of the most distinctive aspects is its variety, in that communities differ in their degree of contact with the dominant society and schools are designed to accommodate such differences. Thus, physical facilities differ from one community to another; the amount of emphasis on Danish tends to vary with the amount of Danish used in the rest of the community; the skills and values taught in more modern communities are more characteristically Danish, while those in remote districts tend to be more traditionally Greenlandic; there is continuity in concepts taught in the school system and the materials available are those most appropriate to the community in which the school is located; finally, there is similar and interrelated continuity between motivations, disciplines, self-concepts, and senses of identity which are taught in schools in different kinds of community situations. Results here indicated that the basic continuities insured adequately appreciative attitudes towards parents, home community, and self, and feelings of adequacy and competence. The flexibility of the system further tended to insure that life goals taught were attainable and relevant in terms of opportunities

available and skills learned for the exploitation of these opportunities (Hobart, 1968:106).

Wintrob and Sindell (1968) have investigated the psychological consequences of enculturative discontinuities among the Cree Indians in Canada; these also resulted from living alternately in the two different environments of home and residential school. Data from an intensive interview schedule revealed that 48 per cent of the 109 students in the sample were rated as experiencing clearly defined identity conflict. In an additional 14 per cent, indications of identity conflict were sufficiently pronounced to be defined as identity confusion.

Saslow and Harrover (1968) have reviewed the literature pertaining to psycho-social adjustment of Indian youth in the United States; they conclude that the culture shock of having to renounce, with the beginning of school, much of what has been learned before school, has ensured that Indian and other minority groups suffer in adolescence from identity conflict manifested in feelings of low self-worth, alienation, and helplessness.

Further discussion on the impact of discontinuity between two environments on personal identity is found in Goffman's (1961) analysis of total institutions, and in other studies that have adopted his framework to study such institutions (Aubert, 1965; Emery, 1970). Their characteristic features greatly affect personal identity of the inmates and work consistently towards personality disintegration. At entry into a total institution, the individual has a conception of himself made possible by certain stable relationships in his home world. It is characteristic of such establishments to strip him of the supports provided by these arrangements and compel him to undergo a series of deprivations, degradations, and humiliations. While many of these may not be great in themselves, they become significant because they occur so frequently and in so many aspects of institutional life — the whole milieu assumes this character. Thus total institutions disrupt and defile precisely those actions that in civil society have the role of attesting to the individual that he has some control over his world — that he is a person with self-determination, autonomy, and freedom of action.

Discontinuities between Kormilda and home

An objective account of the discontinuity between home and school does not necessarily reflect the degree of continuity/discontinuity experienced by individual students. Williams (1971) has indicated that Aborigines are able to minimise role conflict through the observance of different norms

depending on the situation in which the individual finds himself, and the effect of discontinuity may be minimised in this way. A discussion of life-styles designed to indicate the areas of conflict experienced by students must therefore include their subjective reports, and observations of their behaviour.

Evidence pertaining to students' perceptions of the life-styles at home and at Kormilda College was gathered from several sources: semi-structured interviews with ninety-five students, casual conversations in non-school hours, and analysis of responses to a modified form of the Bavelas Ideology Test, which was administered to all students in the College (see Appendix 3 for details). Most aspects of the school system at Kormilda presented enculturative discontinuities with the community life experiences of the students, and these created conflicts as the students alternated between school and home.

Some of the initial discontinuities involved sleeping habits, food, clothing and language. At Kormilda, students slept in beds, generally with only two persons to a room, while at home the majority slept on the ground or on the floor, rolled up in blankets next to other relations. Some Catholic missions and one settlement provided dormitory accommodation for school students, but this was atypical. Most students liked the sleeping arrangements at Kormilda; the girls in particular had a preference for dormitories, and several girls asserted that the best thing about Kormilda was the chance to sleep in a bed, in a dormitory, or in a room of their own. A feeling of security appeared to underlie this preference and was reflected in the words of one girl: 'I like sleeping in the dormitories best — you're safe here and the men can't get me.' Only three girls showed great distress at the thought of sleeping in the camp when they returned home during the holidays, however, and the remainder stated that they experienced no discomfort.

The provision of regular meals at Kormilda was welcomed by many students who did not always get enough food to eat at home. Most students adjusted quickly to the type of food that was served at the College and yearned only occasionally for 'bush tucker', which supplemented their 'store food' diet at home. A number of boys complained that they were always hungry at night and that this prompted them to steal food from the kitchen and tuck shop.

Great emphasis was placed by the staff at Kormilda on a neat and tidy appearance, and students who internalised these norms often experienced conflict at home. The presence of conflict was revealed in responses to questions on the Ideology Test concerning good and bad things to do at

Kormilda and at home. Several girls claimed a good thing to do at Kormilda was to wear clean clothes and to look neat and tidy, while this was considered a bad thing to do at home. One girl spoke about the ensuing conflict during the interview: 'The people at home — they don't like us being clean. But we have showers and a clean dress at Kormilda, and we like being clean. The other girls are just jealous of us. They don't like us ironing our clothes and looking nice.' Another senior student was observed rubbing dirt into her hair before leaving at the end of term and she explained that 'if we go home looking smart, those people at home won't talk to us — they tell us we're rubbish ones, trying to be like white people.'

Some of the difficulties encountered in the school milieu involved language. The large majority of students spoke dialect at home and among themselves, although English was used as the medium of instruction in schools. Students already had a conversational grasp of English when they first came to Kormilda and generally pronounced words correctly, but they encountered great difficulties in reading, reading apprehension, and in the more subtle areas of word meaning. These problems caused particular concern to high school students, who responded by becoming withdrawn in class, and by refusing to participate in any class activities.

At Kormilda, students came into contact with other Aborigines who did not speak or understand their own languages and English was therefore used as a common tongue. However, most friendship groups reflected a common language and students continued to speak in Aboriginal dialect among themselves. As a result they did not experience much difficulty when they returned home during the holidays and reverted to dialect with their parents and other kin. Some students antagonised the older people by speaking English so they would not understand, and this was interpreted by the older people as a rejection of their authority. Several students also encountered resistance at home when they lapsed into English without thinking: 'Sometimes at home I forget I'm home and I talk in English. My mother gets real wild with me and says "You're not a white person, speak in language." I tell her, "I just forgot — I thought I was at Kormilda."' Another girl confessed 'Sometimes I forget how to talk to them boys at home and can't think of the words; sometimes I have to say it in English because that's all I can remember.'

Students therefore appeared to experience a degree of enculturative discontinuity in sleeping habits, food, clothing and language. Although the majority seemed able to adjust to the norms for these areas in both

home and school settings, several students were unable to do so and experienced conflict. Information gained from the Interview and Ideology Questionnaire, from informal conversations, and from observations in a few communities, indicated that dissatisfaction lay with the home setting, probably because these students had internalised the western norm.

Because of the stress on permissiveness and self-reliance in Aboriginal socialisation, students found it hard to adjust to the many rules and routines which the school established in order to cope with the large numbers of students under its care. Rigid scheduling of classes, meals, activities, and bedtimes, and boundaries defining where students could and could not go conflicted with the life-style at home. Students felt that they should be allowed to leave the College grounds more often, whether for outings to town and pictures, visits to relations, or hunting in the bush around the College. Such liberties were taken for granted in their own environment and the lack of them at Kormilda created intense dissatisfaction.

One consequence of the discontinuity between home and school was that rules were frequently broken and constant reprimands and punishments required. Discipline at Kormilda College was a persistent cause of friction between students and staff. Several factors contributed to this situation: first, the rules were often not clearly defined; second, punishments were inconsistently administered, and girls in particular often avoided negative sanctions altogether since caning of them was not permitted and most other punishments appeared to be ineffective; third, and perhaps most important, the authority of whites to discipline students was not seen by the students as legitimate.

This last factor is perhaps a reflection of the disintegration of the traditional social structure of Aboriginal society and the decline of the authority of the elders. Child-rearing in Aboriginal society was very permissive and order was maintained by the elders who controlled the rites of initiation and acceptance into totemic life. Hamilton (1970:122) has commented on the different phases that characterise patterns of child-rearing among the Anbara in North Australia and European society:

The real beginning of Aboriginal life for the Anbara boy and girl comes with his circumcision and her marriage. Only then occurs the kind of training which European society takes for granted in the rearing of children from their earliest months: subjection to adult authority, training in the beliefs and values underlying adult behaviour; the imposition of self-control and self-denial.

While child-rearing in Aboriginal society continues to be very permissive, Albrecht (1970) asserts that, with the disintegration of Aboriginal culture in many communities, the authority of the elders is no longer effective and thus no mechanism exists for enforcing behavioural norms and maintaining order. It seems likely, then, that many students came to Kormilda without internalised values for self-discipline and self-control and thus attempts by staff to impose discipline and enforce observance of school rules were not always perceived by students as legitimate. The outcome at Kormilda was that some students displayed a disrespect for all rules, and a rejection of the imposition of punishment by those in authority as completely unjustified, and used abusive language towards staff members.

Thus students appeared to experience considerable conflict at Kormilda in attempting to reconcile the permissiveness of Aboriginal society with the more authoritarian atmosphere characteristic of such total institutions. Autonomy was encouraged in the College, but the focus was on individualistic gains rather than on individuals co-operating for the benefit of the kin group. Competition was encouraged both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities as illustrated by a remark to the students by a staff member: 'You play softball to win, just as you do everything else to win, and work at school to win.' While many of the students participated in team games, they had to learn to co-operate with other students who were not kinsmen, but who were just temporarily united for a specific purpose.

Students had well defined kinship relationships with all other persons in their home communities and these governed reciprocal role obligations and determined behaviour. At Kormilda, however, students were in contact with Aborigines from different areas with no common bonds. Almost half the students maintained it was difficult to make friends with other students and tribal affiliations appeared to be an important determinant of interpersonal attraction. Reasons given for difficulties experienced in making friends from other tribal areas included 'they are different from us', and 'it is the feeling among the tribes'. Fighting among students was not uncommon at Kormilda, but it was mostly confined to intra-tribal groups and generally concerned disputes over boy/girl friends. Several students expressed unfavourable attitudes towards the few part-Aborigines in the College. They were referred to as 'that part-coloured one' rather than by name, and occasionally pejorative remarks were made to the face of the individual, such as, 'you're not even an Aborigine, white face'. However, for several students, the opportunity to make friends from

different places was one of the most favourable aspects of Kormilda, and a few students maintained a correspondence with friends from other communities during the holidays and after they left school.

Tribal ethnocentrism appeared to be an important characteristic of Aborigines and the presence at Kormilda of other Aborigines from totally unrelated tribes therefore presented an additional aspect of discontinuity between the two environments. While most of those students who experienced conflict were able to minimise it through associating predominantly with their own kinsmen, a few experienced the reverse problem and had boy or girl friends from different tribes whom they wished to marry. This created intense conflict, as in most instances the students concerned were aware that their own people would reject their partner.

Attitudes towards staff members varied considerably, and it is difficult to ascertain what personality characteristics inspired respect, and how much antagonism was directed towards a role position rather than towards the individual incumbent as a person. Williams (1971) asserted that boys typically showed antagonism towards staff in home communities, while girls were more inclined to interact with and elicit support from Europeans. This sex difference did not emerge at Kormilda, however, and the greater tendency for girls to interact with white members of staff was probably a reflection of the higher proportion of single female staff members living in the College grounds, rather than a rebuffal of the staff by boys. Several students expressed a keenness to have more Aborigines on the staff to whom they could turn for help and emotional support, and students occasionally complained that 'no-one in this school understands us'.

Films, books, newspapers, dances, and sport played an important role in College life as informal modes of exposure to western culture. Half the students mentioned the opportunity of playing in team games and other sports when asked what they liked best about Kormilda. For some students, particularly the boys, such activities were the only aspect of Kormilda that motivated them to return after the holidays. The media, especially films, teenage magazines, and comic books, were very popular with the students and influenced their perceptions of the European-Australian sociocultural system. In many cases, a distorted image of the dominant society was conveyed; for example, there was a tremendous emphasis on romantic love in the teenage magazines. The resulting ideas concerning the western concept of marriage frequently created conflict with the arranged system of marriage which continues to characterise Aborigin-

al society. Many of the girls were promised to men in a polygamous system, and several refused to comply with this traditional custom. Parents, and husbands to whom the girls were promised, were often disturbed at the effect of schooling on this traditional custom and some students were refused permission to attend or return to Kormilda for this reason. Many students desired to emulate singers, film stars, and sports stars, whom they read about in magazines and saw in films. Hobart (1968:103) refers to this embracement of the western subculture as 'Elvis Presleyism', and claims that its function for students in a minority ethnic group is to provide an escape from the ambiguities and the conflicts of the situation in which the adolescent finds himself. Involvement with the subculture was reflected in the dress and personal grooming, music, and dance preferences of the students.

One of the main sources of dissatisfaction at Kormilda was the lack of opportunities to engage in traditional activities. The majority of students claimed that what they liked best about home was the chance to go hunting and fishing; yet, these activities were not available at Kormilda, despite the surrounds of bush and water. Boys lamented that they were never given the opportunity to get away from the College and to go camping, while girls were concerned that they were not permitted to leave the College in order to visit friends or relations in Darwin. Several students missed the camp-fire activities of home, particularly dance and music, which were an integral aspect of the Aboriginal life-style in many communities. One boy stated that he found it difficult to join in the dancing when he went home since participation in traditional activities was not expected from Kormilda students.

Students appeared to experience conflict for opposing reasons: on the one hand, many students were unhappy at Kormilda since there was no opportunity to pursue traditional activities, while on the other, a substantial proportion were dissatisfied with life back home during the holidays since the range of leisure activities was very restricted in many communities. As students settled down to the routine of school, many began to enjoy it. Nonetheless, negative feelings about the regimentation of school life and the separation from kinsmen remained. This ambivalence was reflected in the attitudes to school attendance. When students first returned to school, they did not like it; by mid-term, they had readjusted to school life, and most liked it on the whole. At the end of term, they were keen to return home and were happy to see their parents, siblings, and relations again. However, as the holidays progressed, many students became bored with the limited range of recreational activities avail-

able and missed the conveniences of life at Kormilda — showers, hot water, electricity, and regular meals. As the beginning of the school term approached, students were once again reluctant to leave families and give up the greater freedom from restriction that they had enjoyed during the holidays. One student expressed this ambivalence during the interview: 'When I'm back home, I sometimes like to be here; and when I'm here, I like to be home. It's funny you know.'

It is very apparent that a wide culture gap existed and this was likely to have a significant impact on the ability of the individual to resolve conflicts in personal identity. Little homage was paid to the aims laid down in the Watts-Gallacher Report for transitional colleges and very little effort was made to instil a pride in ethnic identity or to provide a bridge with the community. Students appeared to be left in no man's land. While it was hoped that the College would enable students to acquire skills, knowledge, attitudes and values so that they might take their place alongside whites, the discontinuity that existed between Kormilda and their home communities meant that learning was probably reduced, adjustment to a new situation occupying much of the student's time.

6 Conflict in identity and maladjustment of students

The third issue of importance to this study of Kormilda College concerns the conflict in identity faced by adolescents and their attempts to resolve it. Various writers have proposed different models of identity from a traditional orientation to a western or modern orientation and have outlined the conditions required for successful resolution of identity crisis in relation to each of them.

The concept of personal identity

Personal identity refers to the sum total of the individual's feelings, attitudes, values and behaviour. It is multidimensional and ethnicity is subsumed within it as one dimension. Personal identity reflects the concern of the individual with who he is, how he appears to others, and what progress he is making towards his social and occupational goals.

'Black consciousness' is one of the most important concepts in enabling black minority groups to develop a positive personal identity. In the past, the personal identity of blacks has often embodied conflict since their self-image has been defined by whites in such negative stereotypes as lazy, apathetic, dumb, dirty, etc. and this has precluded the development of meaningful social and occupational goals. Black consciousness, however, is an attempt to instil blacks with a sense of peoplehood: pride, rather than shame, in blackness, and an attitude of brotherly, communal responsibility among all black people for one another. As Carmichael and Hamilton claim (1968:37), 'black people must redefine themselves and only *they* can do that'.

adolescence as a time when individuals experience a crisis in their identity. Although the formation of personal identity is a continuing process from birth, it is at this particular period that young people must make a series of personal, occupational and ideological choices to determine 'who they are' — both in their own eyes, and in those of others. If an individual sets for himself goals consistent with his self-image that he is not able to fulfil, anxiety is generated and he becomes confused in the different roles he plays. If he is unable to resolve this identity conflict as he passes into early adulthood, then he continues to be characterised by inconsistency of goals,

impairment of decision making ability, and self-devaluation.

The likelihood of an individual's reaching adulthood with an integrated sense of who he is is held by Erikson to depend on three main conditions. First, it depends on successful resolution of earlier psychosocial crises which are held to characterise different phases of development in the child's life. These crises represent specific development tasks that must be accomplished by the child and its environment. According to Erikson (1968:56) each basic psychosocial trend meets a crisis at an ontogenetic stage:

Basic trust versus mistrust — infancy. Resolution of this crisis represents the enduring belief in the attainability of primal wishes in spite of the anarchic urges and rages of dependency.

Autonomy versus shame, doubt — early childhood. Resolution of this crisis represents the unbroken determination to exercise free choice as well as self-restraint in spite of the unavoidable experience of shame, doubt, and a certain rage over being controlled by others.

Initiative versus guilt — play age. Resolution of this crisis represents the courage to envisage and preserve valued and tangible goals guided by conscience, but not paralysed by guilt and by the fear of punishment.

Industry versus inferiority — school age. Resolution of this crisis represents the free exercise (unimpaired by an infantile sense of inferiority) of dexterity and intelligence in the completion of serious tasks. It is the basis for co-operative participation in some segment of the culture.

The second condition is the adequacy of models with which the individual can identify during adolescence. The principal models are the parents or those fulfilling a similar role. If these adult figures hold different values, then the child becomes confused and is unable to establish meaningful goals or to sort out for himself what he stands for. If an individual is socialised in terms of traditional values and patterns of behaviour, then he experiences conflict if he is placed in another environment where the adult figures embody different values and set different goals. The third condition depends on the individual's potential to realise the various social, occupational, and other goals he has set himself; taken together these conform to his self-image.

Model of identity orientations

Wintrob and Sindell (1968) suggest that personal identity is a continuum

and that it is possible to identify particular orientations ranging from one pole (which they define as traditional) to the other (which is a white orientation). Between these two polar extremes lies a synthesis of traditional and white models. For the individual who adopts a traditional orientation, he looks to his own membership group — other Aborigines — for a guide to his own behaviour and they provide the major source of his values, attitudes and norms. For the individual who adopts a white orientation, the dominant society, which is not his own membership group, is the source of his major perspectives and resultant behaviour. Complete cultural replacement may occur: the individual adopts new norms, which replace the traditional ones in all situations. Finally, the individual who synthesises both white and Aboriginal orientations adopts both groups as sources of his attitudes, values and norms. His behaviour is most likely to be influenced by the particular situation in which he finds himself, although it is also likely that those attitudes and values which are most crucial to his identity as an Aboriginal will be retained in all situations.

Wintrob and Sindell have attempted to identify the variables associated with socialisation that might determine the choice of a particular identity orientation. They claim that students who have internalised feelings of rejection in their family relationships and have established emotionally supportive relationships with white surrogate parents are more likely to polarise towards a white identity model. Polarisation towards a traditional model is likely to occur when the child has started school at a relatively advanced age, by which time acculturation along traditional lines is far advanced. In such cases, sex-appropriate traditional role behaviours have been reinforced and traditional modes of gratification have been internalised to a high degree. But in order for this process of acculturation to result in a firm emotional commitment to the traditional life, the child must be secure in his relationships with parents, close kin and other individuals who have played key roles in pre-school socialisation. Where these conditions are fulfilled, the traditional model retains its strength during subsequent years of formal education in a white urban milieu. Finally, Wintrob and Sindell suggest that synthesis of both white and traditional models will occur given the following conditions: positive affective parent-child relationships during early schooling in the home community, and their reinforcement during vacations when the student is reunited with his family after attendance in the residential college; some degree of encouragement of, or at least absence of strong parental opposition towards, the student's educational and occupational aspirations; development of positive affective ties with those whites

(teachers, counsellors, parent surrogates) and those Aborigines (adult kin, older siblings, and friends) whose white orientations have not been accompanied by rejection of Aboriginal values and personal ties and who serve as models for the building of the student's ego ideal and reinforce his aspirations; and the elaboration of social, educational and occupational goals consistent with the student's potential for their achievement. Research on the impact of education in a residential college on the personal identity of Cree Indian students confirmed the pattern of variables as mediators of identity orientation (Wintrob and Sindell, 1968:30-5).

How likely are Kormilda students to resolve identity conflict in relation to each of the three identity orientations? First, let us consider those Aborigines who were primarily traditionally oriented and who saw their future back home in their own communities, maintaining the traditional value and belief systems and life-style. It seemed likely that most of these individuals would be in post-primary classes and therefore have no alternative to schooling at Kormilda. The discontinuity experienced at Kormilda would serve to intensify conflict and to confront the individual with problems of adjustment taking precedence over the learning of new skills. The lack of Aboriginal models at Kormilda, and the lack of emotional support from home, seemed likely to produce intense feelings of homesickness and antagonistic attitudes towards Kormilda and members of staff. While some of these students may well have complied with behavioural norms while at Kormilda, they were unlikely to internalise them and therefore their behaviour would probably revert to community norms when they returned home.

Those Aborigines who were white oriented would, on the other hand, face adjustment problems of a different kind. Their orientation towards the dominant society would lead them to adopt and internalise its norms and values. It was contended earlier, however, that some of these values mediating achievement behaviour are diametrically opposed to those of the traditional society, particularly that reflecting the collectivistic orientation on the relational value that can be seen as the core of Aboriginal identity. As long as white society in general, and Kormilda College in particular, failed to give some positive balance to Aboriginal culture and to instil a pride in Aboriginal heritage, the Aboriginal who was white oriented would probably be characterised by a negative self-image and a devalued image of his own membership group. Resolution of identity conflict could be achieved if the individual were able to move into the community and had the requisite skills and abilities enabling integration to take place. However, there were few opportunities for students to

develop feelings of confidence in interacting with whites, to participate in processes of decision making, or to assume responsibility. All these skills would be required for acceptance into the wider community since the individual would not have the solidarity of his membership group behind him.

Finally, there is the group of Aborigines who attempted to resolve identity crises through a synthesis of white and traditional models. As has already been mentioned, some of these individuals would no doubt be successful, but since cultural synthesis is not always possible, confusion of identity would remain a likely outcome for others. Those who used both Aborigines and whites as reference groups would be expected to internalise many of the norms and values of the dominant society but would be unlikely to change those orientations crucial to their identity as Aborigines. Such individuals would probably retain a collectivistic orientation and be reluctant to move away from their own kinsmen, even when occupational aspirations could not be fulfilled in their own communities. Kormilda College would therefore be functional for these individuals only if it provided them with the skills that helped them to achieve their aspirations, and at the same time reinforced Aboriginal identity. The discontinuity that existed between Kormilda and their home communities, however, suggested that learning would be reduced, since adjustment would occupy much of the student's time. Moreover, the failure of the College to reinforce Aboriginal identity and to instil a pride in Aboriginal heritage seemed likely to create additional conflict. The lack of Aboriginal models in the College required the individual to use whites as a reference group. While some of the missions and settlements provided job opportunities, other communities and particularly the pastoral properties were extremely restricted in range. It would seem likely, then, that students would experience stress manifesting itself in symptoms of maladjustment.

Maladjustment

Identity conflict may be expressed in a number of ways depending on cultural norms, the particular situation in which the individual finds himself, and the limitations of the individual's constitutional capabilities. For example, there are both individual differences and cultural differences between groups on the level of toleration of stress; society may also prescribe different modes of expression of maladjustment for males and females; a social control agency such as the law or an institution may sanction some forms of deviant behaviour but not others.

Inkeles and Smith (1970:85) have provided a definition of adjustment which takes these factors into account:

By adjustment we refer to the relative success or adequacy of an individual's functioning as a psychological and social being, within the limits of his constitutional capabilities and his environment. We emphasize that the criterion of successful functioning must be *relative* to one's physical body and one's environment.

This suggested that a fruitful way in which to assess the identity conflict experienced by students was to measure symptoms which indicated that the individual was maladjusted in relation to the environment at Kormilda.

The major criteria of mental health or adjustment have been reviewed by Scott (1958) and, among the six in common use, the first three were selected as suitable measures of maladjustment of students at Kormilda College; the six are social maladjustment, objective psychological symptoms, subjective unhappiness, exposure to psychiatric treatment, psychiatric diagnosis, failure of positive adaptation.

Social maladjustment or deviant behaviour is defined as 'conduct which is generally thought to require the attention of social control agencies — that is, conduct about which 'something should be done' (K. T. Erikson, 1964:10). In this study, then, deviant behaviour was assessed from those behavioural problems of children that were considered by researchers to be symptomatic of maladjustment and that were punished by staff for their occurrence and also perceived by students to be 'wrong' (see Chapter 8).

The second index of maladjustment was objective psychological symptoms, which were expressed as psychosomatic symptoms (again, see Chapter 8). The Adolescent Adjustment Interview Schedule devised by Wintrob and Sindell (1968) for use with Cree Indians in a cross-cultural context was used for this purpose. Some of the items included were: frequent headaches, stomach aches and vomiting; frequent attendance at the clinic for minor complaints, bed-wetting, school phobia, frequent nightmares, shaking inside, compulsive lying.

The remaining index was subjective unhappiness, which was measured by asking students how they felt about things, whether they often felt sad, and whether they sometimes wished they were dead. The case studies in Chapter 7 illustrate these symptoms.

A record was made for each student over a period of a year of each of

the symptoms described and data was obtained from a number of sources: observations, reports from teachers, staff and other students, interviews and casual conversations, hospital records from the resident sister at the College. In addition to these measures of maladjustment and stress, teachers were also asked to complete a check list for each student on a number of criteria that were considered to reflect the degree of adjustment at school. The items included in the check list were: is easily distracted, lacks concentration; is shy, does not participate in class activities; is apathetic, lazy; is very withdrawn; lacks confidence; is temperamental, insolent; has gross fears of failure and inadequacy; does not mix with other non-Kormilda students. Finally, it was apparent that many students found that an effective way to reduce identity conflict and stress was to drop out of Kormilda altogether. Thus, the proportion of individuals who left the College relative to the initial intake was taken to represent a valid, and perhaps the most revealing, index of stress.

In order to provide the reader with an understanding of the degree of stress experienced by students at Kormilda, three different analyses based on the various dimensions outlined above are attempted. First, four case studies are presented to provide a detailed description of the models of identity orientation described earlier and some of the conflicts associated with each; second, the drop-out rates of students at Kormilda are analysed; and third, an attempt is made to describe the numbers of students characterised by social maladjustment or exhibiting psychosomatic symptoms of stress. Comparisons between sub-groups of the school population are also made so that cultural norms in the expression of stress and in the differing degrees of conflict are apparent. Finally, some limitations on the conclusions which can be drawn from the findings are discussed.

7 Case studies

These case studies are presented in order to provide a detailed description of the three different models of identity orientation discussed in the preceding chapter: polarisation towards a white model and a traditional model, and synthesis. The cases have been selected to represent different positions on the identity continuum and to exemplify points made earlier. With each an attempt is made to generalise from the individual to the group of which it is 'representative'. The first is a traditionally oriented student. It is apparent that the traditional model towards which he was polarising differed considerably from anthropological descriptions of a 'traditional' Aboriginal, and his attitudes, values, norms, and aspirations reflected considerable contact with the dominant society. In the present study, the location of 'traditional orientation' on the continuum of ethnic identity has already moved away from the traditional pole. The second and third case studies describe individuals who attempted synthesis. Case Study Two illustrates successful resolution of identity conflict, while Case Study Three exemplifies the intense conflict and identity confusion experienced by a girl who was unable to choose between contrasting values, role expectations, and models for identification. While she is categorised as attempting to synthesise both white and traditional models, she was located close to the white pole on the identity continuum and eventually tried to resolve conflict through white polarisation. The final case study is that of a girl who was white oriented. Her membership group continued to influence her, however, and it is clear that she had not completely internalised the attitudes, values, norms, and aspirations of the dominant society. Her location on the identity continuum has been defined as white orientation, but it does not represent the most extreme point possible.

Case One: traditional orientation

A.B. was seventeen years old and in his second year of post-primary. He enjoyed his first year at the College, but considered he was old enough to leave school when interviewed and did not want to remain at Kormilda any longer.

He came from a Roman Catholic mission, 200 miles from Darwin, but his contact with the dominant society had been increased by visits to Sydney, Brisbane, and Melbourne. His family lived on the mission in an iron shack, without facilities such as water and lights, and everyone slept on the floor. His father was dead, and his mother, who spoke a little English, worked in the sewing room. A.B. did not mind the way of life back home and said that he would be perfectly happy living in a similar house when he was older. Ceremonial life was still important on the mission; A.B. was a particularly good dancer and enjoyed the music and dance in the camp during the evenings. However, he realised that these traditions had no place at Kormilda and said sadly during the interview: 'I feel shamed. I've been in the College too long. I would look silly if I did dances when I get back from the College — I've been to Kormilda and they don't expect people to do that sort of thing any more. I would have to stay at home a long while and get used to it again. I don't mind dancing in front of other people.'

A.B. enjoyed hunting and fishing when he was home and spoke about the kinship obligations still observed: 'We have to share things with all the people — that's our way, you know. Last holidays, I caught three kangaroos and gave one to each of the three camps.' He recognised, however, that the mission was changing things and that boys must go to school: 'Boys are different, they should go to school first. Girls are allowed to stay home.' Nevertheless, he believed that after one year at Kormilda he had learned enough, and the futility of spending too long at school was apparent to him: 'That superintendent, he said the boys had to stay at Kormilda and get a good job. He said "you boys got lots of things to learn at Kormilda." People are getting real wild with him now because he promises things and then they aren't there.'

Following the holidays in first term A.B. did not want to return and he and his friends missed the plane. His mother wanted him to stay home and help look after the children since his father was dead and he was the eldest child. The superintendent, however, encouraged all the boys to return, some against their will, since they created trouble at home and there was not enough for them to do. Besides feeling homesick for his family and missing the traditional way of life back home, A.B. disliked certain aspects about Kormilda, particularly all the rules — 'they're always telling us to do things here'. However, he did enjoy the pictures, the opportunity to go shopping, and Manual Training, and admitted that, when home, he missed these.

At school A.B. was a very likeable student who clowned in class and got

on well with other students and teachers. He enjoyed school, and did not experience any difficulties with the work. The class atmosphere was very relaxed and all the students particularly liked their class teacher; he never felt nervous in class when asked questions or requested to do something for the first time. In fact, he stated: 'I don't worry about Europeans, I think Europeans are friendly. I worry about Aborigines because they fight when they're drunk.' He admitted, however, that he often felt unhappy, especially when he came back from the holidays. At first, he used to get a lot of headaches and feel sick, and the sister would give him medicine, but he said that he did not feel like that so much any more. He often felt scared, though, 'especially when I see the principal coming — I certainly do. My voice seems to be choking me; my voice goes all funny'.

A.B. was a member of a gang of boys from the same mission, none of whom wanted to be at Kormilda. Because of this desire to be home, and the lack of community support back home for their presence at the College, the boys caused much trouble in out-of-school hours. A.B. spoke with delight about their raids on the kitchen and tuck shop and his antics in the girls' dormitories at night. He ran away from the College on a number of occasions and was involved in an assault on a staff member. Towards the end of second term, he was caught sniffing petrol with his peers, and steps were then taken for their expulsion from Kormilda. None of the boys from the mission returned to Kormilda for the remaining term.

When it was time for him to leave school, A.B. wanted to work at timber cutting on the mission. As he himself claimed, he had learned a lot of things at Kormilda but had been there too long and did not need to know any more. This attitude is understandable as no formal education was required to fulfil his aspirations, and prolonged detention at Kormilda for a boy of seventeen only created conflict and frustration with consequent overt reactions against the system. The only aim of A.B. at the time of the interview was to leave Kormilda and return home to live in the same way as his kinsmen. He felt that things should stay the way they were at that time and people should not start making changes — 'There's too much trouble that way.' He was promised to a young girl and although he could appreciate the reaction by some Aborigines to the promise system, maintained that tribal laws were the most important and that he must marry his promise: 'The people would be angry if I don't marry her. You've got to pay money to that man if you don't want to marry his daughter.' Despite his traditional orientation, and friendships only with boys of his own tribe, A.B. thought Australian identity to be the most important. 'Most Aborigines at home think tribe comes first, but we children think

Australia comes first — Australia is a big country.'

A.B.'s socially deviant behaviour can be seen to arise from the discontinuity between the two environments of home and College and a failure to adjust to the situation in which he was then detained. Conflicts inevitably arose and the only reaction which seemed possible to such a student was to fight against the system itself. His hostility was not directed towards Europeans and the dominant society, but towards the College itself and the principal as the figure who represented authority. As a result of this hostility, A.B. did not internalise any of the values the school was trying to inculcate, nor did he develop occupational and educational aspirations different from those of his peers back home. He therefore might have been expected to experience little difficulty in adjusting to a life on the mission since the material advantages of Kormilda had not made any major impact on him and he was not dissatisfied with the average lot of the individual in the camp situation to which he wished to return.

A.B.'s feelings about home, his attitudes to Kormilda, and his deviant behaviour, were fairly typical of the eleven other students who were traditionally oriented. All but one had dropped out of the school system before completing a post-primary course, and many had vented their feelings of frustration in deviant behaviour directed against the College. They all wished to work at home in the range of occupations available to Aborigines on settlements, and none had any aspirations which could not be fulfilled in home communities. The traditional way of life was still important and the major dissatisfaction at Kormilda arose from the failure of the school to provide continuity in this area.

Case Two: synthesis

C.D. was seventeen years old and in his last year of post-primary, having begun as one of the foundation students of the College. He was a very likeable, friendly student who was well adjusted and self-confident. He was popular with all the other students, and his best friends were two boys who also came from Darwin. English was his first language and he maintained that he did not speak a tribal language at all.

C.D. had lived on a government settlement, east of Darwin, for most of his life but four years earlier he and his family had moved to the local settlement on the Aboriginal Reserve in Darwin where they lived in one of the Housing Commission homes. They also owned a car. There were a substantial number of people from their former settlement living on the Darwin Reserve, and considerable movement occurred between the two communities. C.D. and his family usually returned to their former

community each year to visit relations. His father was a linesman with the PMG and his mother looked after the house, although an Aboriginal woman also helped with the housework since his mother was afflicted by leprosy. His family included two sisters, one of whom was also at Kormilda and attending high school. C.D.'s parents placed a high value on education and were very keen for their children to be at Kormilda. His father maintained with pride that all his family spoke only English, although they could in fact converse in pidgin, which was the lingua franca of the district in which they formerly lived.

The life led by C.D. at home was very similar to that at Kormilda. He slept in a bed and was bound by a relatively fixed time schedule and sequence of activities. His parents had internalised many of the western values and emphasis was placed on personal appearance and hygiene. Having lived in Darwin for a few years, C.D. had developed many of the modern social skills necessary for integration and acceptance within the community and had interacted with white peers and adults in many different situations. C.D. liked being at home during the holidays and wished to continue living there when he left school. However, he considered the best things about Kormilda were being away from home and the pressures and demands of parents, and the opportunities for playing in sporting teams.

Ceremonial life was no longer of any significance for C.D. or his family, although he continued to identify as an Aboriginal and wanted to marry an Aboriginal girl of his own choice. His parents no longer believed in the importance of the promise system and there were no tribal pressures on him to accept this marriage pattern. His concept of identity as Aboriginal was related to kinship ties and his affinity with his kinsmen both from his former community and from the settlement in Darwin, and he felt that being an Aboriginal was more important to him than being Australian. His attitude towards the Aboriginal people was favourable, although not as high as his own self-concept or attitude towards Europeans. He was oriented towards the future and believed that things would be better for him than for his parents and that people must forget about the old ways if they want to get ahead. He himself wanted to get a good job so that he might buy the material possessions that Europeans in the dominant society enjoy.

When the time came for C.D. to leave school, he wanted to follow a full mechanics course and work as a qualified mechanic in Darwin. Although he was in post-primary, rather than in the academic stream, his ability surpassed many of those at high school and it seemed likely that he would

be able to realise his aspirations. He did not experience any difficulties in school and teachers' reports indicated that he coped well with the work. He enjoyed manual training, particularly mechanics, and received an award at the end of the year as an outstanding student in this trade.

Despite an outward appearance of self-confidence, C.D. was still unsure of himself in some situations. He reported that he sometimes felt nervous in the presence of white people and often felt homesick for his family. However, he showed no other signs of the maladjustment or conflict that characterised so many students at the College, and was rarely in trouble for any form of misbehaviour. As a dormitory prefect he organised other students, and his discipline in this situation was accepted by all.

C.D. was a student who exemplifies a successful outcome of the goals of the education policy and of the broader assimilation policy. While he identified as an Aboriginal and was proud of his ethnic group, he was nevertheless integrated into the community and had the skills and work attitudes to enable him to fulfil his aspirations and participate in the economic, social, and political structures of the dominant society. He had successfully resolved any personal conflicts in identity facing him in a cross-cultural situation, through integration of the attitudes and beliefs of the two societies. A probable reason for this successful resolution and adjustment was the continuity between the two environments in which he was socialised. For him, Kormilda did not present a host of new situations requiring new norms of behaviour and the development of new skills; rather, it reinforced most of the values he had already internalised through identification with his own parents. The continuity between the two environments promoted more effective learning since most of his time was not taken up in adjusting to the conflicts between life at Kormilda and life at home. Contact with whites in the dominant society and with white peers in the primary school had led to a greater degree of self-confidence and the acquisition of skills that would enable him to fulfil his educational, occupational, and social aspirations.

Case Three: synthesis

E.F. was sixteen years old and in her second year at Kormilda and attending Darwin High School in first year. She was a friendly, mature girl and got along well with other students and staff. However, she associated mainly with those students who were her kinsmen and claimed to feel uncomfortable with the others, especially those from the 'Top End'. Her English was good and she had no difficulty in communicating ideas and feelings.

Most of her life had been spent on a government settlement 500 miles south-west of Darwin, where she lived with her parents in a humpy in the camp during the holidays. Neither of her parents had received any formal education, although they were happy for E.F. to go to Kormilda. Her father worked on the settlement, and her mother looked after the younger children, including two brothers who expected to come to Kormilda in 1972. E.F. herself was promised to an old man who died in an accident and she was subsequently claimed by his brother as tribal custom decrees. She was very much opposed to the promise system and refused to go to this man. She still wished to marry an Aboriginal but wanted to choose for herself. Her attitude towards her own people was ambivalent; on the one hand she was dissatisfied with life at home and wanted to live in a house, wear clean clothes, and be 'respectable'; on the other hand, she was not anxious to leave her own people and said that she would like to get a job at home which would enable her to fulfil these aspirations. Her occupational ambition was to follow a secretarial or teaching course and then return home to the settlement to work.

Although she enjoyed returning home for the holidays during her first year at Kormilda, she became increasingly disturbed at the idea during the second year. The prospect of trouble with her promised husband and sleeping in the camp was distasteful to her. In second term, she and a girlfriend were granted permission to live in the single staff quarters during the holidays, and most of the time was spent playing records, being 'European', and spending as little time as possible in the camp. The other children at home usually taunted the Kormilda students and accused them of being 'whitefellows', but this was dismissed as jealousy and there were enough individuals to give one another support and enable them to resist the peer group pressures of the community at home.

At this time, conflict was clearly present, and the pull of both western and traditional societies apparent. On the one hand, her own people could provide her with a sense of belonging and security, while on the other hand white society provided glimpses of a 'better way of life', with more status and material comfort. Her dislike of the promise system and a desire to marry an Aboriginal of her own choice revealed further alienation from her own people.

At Kormilda E.F. appeared happy and well adjusted in the early part of the year and participated in various College activities. She was a frequent visitor to the researcher's house and occasionally confided some of her anxieties. Her best friend at Kormilda was a kinsman who was white oriented and continually defied the rules until her eventual expulsion. Yet

despite this friendship E.F. was rarely in trouble for the first half of the year. She enjoyed high school and appeared to cope well with the work. Her teachers described her at this stage as a conscientious, co-operative, and mature student, who was popular with others in the class and had more self-confidence than many of the other Kormilda students.

However, in mid-year, E.F.'s attitude changed completely. While she admitted to liking the first year at Kormilda, she no longer wished to be at the College and claimed an intense dislike of high school. She ran away from the College on numerous occasions and refused to attend school when forcefully returned to Kormilda. She admitted spending several nights with one of her kinsmen at Bagot Aboriginal Reserve in Darwin, and eventually left on a truck returning to the settlement, but was apprehended en route and returned to Kormilda once more. Her best friend was then expelled from the College and this left E.F. with no incentive to remain, and all punishments were ineffective. She organised a job for herself in the kitchen at Bagot Reserve in Darwin and when again sent back to the College, wrote a letter to the principal stating her reasons for giving up high school.

Another reason is that I don't want to continue my schooling at High School. I think I'm old enough to leave school. You see I'm nearly 17. I shouldn't be in 1st year anyway. I know it worries me a lot going to school. I want to give up the whole idea of going to school. I think I've learned enough. You might think education is important and I think so too. Well, you got me all wrong about this. I don't want to be well educated person. I don't want to show off for my family especially. I think I know and understand about the European society now. I'm quite sure I know I don't want to go to school.

... At X, many people think I should leave school not because they jealous. They want me there. They know and they've told me that I'm sensible enough to work and help them even though I don't want to finish High School properly. I want to leave school. I don't want to continue my school at Darwin High. I'm not very satisfied about going to school, especially the Darwin High School where I find subjects very complicated and difficult to understand. So please let me have my job back at Bagot.

Thanks very much for your help.

Following this plea, E.F. left Kormilda and went to stay at Bagot where she worked for a time in the kitchen and then got a job in a dry cleaners in Darwin. She did not like this work, however, and eventually returned to

her home community and spent the first six months of 1971 working as a teaching assistant in the school there. Trouble with her promised husband prompted the superintendent to send her out on the plane to Darwin, and she returned to Bagot and was once more given a job working in the kitchen. At this stage (August 1971), the researcher was back at Kormilda for a further period of fieldwork and E.F. asked if she could come and see her to talk about things. The conflict she then faced was clearly apparent; she had developed aspirations which were impossible to realise and was caught between the lure of European society and elevated status, and her own society which offered a greater degree of security. Her opening remarks to the researcher were:

I'm sad all the time; I worry; I'm just unhappy you know. I'm always getting upset. I don't like living at Bagot — I should be at Kormilda. I liked Kormilda the first year I was here and for the second year. It was I.J. (her best friend) who made me do things.

I've been educated, I know how to behave good — I've been to High School. It's hard you know, that X mob at Bagot — they want me to go to them. But I'm not going to — I know the right way for a person to behave. I was silly last year, but I don't want to live like that any more.

E.F. no longer wanted to return to her own settlement, but would have liked to do a secretarial course and work in Darwin, living in a hostel somewhere. While secretarial and other courses were offered for Aborigines, they were mainly intended to provide individuals with skills that would enable them to work in their own communities and were usually not of sufficient standard for employment in Darwin. Other jobs in towns, such as shop work, required a measure of self-confidence she lacked. Visits to Commonwealth Employment Agencies and to the Aboriginal Guidance and Adjustment Section failed to reveal any alternative in the immediate future to working in the kitchen. Attendance at Kormilda and a year at high school, however, had led her to expect greater opportunities and had given her a feeling of superiority over fellow Aborigines who had received little formal education. Her present salary and working conditions made it impossible for her to live anywhere else but Bagot, yet it was there that she was subject to the greatest pressures to accept her lower status in Aboriginal society and conform to all its norms, which she realised were often opposed to those in western society.

The two case studies of individuals attempting to resolve identity conflict through synthesis of white and traditional models illustrate two

possible outcomes of formal education in a cross-cultural context: for one individual conflict was exacerbated since she was forced to choose between contrasting norms, role expectations, and models of identification; while for the other, the experiences at school provided continuity with his lifestyle at home and enabled cultural synthesis to occur. The majority of students at Kormilda attempted synthesis, although only a few individuals experienced identity confusion as intensely as E.F. It is possible that it is only at a point in time when the individual has to make decisions concerning occupation or place of residence that conflict becomes more intense and resolution may be perceived as impossible.

Although many students were able to reduce role conflict through observing different norms in different behaviour settings, many showed symptoms of stress. The drop-out rate was still high among individuals who were attempting to resolve identity conflict through synthesis, and truancy from the College was very common. The school had made some impact on most of the students in areas such as personal hygiene and appearance, and had helped them to develop a degree of self-confidence, but it had created many conflicts in the attitudinal area. One boy who had been at Kormilda for three years stated: 'You can't change anything that goes against tribal law, even if you don't think it's right', and another asserted: 'We should do things the way the old people have done them — we have to carry on for our parents.'

Most students had a favourable self-concept and only occasionally made reference to ethnicity: one boy retorted during a conversation: 'You forget there's one difference between us — you should know — you're white and I'm black.' However, despite favourable self-images, many students had negative attitudes towards other Aborigines. One boy refused to acknowledge that he could speak a dialect: 'I follow white man's language; I live in a white man's house.' His fellow students in class all explained: 'He's shamed — he doesn't want to say any words in language.' A part-Aboriginal girl was observed putting talcum powder all over her face to see what she looked like as a white person.

Students varied greatly in their degree of self-confidence and ability to cope with the environment outside the College. Most were still shy in interacting with whites, and one girl confessed: 'We only understand Europeans a little bit, they do things differently from us.' While students in post-primary classes coped adequately with their school work, many of those at high school found the work very difficult and expressed feelings of inadequacy: 'I just haven't got any brains and I can't understand those things. I wish I was brainy. I try hard at school, but I just can't do some of

those things.' Some of the students at high school faced opposition from parents in their desire to continue. This created conflict and deprived students of the necessary encouragement from home to persevere. A senior student expressed her difficulties in a letter: 'I sometimes find my work and studies very hard but I don't give up. I'll try my best and keep going no matter whether the work seems hard or easy. I'll still try so one day I'll set an example for my own people. Some of my people don't understand and they don't too.'

One of the greatest conflict areas for students attempting to synthesise models was the promise system of marriage. While students wanted to return home to live, many girls did not want to marry their promised husbands. The majority of girls rejected the traditional arrangement of marriage and in several cases they disliked returning home for the holidays since conflict was intensified.

Case Four: white orientation

G.H. was a sophisticated Aboriginal girl of eighteen who was a foundation student of the College and in second year at high school. She was oriented towards the dominant society and had internalised many of its values and adopted its norms, not only in the situation of Kormilda, but also in her home community. She spoke English well, although dialect was still her first language and spoken with her friends, and she appeared self-confident in most situations.

G.H. came from an island mission in the Gulf of Carpentaria, although her parents had recently moved to a mission on the mainland adjacent to a mining town. Her father was head of one of the important tribes and was a councillor at the mission. He had a number of wives and lived in a humpy in the beach camp, although G.H. and her sister, who also attended Kormilda, usually stayed with their mother or full sister when they went home during the holidays. Although her father was unable to read or write himself and spoke very little English, he considered education to be important and was happy for both his daughters to be at Kormilda, providing they observed the traditional norms of behaviour when they went home.

G.H. was promised to an old man who died and she was subsequently promised to a second man who took another wife. She was very much opposed to the promise system of marriage herself: 'I told my father, I don't want to be promised — why do you have to have a promise? Then I got real angry with all those old men and said I don't want to marry any of

you and my father he got real angry too. I think the European way is much better and a person should be able to choose.' Undoubtedly the authority of her father enabled her to avoid being forced to go to her promise, but she now rejected all her own people as marriage partners: 'There's no one any good at X — they're all rubbish, those young men. I don't want to marry them.' G.H. had a European boyfriend in Darwin, but admitted that she could never return home with him to live there. She asked plaintively: 'Why is it wrong to have a European boyfriend?'

Ceremonial life was still very important among her people and her father played an important role in this sphere. She herself still liked the singing and dancing, although she did not participate very often. Kinship ties remained a dominant aspect of interpersonal relations and even at Kormilda she observed avoidance taboos relating to specific persons and retained traditional supernatural beliefs. While home in the holidays, she mostly spent the time just sitting around, and after a day at home would rather have been back at Kormilda: 'It's boring at home and there's not enough things to do — I'd rather be back in Darwin.'

G.H. took great pride in her personal appearance and was always well groomed, with a ribbon in her hair. This created intense conflicts at home: 'The people at home, they don't like us being clean. The other girls are just jealous of us. They don't like us wearing our clean clothes or looking nice.' Her father similarly protested at her attempts to be a 'narbuci' (pejorative term for European). This basic dilemma between the western way of life as exemplified at Kormilda and accepted by G.H. and the traditional pattern at home was recognised explicitly: 'The people at home call us Kormilda people names. It's hard going back for holidays — we live like Europeans now. They try to make us like Europeans in there — the people at home don't like it.'

Despite this dissatisfaction with the traditional way of life back home and the desire to return to Darwin as soon as she had seen her relations, G.H. was not very happy at Kormilda, although she chose that situation in preference to home. She would have preferred to live in a hostel or in a town with a family. The main trouble with Kormilda was that 'there are too many rules and too many bossy people. . . . This place is just a prison, we don't have fun here as teenagers — we're missing out on being teenagers. We should be at home where we have fun growing up.'

As a result of the pressures and conflict experienced, G.H. was repeatedly in trouble and remarks to her by the principal that such behaviour was to be expected because 'she is basically bad' only intensified her maladjustment. She was a petulant individual and was insolent

and stubborn with staff when reprimanded. She ran away from the College on numerous occasions, and refused to comply with the rules when refused permission to leave the College as a punishment for disobedience. Many of her difficulties arose from her age and maturity and the knowledge that she would be treated as an adult at home; at Kormilda, she was bound by all the College rules and accorded no special privileges. She herself said 'I don't want to stay at Kormilda College any more — I'm too old now.' G.H. claimed she often used to feel unhappy, but not any more. Sometimes, though, she cried in her room and often had scary dreams about the people fighting back home, which used to wake her up in the night.

At high school G.H. was the only Kormilda student to take an active part in the school organisation. She was the class representative on the Students' Council and made an effort to become involved in other school and class activities. She mixed well with other students in the class and in a sociogram administered at the high school the preceding year, was the only Kormilda student who wanted to sit next to a European. Teachers' reports of her performance varied, although most said she was one of the best students in the class, even though slow and easily distracted. She was still shy and reserved, however, and was embarrassed to have attention drawn to her. G.H. herself said she found school hard, particularly English. She enjoyed typing best of all and her teacher maintained that she was the best in the class and should have no difficulty in finding employment in this field. She found all the students in her class friendly and did not feel nervous when the teacher asked her questions. However, she continued to feel uneasy when in the presence of people she did not know and was scared whenever she had to make speeches.

G.H. wanted to continue on at school until fourth year and then get a job working in an office. She would like to live in Darwin in a house and certainly not at Bagot Reserve. However, she was not opposed to living at home if she could get a job with the mining people who were established adjacent to the mission. The availability of a European population, particularly males, was an attraction here.

G.H. typified an individual who was oriented towards white society, had accepted its norms and values and wanted to become integrated within the dominant society. She was very much aware of the subordinate status of women in her own society and saw that the only possible solution to her situation was to marry a white man. She was aware at the same time that this would mean rejection by her own people. Her prolonged stay at Kormilda was a means of postponing the inevitable decisions concerning

her future — whether to return home to the camp situation and to marry a promised husband, or to remain in Darwin. However, she also had the ability to fulfil the aspirations she had developed through contact with the dominant society and therefore had the potential to resolve the identity conflict she was experiencing at the time. If she were prepared to accept the European way of life, settle in Darwin, and be independent of her kinship obligations, then conflict might be resolved. The alternative of returning home would satisfy certain needs, but would also create endless dissatisfactions and an inevitable alienation from her own people, who had not experienced the same degree of social change.

The conflict G.H. faced was similarly experienced by most of the twelve students who were white oriented, and a number of these students showed signs of acute identity confusion. Six girls subsequently married or had children by European men and the other girls had all rejected their promised husbands and denigrated the men of their own ethnic group as 'rubbish ones'. Most of these students had developed high educational, occupational, and social aspirations, and wished to live away from their home communities. Since the majority were at high school, it is likely that they had the ability to realise their aspirations, but they were nevertheless characterised by a lack of self-confidence in interacting with whites, and some had gross fears of failure. One girl mentioned that she would like to be a nurse and train down south, but felt that she could not cope with the situation and with all the white people, and even in Darwin she felt that people in the street were always looking at her. While hardly any of these white oriented students wished to return home during the holidays, they were not always happy at Kormilda. Each student had run away from the College on at least one occasion, some as often as fifteen times, and most exhibited a number of psychosomatic symptoms indicative of emotional conflict. One girl received psychiatric treatment, another had taken an overdose of aspirins; one boy mentioned that he felt sick with worry trying to decide what to do about the future, and just lay awake at night thinking about it; another girl suffered from nightmares; and all remaining students had been in trouble for deviant behaviour, including assault and abuse of staff, disobedience, and promiscuity.

These four case studies clearly illustrate the conflicts experienced by students at Kormilda College, irrespective of whether they chose to identify primarily with white society or with the more traditional elements of their Aboriginal society. One student seemed able to reconcile the two opposing cultures and could be defined as a 'success' in the eyes of the educational authorities. The failure of the other students to resolve

conflict, however, indicates how easy it is for Aboriginal adolescents to become marginal to both societies. Aboriginal parents continue to decry the deleterious effects of Kormilda College on their children (Duke and Sommerlad, 1976). They maintain that there are three outcomes; these are well exemplified by the case studies. First, the students who return home are alienated from their kinsmen and community and do not readily adapt to the life-style adhered to by most Aboriginal people; second, the girls become pregnant to white men or to Aboriginal boys in the wrong skin group; and third, the young men frequently become involved in various forms of delinquent behaviour. The two girls, E.F. and G.H. both had children by white men and, having been deserted (in one case before the baby was born), they now face the problems associated with bringing up half-caste children in a community which ostracises them.

8 Symptoms of stress

Drop-out rate

An objective measure of the failure to adjust to life at Kormilda is the drop-out rate of students from the College. Perhaps the most effective way to reduce conflict experienced at Kormilda was to leave the College and return home. However, the rate at Kormilda is difficult to determine. An analysis of the enrolment figures in each of the classes reveals that many students had not progressed through the school system in the usual sequence of grades: some students enrolled during the year, others entered second or third year on arrival, and a few were transferred to higher grades in mid-year or by-passed a year altogether as numbers in some classes became depleted. An indication of the drop-out rate can be obtained from three different analyses: students dropping out during 1970; numbers successfully completing courses; analysis of the drop-out figures relative to the initial intake numbers.

Of all students enrolled at Kormilda in first term 1970, 43 per cent (seventy-three of 168) had dropped out by the end of that year. This figure excludes students who successfully completed a course and then left at the end of the year (i.e., post-primary 3 students). Of my sample of ninety-five, forty-one dropped out.

Since the post-primary course was three years, students who enrolled in 1968, 1969 or 1970 could have completed the course by the end of 1972 (the latest year for which figures are calculated). Some students entered post-primary 2 in their first year of attendance at Kormilda in 1970, and thus are included in the figures, since they finished a course after two years. Only 23 per cent of students enrolled at Kormilda during the period 1968-70 who could have completed post-primary 3, did in fact do so. Enrolments for each year and numbers completing post-primary 3 were: 1968 fifty-five enrolled, six completed; 1969, fifty-five enrolled, eight completed; 1970, forty-three enrolled (seven entering at second year), seventeen passed (six entering at second year).

By the end of 1972 six students had reached fourth year high school (which represents successful completion of a course for this group).^{*} For

^{*} One student completed fourth year at Darwin High School in 1970, but he was only resident at Kormilda for one year, and was therefore not included in the enrolment figures.

purposes of comparison with post-primary, the number of students completing second year high school (corresponding to three years at Kormilda and equivalent therefore to post-primary 3) are: 1968, ten of thirty-one; 1969, eight of thirty-nine; 1970, twelve of forty-three. Of all the students enrolled in the Transitional class at Kormilda in 1968, 1969 and 1970, 26 per cent had completed second year high school by the end of 1972.

There were three intakes of students who had been at the College for a minimum of three years. Enrolments and subsequent drop-outs (excluding those who had completed post-primary 3) are given in Table 3. All enrolment figures at Kormilda since the inception of the College in 1968, are given in Appendix 3.

Table 3: Student enrolments and subsequent drop-outs for intake years 1968, 1969, 1970

Post-primary					Transitional/high school					
		drop-outs after (years)						drop-outs after (years)		Still at school in 1972
	enrolments	1	2	3	completers	enrolments	1	2	3	
1968	55	31	16	2	6	31	9	6	11	5
1969	55	27	14	6	8	39	14	15	3	7
1970	43	10	4	12	17	43	20	8	3	12
total	152	68	34	20	31	113	43	29	17	24

Thus 44 per cent of post-primary students dropped out during or at the end of first year in the College. A further 22 per cent of the total intake dropped out during or at the end of second year and another 13 per cent during or at the end of the third year. As the Table shows, however, the relative proportion dropping out is less for the 1970 intake than for the preceding two years. It is possible that this result is due to a different selection procedure, since the total enrolment for 1970 was less than those of both 1968 and 1969, although one would expect this figure to be increasing each year as the total number of students in special schools has increased each successive year.

Of the Transitional/high school students 38 per cent dropped out during or at the end of first year, a further 26 per cent of the total intake dropped out during second year and an additional 15 per cent during third year. Contrary to the findings among post-primary classes, a greater

proportion of the 1970 intake of students in the academic stream dropped out during their first year, as compared with the previous two intake years.

These results clearly indicate that there was a high drop-out rate at Kormilda. More than 78 per cent of students in both streams had dropped out of Kormilda before they had completed a minimum of three years in the College. Only 20 per cent of post-primary students had finished a course, despite the fact that no other educational opportunities were available to the remaining 80 per cent in their home communities, unlike those existing for students in the academic stream, who could transfer to post-primary in their home community if they no longer wished to stay at Kormilda. No sex differences were apparent; figures given above are for both sexes. It is of interest to note, however, that the group of students in the senior class at high school included five females and one male.

Measures of maladjustment

A second objective measure of maladjustment was obtained from the recording of symptoms of stress. Cross-cultural researchers concerned with the impact of social and cultural change upon the mental health of the individual have devised a number of indices to measure this dependent variable and these have been discussed (Chapter 6).

While some theorists (Erikson, for example) regard maladjustment as a unitary concept, others claim it is multidimensional. Most researchers have adopted only one criterion. In the present study, two were adopted as measures of maladjustment or stress: social maladjustment and psychological symptoms.

Social maladjustment

Social adjustment is necessarily determined with reference to norms of the total society or of some more restricted community within the society; deviance from such social norms therefore constitutes maladjustment. Clinard (1963:22) maintains that deviant behaviour is reserved for those situations in which behaviour is in a disapproved direction relative to the norms and of sufficient degree to exceed the tolerance limit of the community. Difficulties arise here in the determination of the tolerance limit. Erikson (1964:10) has attempted to overcome this difficulty by defining deviance as 'conduct which is generally thought to require the attention of social-control agencies'. Operationally, an index of social maladjustment can be compiled from the universe of punishable behaviours occurring at Kormilda. While deviance in this sense can be

employed as an entirely objective description of behaviour, divested of any moral evaluative implications, it is important to the definition that students themselves should be aware that the particular behaviour contravenes the College norms (that is the norms set by the staff).

The list of items comprising the scale of social maladjustment corresponds to the tension-discharge syndrome that Nürcombe and Cawte (1967) indicate as a pattern of behavioural disorder characterising Aboriginal children. It is important to note, however, that this scale reflects social maladjustment relative to the norms of white society and identical symptoms may be found among white children in boarding schools. There may be other symptoms indicative of stress that are culturally expressed and that were not measured by either of the scales adopted. Limited evidence for the validation of scales is found in Appendix 2. The items are: resistance to discipline; absence without permission; assault; theft; petrol sniffing; gang associations; promiscuity; prostitution; disobedience; anger; insolence.

Almost one third of the students showed no symptoms of deviant behaviour or social maladjustment, but 23 per cent engaged in four or more types of deviant behaviour. The most common symptom of deviant behaviour was absence from the College without permission: this category included students who ran away from the College because they did not like it and wished to return to their home communities, and students who were absent for short periods for a specific purpose such as going to the cinema. More than half the students in the College had been absent on at least two occasions. One third of them engaged in promiscuous behaviour and a similar number created serious problems in discipline. It was not at all uncommon for students, especially girls, to hurl abuse at staff and the house mother was often in tears as a result of the conduct of students and personal humiliation by certain individuals. Staff were assaulted on several occasions.

The scale used to measure deviant behaviour did not take frequency of the occurrence of particular symptoms into account and thus does not adequately reflect the conflict experienced by those individuals who engaged in only one form of deviancy. However, frequencies of occurrence were recorded for each type of deviant behaviour and are of interest: twenty-five students were absent from the College on at least five different occasions and some as many as fifteen; eight high school students were truant from school at least eight times; ten boys were caught breaking into the kitchen or tuck shop on at least three separate occasions. Other deviant behaviour such as petrol sniffing occurred only once, but several

boys were involved.

Psychological symptoms

Maladjustment is also frequently assessed by psychological inventories purporting to reflect the critical processes. A general characteristic of these batteries is that each item is assumed, *a priori*, to involve a 'directional' quality, such that one type of answer may be taken as indicative of psychological disorder, and the opposite answer as indicative of normal functioning. Among the most common indices used cross-culturally is the Cornell Medical Index (C.M.I.). This has been adapted independently for use with Aborigines by Berry (1970), and Bianchi, Cawte and Kiloh (1970), and was also used by Chance (1965) in his study of the Eskimos. Examination of the items, however, revealed that many of them were inappropriate for adolescents and did not include psychosomatic symptoms associated with the particular school environment. Inkeles and Smith (1970), in their study of personal adjustment in the process of modernisation, adopted a set of questions which had previously been widely used for this purpose in various countries, but stated that it was not satisfactory for individual diagnosis and revealed group differences only. A more suitable measure of psychological symptoms of maladjustment among adolescents appeared to be the Adolescent Adjustment Interview Schedule devised by Wintrob and Sindell (1968) for use with the Cree Indians. This schedule included sections on anxiety, aggression, and inadequacy, with questions pertaining to psychosomatic symptoms of maladjustment and stress. These questions were therefore included in the Interview Schedule administered to all students in the present study, and an attempt was made to compile an index of anxiety-inhibition, which Nurcombe and Cawte (1967) claim to be a second pattern of behaviour disorder in Aboriginal children. Many of the questions required a subjective response from individuals: for example, do you often feel sad? Others were based on observational data: for example, frequent dispensary attendance for minor complaints. Where possible information was obtained from the school sister to verify responses of individuals. Psychological symptoms included in scale were: hypochondriasis; enuresis; school phobia; frequent headaches; frequent stomachaches and vomiting; fantastic pseudologia; isolation feelings; frequent sadness, crying; frequent shaking inside; frequent nightmares.

Only two students failed to exhibit any psychosomatic symptoms; 25 per cent showed at least four. A few individuals were particularly maladjusted

and three received psychiatric treatment. The most senior student in the College suffered from frequent asthmatic attacks, which were psychological in nature and resulted from conflicting pressures in the school and home situations. The most common psychosomatic expression of stress was frequent sadness and crying and both boys and girls admitted they were often homesick and often cried to themselves. It was not uncommon to find students lying on their beds, crying. Other symptoms with high frequencies were headaches, stomachaches, nightmares and hypochondriasis.

Comparisons by orientation and sex

For both social maladjustment and psychological symptoms, comparisons were made to determine whether there were differences in the degree of maladjustment by identity orientation or by sex. The results indicated that the location along the continuum of identity (see Appendix 2) was not associated with any particular level of stress. It was stated earlier that the social system at Kormilda did not appear to facilitate resolution of identity conflict, whether for those polarising towards a white model, seeking a synthesis, or adopting a traditional model. The results tend to support this assertion since all three groups showed a similar number of stress symptoms. However, although there were no significant differences between groups, a consistent pattern emerged of individuals polarising towards the white identity model tending to express stress through psychosomatic symptoms, and those polarising towards the traditional model scoring higher on social maladjustment.

Girls showed significantly more psychosomatic symptoms of stress than boys, although there were no differences between them on deviant behaviour. Comments by girls indicated that many of them saw their role in Aboriginal society as being subordinated to male authority and as having little status, despite their high educational achievements. For many of the girls, the only way in which they could realise their social goals was through marriage to a white man. Such a future, however, frequently entailed ostracism by the community and to cope with this outcome, the girls ended up by rejecting their own kinsmen in anticipation. The identity conflict in such instances created a high level of stress and was more acute for the girls than the boys. These results are supported by findings among other ethnic groups. Berry (1970), for example, found that among part-Aborigines in an Aboriginal coastal town, women experienced more stress than men, and Chance's (1965) work with Eskimos revealed three times as

many symptoms of stress in females as in males. Wintrob's and Sindell's (1968) findings for the Cree Indians showed that females at elementary school experienced far more identity conflict than did males, although this result did not hold among high school students.

Adjustment at school

Ratings on adjustment at school were obtained for all students, but interest here is focused on students in Transitional Grade 7 and at high school, since only for these two groups could changes in behaviour be examined as a result of interaction with white peers at high school. The results are summarised in Table 4 and an attempt is made to show the percentage of students characterised by particular behaviour at the end of their first year at Kormilda and then the following August after two terms at the high school. The third column gives percentages for the group of high school students in their second and third years of high school.

Table 4: Percentages of students displaying symptoms of maladjustment

	Grade 7 at Kormilda 1970	Same group at high school 1971	1968-9 intakes at high school 1971
shy	30	60	60
lacks concentration	50	35	30
apathetic, lazy	25	13	50
insolent, tempera- mental	10	21	—
does not mix with non- Kormilda students in class	—	54	50
very withdrawn, almost non-communi- cative	—	—	33
has gross fears of failure or inadequacy	10	10	10

The most significant features are increase of students who became withdrawn, and the failure of more than half the students to interact with

European peers in the class. The adjustment of the 1970 intake of students at high school appeared to be better than that of the previous two years' intakes. This was possibly due to the increasing numbers of Kormilda students at high school and the support they provided for one another.

The changes in behaviour of students when they left Kormilda suggest that a number of them were maladjusted at high school and it is probable that learning was therefore reduced. Apart from acute withdrawal symptoms, which characterised several students, three girls showed symptoms of acute school phobia, hiding in cupboards or toilets, or locking themselves in their rooms to avoid going to school. There was one case of enuresis (bed-wetting) by a girl who expressed extreme nervousness at having to attend high school.

Implications

The results relating to maladjustment of students indicate that 25 per cent were unable to resolve identity conflict and experienced stress, expressed in a variety of symptoms. Comments by students suggested that the culture gap between home and school was a major source of dissatisfaction and contributed to the decision of many to return home. Although only one individual failed to show any symptoms of maladjustment, a number of students received only low scores. It is possible that individuals in this group did experience intense conflict manifesting itself in only one symptom, and it is a reflection of the inadequacy of the measurement instruments that such an explanation for the low scores on the maladjustment scales can be offered. Nevertheless, Newcomb, Turner and Converse (1965:419-20) have shown that role conflict *can* be minimised when two sets of incompatible norms are made specific to separate situations:

Membership in different groups whose role prescriptions are opposed to each other involves minimal conflict when the different norms are alike in specifying situations in which one set of role expectations takes precedence over the others. This area of inter-group consensus, if it is effective in minimising conflict, has the effect of presenting a single set of norms and says, 'Everybody expects you to be peer-group-like in these and these situations, and to be family-like in those and those'.

It is likely that some students at Kormilda were able to minimise conflict thus, although the incidence of maladjustment indicates that others were clearly unable to do so. Wintrob and Sindell (1968) found that

Cree Indian students in elementary grades showed more identity conflict and manifest psychopathology than did students at high school. They suggested that older students attempted to resolve identity conflict through synthesis of traditional and white models and were more successful in doing so, while elementary students were not yet as realistic and were more inclined to polarise towards white or traditional models.

The results obtained in the present study support those obtained among other minority ethnic groups in similar culture-conflict educational environments. Wintrob's and Sindell's (1968:10) results among the Cree Indians in Canada indicate that 48 per cent of the students experienced clearly defined identity conflict, and in an additional 14 per cent, indications of identity conflict were sufficiently pronounced to be qualified as 'identity confusion'. Hobart's (1968) findings among Eskimo students in residential college provide further evidence for identity conflict and confusion. These researchers all claim that the identity conflict experienced by students is augmented by the discontinuities between life-styles at home and in the college, and the different reference groups available to the individual.

As we have seen the social environment at Kormilda did not facilitate the resolution of identity conflict; indeed it may have *exacerbated* conflict since Kormilda presented students with contrasting role models, values and expectations from those in their home communities. Research findings among other cross-cultural educational institutions already discussed indicate that maladjustment is a likely consequence when there is no continuity between the life-style and experiences at home and those in the school. However, it must be stressed that the design of the study reported does not permit a casual relationship to be made and thus any conclusions about the direct impact of education on the personal identity must remain tentative. Moreover, there are a limited number of studies concerned with the adjustment of Aborigines in a culture-conflict situation which indicate that many individuals experience stress in their home communities (Nurcombe et al., 1970; Bianchi et al., 1970; Money et al., 1970; Sommerlad, 1973). It is not uncommon for boys to engage in such deviant behaviour as breaking into classrooms and offices, petrol sniffing, stealing from white staff and assault. In such communities, considerable discontinuity exists between the economic structure and formal educational system, and the life-style of Aborigines. Money et al., (1970:397) in fact state that the conflicting reference groups which embody conflict between the traditional and western ways of life are responsible for the crisis in self-identity experienced by adolescent males:

The three types of nonconformity, sniffing, stealing and sex, were manifested by boys and youths who were experiencing acutely and at first hand the incompatibility of what their fathers and tribal elders stood for, versus what their school teachers and others of the mission staff stood for. The adults were unable to work out a compromise. Those youths who were unable to take sides, completely rejecting either the Aboriginal old guard or the mission new, had no model on whom to identify their teenaged sense of masculine identity.

The findings from these studies do not conflict with the conclusions drawn about identity conflict at Kormilda College. Rather, the data from all the studies of culture clash among the Aboriginal people indicate that significant changes in identity are occurring as a result of social and cultural change and this is exacerbated in those situations where the culture gap is greatest and individuals are unable to resolve identity conflict. Catherine Berndt (1961:27-8) sums up the effects of social change among the Australian Aborigines and its effect on personal identity:

It is inevitable that changes should come in language, in personal names, in the social units themselves and in the criteria of membership or affiliation, as well as in other features of local living. The critical question hinges on the nature of such changes, the degree to which they allow for continuity with the past. There is a point of view which holds that such continuity is unnecessary, that an abrupt break with tradition is both kinder to the people involved and more effective in ensuring their allegiance to the new order. But this is a minority view, even a deviant view which goes contrary to the overwhelming preponderance of findings not only in anthropology, but also in the fields of mental health.

9 Some educational implications

The findings reported here have implications for education at a number of different levels: first, for Kormilda College as a system in itself; second, for educational policy as it relates to Aborigines throughout the Northern Territory; third, for changing concepts of education as applied to the wider community.

Kormilda College as a total system

The goals of education for Aborigines in the Northern Territory were not being achieved at Kormilda College. First, a new profile of achievement orientation did not replace the traditional profile; the development of associated work habits and attitudes did not occur with increasing exposure to the school system. It is possible that even the small group of students characterised by an achievement syndrome had internalised these values and aspirations before coming to Kormilda. Several explanations have been suggested for this failure to find any significant changes in values and aspirations. Most of these relate to the nature of interaction between students and whites and the range of behaviour settings precluding the establishment of meaningful personal relationships with white peers, College staff, or other whites. An additional explanation consistent with this is that the peer group assumed great importance among the students and that one of its values was joint opposition to staff, which further mitigated against the establishment of close friendly relations with individual whites. Many of the students formed cliques at various times, frequently speaking in dialect and discussing their relations and home community experiences. Williams (1971:10) speaking of peer groups in an Aboriginal community stated that opposition to European missionary staff was a salient characteristic among the boys: any individual who annoyed or frustrated a staff member was considered a hero and other boys were amused by his exploits. Similar behaviour was observed at Kormilda among the traditionally oriented boys who actively challenged the authority of white staff members. Goffman (1961) maintains that peer group solidarity emerging in opposition to

staff is characteristic of total institutions, and enables reassembly of the self to take place.

Unless the social environment is such that close, personal and meaningful relationships can be established between Aborigines and whites, both inside and outside the classroom, then it is unlikely that new attitudes, values or patterns of behaviour will be internalised and carried over into the home situation.

As we have said, although the official policy for Aboriginal education recognised the importance of the retention of Aboriginal identity and the need to establish a transitional college where students could adjust to the life-style of the dominant society in the company of their kinsmen, the social system at Kormilda appeared to defy these goals and precluded their attainment. A similar conclusion was reached independently by a social worker in Alice Springs, who gave evidence before a Parliamentary Committee on the proposed construction of Yirara, a new residential college in Alice Springs (Downing, 1974:35):

I think that Aboriginal education should equip the child firstly to get the best from his own culture and secondly to relate effectively to foreign culture. It can do this only if it sets full value on both, a value which the child can sense and which encourages him not to want to rubbish his own culture and move out of it — because this is the process that is taking place — but to learn as much as he can of his own culture and some of the strengths of it and as much as he can about our culture and the opportunities that are there. In this way, I think healthy development could well lie, but I am sure it does not lie in the present approach; there is rot on one side.

The solution to the problem does not appear to lie at the policy level (where there was anyway explicit recognition that transitional colleges must help bridge the gap between the dominant society and the traditional community). What is required is a continual readiness to appraise the difficulties encountered by the students in the educational process and to modify the school system in the light of this experience. It would appear that the behaviour problems of students, as manifested in the high drop-out rate, deviant behaviour, and other symptoms of stress, were considered by the educational authorities to be inherent aspects of a transitional college. This view was expressed by the Director for Welfare in the Northern Territory (Giese, 1971:6):

When we first established Kormilda, we found a fairly substantial loss at the end of 1st term. This was one of the things we expected to happen — that some of the children would go home and the break away from the family would be just too much for them. We do have some drop-outs with children who get into behavioural problems but this is nothing unusual when you are dealing with young people in a co-ed situation and in the sort of educational environment that we have.

However, 'the sort of educational environment that we have' can be modified in numerous ways so that continuity is maintained with the home life experiences of the students. If transitional colleges are regarded as static systems, then it would seem likely that students will continue to drop-out or evidence signs of stress. The research findings here and elsewhere also have implications for the organisation of the College. Kormilda was primarily intended for students proceeding to secondary school and the incorporation of a post-primary course was regarded as a temporary measure. Students in Transitional classes and at high school therefore represented an 'elite' group, which has implications for their future role in society. The Watts-Gallacher Report (1964) recognised the potential dichotomy between the academic and non-academic streams but maintained that the educational organisation precluded it since both groups shared elements in their education program. However, different goals and ultimate roles for each group in the community were clearly envisaged (p.72):

The children in this group [post-primary] will grow up close to their own tribal customs and beliefs, and well-versed in their own culture, and by virtue of their identity and knowledge some will emerge as leaders in their own communities. There will have been developed in all of the children an esteem for and a pride in their own heritage, and there can be created a situation which will develop mutual respect between the children who progress in their European education and those who remain closer to their own culture. The children following an advanced course will have respect for those who have an intimate knowledge and a close emotional adherence to their own culture. These will, in turn, respect the former for their mastery of the European situation.

The results of the present research suggest that this ideal was not being achieved. The finding that those who adopted achievement values and high aspirations also tended to devalue other Aborigines indicates that

those who 'mastered the European situation' did not respect other Aborigines for their knowledge of the traditional culture. While the current resurgence in Aboriginal identity among detribalised Aborigines supports the Report's assumption in that there is a new respect among them for the traditionally oriented Aborigines, it would seem that the full-blood Aborigines who wanted to achieve in the dominant society at this stage regarded their fellow kinsmen as a negative valuation group. Further support for this is provided by the fact that the least favourable attitudes towards Aborigines are held by white-oriented Aborigines and by the fact that all students at Kormilda ranked Aborigines lower than whites or self. Descriptive data and observations both at Kormilda and in home communities support the statistical findings. Students who returned home for the holidays were often reluctant to participate in traditional activities, which they considered alien to their new role as 'Kormilda students'. Informal conversations with white staff and other Aborigines in several communities indicated that the Kormilda students were frequently disliked because of the superior attitude they adopted towards other Aborigines. Several students themselves mentioned during the interview that they were often taunted at home and attributed this attitude to jealousy by their peers. Other researchers have also noted the contempt of Aborigines for one of their kinsmen who has adopted white norms. Williams (1971) claims that girls who showed friendship towards European staff were called *balanda* (white person) by other Aborigines, while Nurcombe (1971) notes a more pejorative term used by the older men to address Aboriginal youths wearing bright European shirts or some similar manifestation of European culture.

It is possible that the lack of any significant emphasis at Kormilda on the retention of Aboriginal identity — whether in curriculum content, leisure activities or value hierarchy implicitly communicated by the staff — contributed to this outcome. However, it is also significant to note that even within Kormilda, the students in Transitional and at high school were aware of their elitist status and adopted a superior attitude towards students in post-primary. This was clearly expressed in a remark made by a high school student to one of her own kinsmen in post-primary: 'I'm not in post-primary you stupid thing — I'm not a *myall* like you!' (*myall* is the term for a traditionally oriented Aboriginal). High school students frequently asserted that students in post-primary of a similar age should not have as many privileges as themselves and hostility between the two groups was often quite marked.

The education of an elite of Aborigines has implications for the entire

structure of Aboriginal society. The Watts-Gallacher Report stated that '*some* Aborigines from Post-Primary will emerge as leaders in their own communities' (my italics), and the implication appears to be that those students who have attended high school and mastered the European situation are more suited to this role. Research in other organisational structures, however, suggests that this expectation is unfounded. A considerable body of research is available concerning the diffusion of new values, ideas and principles, both at a national level within developing countries and highly industrialised societies, and at the level of the individual organisation. Some of the key findings with direct relevance to the present research have been: first, that diffusion must be firmly based on the existing power structure; and second, that beyond the leaders, diffusion requires the force of example. To be forceful the example must be such that the person can readily identify it with his own conditions and it must be provided by an accepted exemplar (Emery, 1970).

These findings suggest two reasons why western values and norms, even if internalised by the students at Kormilda, may not diffuse to other members of the community. First, the students who went to Kormilda did not represent the existing power structure of the community — they were not selected by the Aboriginal people but by white staff on the basis of academic ability. Second, and this may be a corollary of the first, the students were not always accepted by other Aborigines as suitable reference models. One way of eliminating this problem might be by a change in the selection procedures for Kormilda. Students could be selected by the Aboriginal people from both the academic and non-academic streams, and students themselves given a choice as to whether or not they wish to go to a transitional college. The presence at Kormilda of a substantial number of students who disliked the College was a considerable factor in maladjustment problems.

Educational policy and objectives

The finding that the two basic objectives of education for Aborigines, modern occupational status and retention of Aboriginal identity, were not being achieved at Kormilda raises the question whether such goals are theoretically unrealisable in any context, or whether it was the unique social structure at Kormilda that mitigated against them.

A critical appraisal of the cultural deprivation model has suggested that any educational philosophy based on the assumption that students have to be 'brought up to standard' through programs designed to change values

and attitudes to those of the middle class achiever inevitably brings about a devalued self-image and a lack of pride in the membership group. It would seem then that the basic objectives of education for Aborigines need to be changed. Rather than seeing 'cultural values' as inhibiting achievement at school, education should build on such differences to engender motivation. The key value orientation mitigating against school success, and the one that lies at the core of Aboriginal identity, was the group orientation of Aborigines and the importance of kinship ties and role obligations. Watts (1974:15) recognises this need to build on existing values and to provide reinforcement for the affiliative rather than the competitive by exhibiting warmth in the classroom and by extending extrinsic acceptance to the children:

Recognition of the prevailing strength of the affiliative drive should lead teachers to adopt teaching strategies which foster peer group interaction. Unlike pupils high in need for achievement, affiliatively oriented pupils are likely to derive major satisfaction from working with classmates rather than pursuing individual goals. This suggests that cooperative collaboration in small groups will prove more attractive to them than individual competition, and will result in a greater concentration on the learning tasks, thereby promoting more efficient learning. In this way, the very real power of the peer group can become oriented towards, rather than (as is so frequently the present case) away from, school endeavours.

A change in teaching methods from the individualistic approach to the team approach is not merely appropriate for Aborigines with a group orientation. Angyal (1966) claims that all human activity shapes itself according to a broad double pattern: the trend towards increasing autonomy (which parallels the individualistic orientation) and the trend towards homonomy (akin to the group orientation). Far from being irreconcilable opposites, these two can be viewed as part of one trend. Whereas the industrial bureaucratised society of the past century has stressed autonomy, there are clear indications that in the post-industrial era society is moving closer to homonomy. Emery (1974) suggests that homonomy or interdependence will replace independence as a human ideal, and that current trends are already reflecting that change. Thus, in the educational context, the small self-regulating group will become the basic unit or learning cell for all levels of education in the dominant society. Emery (1972:149) writes: 'I know of no other form of educational

organisation that ensures that the individual will find a meaningful place for himself (in the university) and get the support that will sustain him through the inevitable bad patches of anxiety, confusion, despair and boredom.'

Although educationists might come to accept that it is not necessary to change the values of Aboriginal students in order for them to achieve at school, the basic goal of enabling them to achieve modern occupational status still remains. This raises the question whether Aborigines were involved in setting this goal and whether in fact they do want their children to develop the skills and work habits underlying modern status. For educationists, the rationale is that school simply increases the range of options open to the individual by providing him with more skills. He is then free to choose whether he wishes to obtain work in the dominant society or whether he wishes to return to his own community to work. It is, however, not quite as simple as that; those who develop skills that facilitate their transition into the wider society do not then appear to wish to return home to their own communities. It is not merely a matter of choice, but rather that the internalisation of attitudes and behaviour conducive to the attainment of 'modern status' has decreased their options by making them unwilling to return home and unable to fit into the home situation.

This problem is not unique to education but confronts general policy for Aborigines at the present time. On the one hand, the official 'theoretical' policy of the relevant departments places considerable importance on the retention of traditional culture, if the people so want it, but at the same time, it is endeavouring to set up Aboriginal associations for the control of different enterprises throughout the Territory which require Aborigines to develop skills of management which seem in many situations to require a change in identity or self-conception. The need to ensure that enterprises undertaken are economically viable in a western sense requires a change in life-style and the development of suitable work habits and attitudes. Recognition of this fact led the community at Umbakumba (Groote Eylandt) to reject a large grant for the development of a fishing industry since all they wanted was sufficient funds to enable them to purchase a few nets and boats so as to keep the community supplied with fish.

The current trend towards decentralisation which is evident in a number of different tribal communities with varying degrees of acculturation suggests that 'modern occupational status' may not be the goal of Aboriginal communities for the education of their children. At

Hermannsburg (a Lutheran Mission with almost a century of contact with whites), for example, the community simply wants its children to learn to speak English — the rest of the curriculum they consider to be fulfilling the teachers' own needs (Sommerlad, 1973b). There does not yet appear to be one community that has rejected the idea of formal schooling, but communities differ considerably in what they want their children to get from it. More often, however, they require basic skills than western work habits and patterns of behaviour. What hope has the school of trying to instil changes in values and attitudes if the home community does not support such change and indeed feels it is a threat to its social organisation?

Education should not be seen as a system in its own right, but should be viewed as an interdependent system in the wider society. Chance (1968) claimed that congruity between the technological and environmental system, the cultural system and the social system, must be maintained if stress and conflict are to be avoided. Curle (1947) also adopted a systems approach to society, identifying four components: social structure, social roles, social relationships and culture. He emphasised that the interdependence and interpenetration of these four systems means that any social change can occur only through the continued dynamic interaction of the four components. The dependence of resolution of identity conflict on systems external to Kormilda, such as the economic system which governs the availability of jobs commensurate with aspirations, was implicit in the models of identity orientation adopted in the present study. Therefore, if education aims at providing Aborigines with the skills that enable them to achieve modern occupational status, then suitable family, community and work roles or job opportunities must be available in the society.

Employment opportunities for Aborigines are considerably restricted in the existing economic structure of many Aboriginal communities. The replacement of the 'training' allowance scheme by award wages will also mean that fewer jobs are available since those that are meaningless (such as raking the ground in front of a white superintendent's office) will be eliminated. Pastoral properties, in particular, offer few job opportunities for girls, and those that are available are usually only domestic service requiring no formal education at all.

It would appear that if education is to be successful in enabling students to attain modern status, then considerable attention has to be paid to the social structure or technological and environmental system that operates outside the education system itself. Skills required for specific jobs such as

mining should be taught in school or on the job, and an effort should be made to provide a wide range of jobs for those moving into towns. In other Aboriginal communities, the present economic structure perhaps requires a multi-skilled work force. The Gibb Report (1971), for example, has recognised that stockmen on pastoral properties will increasingly require other managerial skills as much of their labour becomes automated; on missions and settlements, similarly, the services required at a particular point in time may rotate between building, plumbing, and mechanic-type jobs. The educational system might therefore aim at providing students with these multiple skills, rather than specialising in the development of a particular trade.

Since the economic system is inextricably bound up with the kinship system among Aborigines, it is also clear that changes brought about in one system have a direct effect on others. If job opportunities are not available in home communities, Aborigines might be encouraged to move into towns in order to obtain jobs, not as individuals, but with other kinsmen, thereby minimising the likelihood of disintegration of the social structure. Suitable accommodation would need to be provided for such extended family groups. Following innovations in the United States in this direction, an Australian automotive firm proposes to introduce a training scheme in which an intake of Aboriginal workers can stay together as a group and move around the plant floor on different jobs as a unit. It is hoped that this will increase their feeling of belonging and, by providing mutual support, will enable them to develop new skills in an alien environment.

The need to stimulate employment opportunities was recognised by the committee set up to review the situation of Aborigines on pastoral properties in the Northern Territory (Gibb, 1971). The Committee recommended:

- a) that the whole problem of placement in employment after training be investigated with reference to:
 - i) increased use of schemes such as the Department of Labour and National Service's unskilled training subsidy scheme;
 - ii) use of Government departments and agencies to recruit Aboriginal employees and institute training courses to promote their effectiveness;
 - iii) encouragement of major employers such as retailers, hotels, restaurants, banks, etc., to recruit and train Aborigines;
- b) increase in the supply of accommodation for young persons seeking employment in centres of mining, industrial, commercial and

administrative growth in conditions which provide help for Aborigines in meeting the social demands of life within the dominant white Australian culture.

In conclusion, it would appear that the goals of education adopted for Aborigines in the Northern Territory were not merely unattainable at Kormilda College but are unrealisable in any context. First, the underlying objectives are based on a cultural deficit model which devalues a pride in one's identity; second, the attainment of modern occupational status is not necessarily the goal of the Aboriginal people; and third, education must be seen within the context of the wider society and the job opportunities available to Aboriginal adolescents.

Education and the wider community

The learning experiences of students can be considered in terms of those in the classroom and those in the wider institutional setting. As earlier chapters have shown, students at Kormilda were not given adequate opportunity to develop behaviour that would facilitate their integration in the dominant society or provide them with those experiences that would further develop their potential for leadership, self-actualisation, confidence to deal with social situations outside their own community, or ability to participate in decision making. Moreover, in nearly all situations involving interaction between Aborigines and white staff, the latter were in a position of authority. When individual students did rebel against such pervasive authority they quickly learned that they were the losers. Kormilda College's failure to provide Aboriginal children with the sorts of experience that would enable them to become responsible citizens is a reflection on the total education system operating throughout Australia and indeed the western world since schools were created to cope with a newly emerging industrial society.

Educators need to recognise that how they teach and how they act may be more important than what they teach. To use Marshall McLuhan's phrase, 'the medium is the message'. That is to say, the way we do things shapes values more directly and more effectively than what we say about them. Children are taught a host of lessons about values, ethics, morality, character and conduct every day of the week, less by the content of the curriculum than by the way schools are organised, the ways teachers and parents behave, the way they talk to children and to each other, the kinds of behaviour they approve or reward, and the kinds they disapprove or

punish. These lessons are far more powerful than the verbalisations that accompany them and that they frequently controvert. Postman and Weingarten (1971:31-2) have outlined a few of the learnings or messages communicated by the structure of the classroom itself:

Passive acceptance is a more desirable response to ideas than active criticism

Discovering knowledge is beyond the power of students and is, in any case, none of their business

Recall is the highest form of intellectual achievement, and the collection of unrelated 'facts' is the goal of education

The voice of authority is to be trusted and valued more than independent judgement

One's own ideas and those of one's classmates are inconsequential

Feelings are irrelevant in education

There is always a single, unambiguous Right Answer to a question

A subject is something you 'take' and, when you have taken it, you have 'had' it, and if you have 'had' it, you are immune and need not take it again. (The Vaccination Theory of education).

One of the most important characteristics schools share is a preoccupation with order and control; as a result children are educated for docility. This preoccupation with efficiency turns the teacher into a disciplinarian, as well as a timekeeper and traffic manager. Discipline is defined in simple but rigid terms: the absence of noise and movement. Thus children must sit still at their desks without conversing at all, both during periods of waiting when they have nothing to do and activities which almost demand conversation. At Kormilda such silence was extended to mealtimes and to recreational activities such as the weekly picture show when films were stopped mid-screening if the students were overexuberant and displayed the behaviour normal at picture shows in their home communities.

How can a group achieve enough maturity to keep itself under control if the members never have an opportunity to experience control? Far from helping students to develop into mature, self-reliant, self-motivated individuals, schools seem to do everything they can to keep youngsters in a state of chronic, almost infantile, dependency. The pervasive atmosphere of distrust, together with rules covering the most minute aspects of existence, teach students every day that they are not people of worth, and certainly not individuals capable of regulating their own behaviour. More

important, schools discourage students from developing the capacity to learn by and for themselves; they make it impossible for a student to take responsibility for his own education, for they are structured in such a way as to make students totally dependent upon the teachers. Whatever rhetoric they may subscribe to, most schools in practice define education as something teachers do to or for students, not something students do to and for themselves, with a teacher's assistance. It is the teacher who decides who will speak and in what order, and it is the teacher who decides who will have access to the materials of learning.

At Kormilda there was a premium on conformity and on silence. Children were not allowed in the classrooms before school or for any activity that was not under the supervision of a teacher. The library was not open for children to sit and browse unless one of the staff happened to have a spare hour when she could supervise borrowing and lending. Students were not allowed to speak without raising a hand. They were not allowed to feel too strongly or to laugh too loudly.

At the heart of the school teachers' inability to turn responsibility over to the students is the fact that the teacher-student relationship in its conventional form is, as Waller (1961:195) states:

a form of institutionalised dominance and subordination. Teacher and pupil confront each other in the school with an original conflict of desires, and however much that conflict may be reduced in amount, or however much it may be hidden, it still remains. The teacher represents the adult group, or the enemy of the spontaneous life of groups of children. The teacher represents the formal curriculum, and his interest is in imposing that curriculum upon the children in the form of tasks; pupils are much more interested in life in their own world than in the dessicated bits of adult life which teachers have to offer. The teacher represents the established social order in the school, and his interest is in maintaining order, whereas pupils have only a negative interest in that feudal superstructure. Teacher and pupil confront each other with attitudes from which the underlying hostility can never be altogether removed.

The tragedy is that the great majority of students do not rebel; they accept the stultifying rules, the lack of privacy, the authoritarianism, the abuse of power — indeed, virtually every aspect of school life — as *The Way Things Are*. Those students who cannot stick it, drop out — as at Kormilda. This situation was attributed to the home background of the students rather

than to the school and its failure to provide an environment in which students find joy, a keenness to learn and an opportunity to develop new skills. As one Kormilda student said, 'This place is just a prison, we don't have any fun here as teenagers — we're missing out on being teenagers. We should be at home where we have fun growing up.'

Western society holds strongly to the ideology of equal opportunity and schools are seen as major avenues to occupations and social roles, and as facilitating equal opportunity for every man to achieve whatever his ambitions dictate and his abilities permit. It is therefore not unreasonable to expect the school to be a *significant* influence — to expect it to create for its students opportunities not dependent on their social origins. And that means making it possible for students from every social class and every ethnic and racial group to acquire the necessary basic skills. One way to assess the school's performance, therefore, is to measure how well it accomplishes this end. The U.S. Office of Education did just this in its mammoth and controversial study, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, the so-called Coleman Report, presented in 1966. The authors concluded that

taking all the results together, one implication stands out above all: That schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and social context; and that this very lack of an independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children by their home, neighbourhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school.

It was noted earlier that the failure of minority ethnic group or lower class children to succeed in school has traditionally been attributed to the 'impoverished background' of their disadvantaged status. There have been few attempts, however, to understand why *schools* fail, or how they might be changed in order to make learning successful for children of these backgrounds. One reason why schools have failed in the past is their emphasis on middle class values and patterns of behaviour and the desire to change those values and attitudes considered to inhibit school success. However, another factor that contributes to the failure of students at school is the expectations of teachers. The teacher who assumes that her students cannot learn or will be disruptive is likely to discover that she has a class of students who are indeed unable to learn or who are disruptive. Some of the teachers at Kormilda held low expectations of students and

considered it a waste of time for many of them. The role of the teacher was simply that of a custodian. One teacher maintained that the only way Aboriginal children would work at their homework was if the classroom was ruled with an iron rod and complete silence was maintained; another told students in her class that they were just a lot of lazy blackfellas and one could not expect any better of them.

Where such ethnic prejudice exists, the vicious circle of low expectations producing low achievement producing low expectations becomes even more vicious. Experiencing prejudice reinforces the sense of inferiority, even of worthlessness. It destroys the incentive to learn, persuading students that it is no use trying since the cards are stacked against them anyway. And it evokes a burning anger and hostility against the school that makes students want to leave as soon as they can, and that diverts their energies from learning into a search for ways of striking back.

The education of children should be a learning experience not merely for the students but also for the whole community. Recent trends in educational thought stress the concept of lifelong education and the concern that education should be a community experience in which young and old can share alike as both teachers and learners. In most Aboriginal communities, the adult population has not had an opportunity to undergo formal education. Thus it is important that they are able to participate in activities that provide new learning experiences and that help to increase their feeling of control over their environment, which has been impinged upon by whites. Education is important to Aboriginal people and their involvement in issues concerning the education of their own children should be a meaningful experience. The degree of parental and community involvement in Kormilda College, however, suggests that, for the most part, Aborigines were not given the chance to assume responsibility, or to take any initiative in the education of their children, or to have any decision-making role, or even to be consulted in any meaningful way. Indeed, their experiences in this area must have convinced them that they are themselves children who need guidance from above and that they are not responsible enough to make decisions on an issue as important as education. Yet educators talk about the need to eliminate or decrease the dichotomy between old and young, or between the 'educated' and the non-educated.

Before Kormilda College was established, both Watts and Gallacher made a number of visits to different communities to invite comments from parents and others about the proposal to establish residential colleges. Such visits were very brief and did not provide an adequate opportunity to

discuss the important issues at hand. The discussions centred not on a range of possible alternatives but whether they wanted their children to go on at high school, which implied the necessity for a residential college of some sort, or not. Neither was any meaningful choice about coeducation presented, because the educational authorities considered that education should seek to change the traditional role structure and to elevate the status of women in Aboriginal society. Justification for coeducation for Aborigines is given by Gallacher (1971:16):

It is very firmly my view, anyway, that the emergence of the female in the college situation as a person able to give direction, to make decisions and to talk freely with her male counterpart is one of the highlights of what is happening at the college. If you were to ask me what is the greatest handicap we have in our education programme at the moment, I would say to you that it is the lack of support in the home. These youngsters will go back into the village situation — a lot of them as young mothers rearing families, and I am quite sure that the assistance they will give their children in an education programme stands well for their future educational interests. As Mr Giese has said, we do have a few boy-girl problems, but I think the wider concept is of greater importance and I would strongly commend co-education.

A recent international comparative study of coeducation by UNESCO (1970) showed that there is an increasing trend towards coeducation at all levels of schooling and that it is exerting a considerable impact on the relative statuses of men and women in society and on the role structure of society. However, it is pointed out (p.119) that 'however necessary such a change might be, it can take place smoothly only to the extent that it is acceptable to the people themselves'. It would seem that there was some opposition by Aboriginal parents to coeducation at the adolescent age. In some instances, students were removed from the College when parents learned of relationships between students; in other cases, parents and promised husbands were reluctant or refused to send their children to the College as pregnancies might have resulted, skin taboos been violated and a disrespect engendered for the promise system of marriage. It would seem essential that the concept of coeducation be discussed with parents and that they themselves make the decisions as to its desirability, since ultimately they must adjust to the changing role structure which will inevitably ensue.

It may have been difficult for Aborigines to anticipate some of the

consequences of residential colleges, but an important function of the consultant's role is to point out the likely consequences of different courses of action so that a meaningful decision can be made. In the case of Dhupuma College, parents were simply informed that in future their children would attend that College rather than Kormilda. The construction of Yirara College, on the other hand, was subject to an inquiry by the Parliamentary Senate Committee on Public Works and two Aborigines were invited to present evidence. Those selected were notable at that time for their orientation towards white society and their desire to please the administrators. The two students from Kormilda who were invited to present evidence at another inquiry were those who had stayed on at the College for the longest period and, while what they said no doubt reflected their feelings about life at the College, a completely different picture might have been given by one or more of the drop-outs. The claim that Aboriginal parents support the idea of residential colleges in such towns as Darwin, Alice Springs and Nhulumbuy is not substantiated by recommendations emerging from meetings not conducted under the auspices of the educational authorities.

For example, at a Workshop on Aboriginal Culture and Identity in 1972, attended by Aborigines from fourteen different Northern Territory communities, the group expressed great concern about the effect of residential colleges such as Kormilda on their children. They agreed unanimously that there should be more colleges for Aboriginal children in local areas and a recommendation was also made that there should be a Council to talk about the question of where such colleges should be built and to discuss questions relating to their functioning. Negative feelings about residential colleges were also expressed by Aboriginal community representatives at a seminar concerned with new policies in Aboriginal Affairs, held at Batchelor, Northern Territory, in 1973.

Aborigines were not involved in the actual design of the colleges themselves and the superstructure of bricks and mortar is a far cry from the buildings in home communities. It is a rather frightening structure, serving only to inhibit parents and other Aborigines from coming to visit. Considerable emphasis is placed on the cost of these buildings, as if it is a statement of the Department of Education's concern for Aboriginal education and its lack of discrimination between white and black. Ironically, such buildings may soon become redundant as Aborigines increasingly make decisions about, and assume responsibility for, education of their children. Dhupuma College is already faced with a crisis, as many of the children have been withdrawn from the school either

because the parents have moved away from the settlement to Caledon Bay, or because they prefer to send their children to the community high school at Nhulumbuy where they can commute from home each day.

The objectives of education were never fully discussed with Aboriginal communities, nor were Aborigines given an opportunity to define their own goals at the local level. Instead, the organisational structure imposed throughout the Territory precluded changes being made to suit local needs. Some experimentation occurred in non-government communities such as Hermannsburg, a Lutheran Mission, although constraints were still imposed since some of their teachers were subject to inspectorial visits by the Department of Education. Consultation with the parents at Hermannsburg revealed that their main concern was that their children should learn 'inside' English — that is, the colloquial English used in general conversation, which was generally incomprehensible to them. They were further concerned that their children were graded by age rather than by clan group. As a result changes were made in the school organisation so that each day, all children within a particular clan group regardless of age began with an oral English lesson conducted by a teacher of their choice. Notes about what was to be discussed in the lesson the following day were distributed in advance to parents so that they would also have some involvement. The most recent development at Hermannsburg is that all education is conducted in clan groups; the clan itself selects the teacher.

The curriculum taught at Kormilda College was not based on discussions between Aborigines and educationists about what they wanted their children to learn in school, but rather on what educationists thought they needed to learn. The absence of any concern with Aboriginal culture, origins, current way of life or even with the radical movement among part-Aborigines was very noticeable. Yet Aboriginal people themselves represent a most valuable resource that could be utilised in the school; this would also increase their understanding of western education and provide them with a meaningful role in the process.

Parents were totally uninvolved in the functioning of Kormilda College and the only time Aborigines from the local community were brought in was when there was trouble at the College. On one occasion, the councillors from Bagot (the Aboriginal Reserve in Darwin) were asked to come to the College and inform the students that any individual who ran away from Kormilda to Bagot would be severely punished by them. It has already been noted that two Associations fostered community involvement with Kormilda but neither of these included an Aboriginal, and

community involvement mostly entailed the white community and not the substantial Aboriginal or coloured population of Darwin. Furthermore, there was virtually no liaison between the College and the home communities, and many parents were completely unaware of what their children were actually doing at the College. The children were obliged to write home a letter each week to their parents but very few parents ever visited the College or had any idea of the range of activities in which students participated.

The contention that it is not possible to place Aborigines in positions of authority over Aboriginal students from other clan groups is not defensible when it comes from whites — it is a decision that Aboriginal people must make themselves. Aboriginal people were deprived of a whole range of learning experiences because they were not considered responsible enough to play a major role in determining the educational requirements for their own children. It is obvious that changes need to be made at all levels if meaningful learning opportunities are to be created. The following chapter examines some of the likely futures for Aboriginal people and several alternative models of education that might overcome some of the problems identified above.

10 Alternative models of education

A number of alternative models for Aboriginal education are outlined in this chapter. These range from modest reform of the present system to a radically alternative model based on the assumption that school as an institution is dead. While proponents of the latter model advocate deschooling society as a revolutionary move, it seems likely that changes in education will happen anyway, and reform of the school will be one stage in the process towards this end. Technological advances in the telecommunications field also have the potential to revolutionise the school; such advances will have special significance for remote Aboriginal communities which have not had direct access to mass media.

In an ideal situation, Aboriginal people should be able to determine the sort of education they want. The result might be no formal education at all, or it might be a similar system to the one they are currently familiar with. It is likely that whatever decisions they make will to some extent be influenced by changing concepts of education within the dominant society. It is possible, however, that Aboriginal communities will differ in the sort of educational opportunities they want available in their communities, and the bureaucracy should be flexible enough to cope with this diversity. The actual model adopted at the local level will be largely dependent on decisions taken at critical points in the decision making process. 'Critical points' are those which seem to be significant for the future development of their society and perhaps set in motion an irreversible process.

The first is the decision about residential colleges — do Aborigines consider that such colleges provide the best means by which their children can learn those skills which are needed to fulfil the community's goals? The answer to this question depends on many factors, a significant one being the future relationship between Aborigines and the dominant society. One current trend appears to be the 'closing of ranks' among tribal people and the rejection of interference by whites in their affairs. Coombs (1973:4) has commented on the increasing evidence within recent years of more urgent and effective desire and intention to withdraw. He believes such moves towards decentralisation may have been stimulated by

a variety of reasons: land rights campaigning and the related desire to demonstrate by an Aboriginal presence the reality of those claims; protection of sacred sites; the growing awareness of Aboriginal access to sources of income independent of immediate missionaries or administrators such as pensions, child endowment; the changing philosophy of government and the white community towards the right of Aborigines to choose how far and at what pace they would modify their traditional ways. To these, Egan (1974) has added the disenchantment of Aboriginal groups with the pressure imposed on them by non-Aboriginal society.

If the recommendations of the Woodward Commission (1973) concerning land rights are implemented, Aborigines will have a measure of security and greater control over the influence of white society by being able to restrict its access to Aboriginal reserves. A number of constraints imposed by the government bureaucracy will no doubt continue to place limits on the degree of self-determination but situations like the one that occurred on Gove Peninsula with the mining of bauxite are most unlikely to occur again. Whether such decisions can be reversed by future governments is uncertain since the proposed decisions on land rights for Aborigines are unpopular with pastoralists and mining companies with vested interests in the Northern Territory. It might be expected that these constitute more of an electoral threat than the voice of combined opposition by the Aboriginal people.

At the present time, those Aboriginal groups seeking to re-establish themselves in their traditional areas are receiving government funds, but with considerable constraints imposed on them. Furthermore, the imposition of an award wage/unemployment benefit system is going to tempt Aboriginal people in many communities to submit to the very system they are trying to escape. Egan (1974) has put forward a proposal for an alternative funding scheme, which provides a sum of money to the group based on a basic wage for all able-bodied members over sixteen years, plus child endowment, age, invalid and widows pensions paid to individual recipients. The funds provided would be dispensed absolutely by the Aboriginal group and would be expected to cover every single activity of the group, ranging from provision of housing, internal health services and schools, to employment of their own members on work projects, the purchase of vehicles and equipment, the organisation of travel, the social and ceremonial life of the group and the employment of full-time Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal resource personnel. Such a scheme would enable Aborigines to develop their own priorities, make their own decisions, and determine the nature and pace of their own

development. The skills that are needed by the community could either be 'bought' in, or be developed by community members through on-the-job experience or training programs.

However, if Aborigines are compelled to continue conforming to Treasury regulations for the safeguard of funds and can undertake only projects that are economically viable, then they will have to play the white man's game. The hope is that after working alongside with whites, they will develop the necessary skills and expertise so that whites will eventually become redundant and leave the community. The predominant feeling in the dominant society seems to be that if Aborigines want to attain a high standard of living and have access to the consumer products of a modern technological society, then they must contribute proportionately to the wealth of society instead of being dependent on it. Therefore, Aborigines must develop a sophisticated set of skills and have a deep awareness of the dominant society and be able to operate effectively within it. It would seem unlikely that these skills could be acquired within the Aboriginal community alone. Rather, certain individuals would need to spend time interacting with the dominant society, thereby gaining the confidence to compete with other groups for scarce resources and a share of the power.

If sufficient numbers of Aborigines, particularly the young, want to maintain contact with the dominant society or integrate with it, then Aboriginal communities might feel that a substantial part of education should occur in settings where Aboriginal students can interact with white students and receive the same basic education so that they can compete on an equal basis. In this case, Aborigines would probably opt for the continuation of residential colleges such as Kormilda where there is some group belongingness and separateness from whites, but a chance to interact with them.

Once this decision is made, educationists should then intervene and together with the Aboriginal people determine the sorts of learning experiences that would be required for students to acquire the skills needed in their home communities.

Reform of Kormilda

If Aboriginal people are not offered any alternative to Kormilda and other residential colleges for secondary education and they want their children to continue on at school, then it would seem necessary to introduce a number of changes into the social system at Kormilda so that students do not experience so much culture-conflict and stress. As we have seen, the overriding feature of the College was the discontinuity between home and

school and it would seem that reforms must urgently be made in this direction. One major consequence of this discontinuity was that the majority of students felt they belonged to both the Aboriginal and white groups, but found it difficult to adjust completely to either. Lewin (1948:179) has commented on this phenomenon and asserts that '*not the belonging to many groups is the cause of the difficulty, but an uncertainty of belongingness*'. Lewin has written several papers on the concept of group belongingness, and they suggest the direction for changes in Kormilda College. One of his major contributions in this area has been the notion that identity must be seen within its 'ground' (1940:174):

The group to which an individual belongs is the ground on which he stands, which gives or denies him social status, gives or denies him security or help. The firmness or weakness of this ground may not be consciously perceived, just as the physical ground on which we tread is not always thought of.

Dynamically, however, the firmness and clearness of this ground determines what the individual wishes to be, what he can do, and how he will do it.

This suggests that the experiences undergone by students at Kormilda College must not be separated from the ground of their home experiences since the two are psychologically one. In order that a positive sense of identity be maintained in a situation where the individual is unsure of his group belongingness, the ground must continually grow. Thus changes should be introduced into the social system of the College to reinforce the ground of Aboriginal identity. In Chapter Five, a number of aspects of the school system which failed to provide continuity with the community life experiences of the students were outlined. These were: physical setting, including food, clothing and housing arrangements; language spoken in the classroom and on the school grounds; norms formally or informally enforced and the value hierarchy explicitly taught or implicitly communicated; social organisation of the school; skills taught in the classroom and in the playground; personnel of the school; time structure and sequence of activities; leisure activities. Many of the suggested reforms have in fact been introduced at Kormilda College by the new principal appointed in 1972, and changes in educational policy have also resulted in reforms. Where developments have occurred, they are included as indented paragraphs between rules at relevant places in the text.

First, the physical setting of the College and the buildings that comprise

it: it would be extremely difficult to alter any of them given the amount of money invested in them. However, if future Colleges are proposed, thought should be given to the construction of cottages in preference to large dormitory blocks. Students from a particular community could live together with those who are their kinsmen or who share a common language, and Aboriginal house parents could be appointed from their particular group. In addition to accommodation for students, some provision should also be made for parents or other community members for short-term visits to the College when they come to town. Aboriginal people could also be fully involved in decisions about the architectural design of the College complex.

A building program has been initiated at Kormilda. This involves the replacement of temporary buildings with new dormitory blocks, classrooms and administrative area. There is no provision for accommodation for single teachers unless they are prepared to share some responsibilities with the house parents and live in the dormitory block in a self-contained flatette. No accommodation has been provided for visiting parents to the College and the old buildings, which served this function admirably, are to be demolished. The building program also entails provision of better recreational facilities and an amphitheatre which could also serve as a corroboree ground. It is also intended to construct a social studies museum where items of Aboriginal material culture are preserved for posterity.

Second, students could be encouraged to speak in their native dialects, and housing with their own kinsmen would increase the opportunities to communicate in these. Many teachers would probably be keen to learn Aboriginal languages, and students could teach staff. This would enhance the pride of students in their own identity, provide them with a new learning experience in which they assume the role of teacher, and enable the teacher to increase his understanding of Aboriginal people and the rich complexity of their languages.

The third aspect concerns the norms which are enforced and the values communicated to students. Students at Kormilda learned submission to authority, subjugation to a vast array of petty rules and regulations which imposed constraints on the freedom of the individual, and lack of confidence of staff in their ability to make decisions and to act responsibly. All these contrasted markedly with their experiences in their home communities where they were not subject to such custodial care, where the

social structure and way of life gave them responsibility, and where they were able to take initiatives and to play an important role in the group. The College also attempted to instil such values as cleanliness, good behaviour (as defined in western terms) and pride in one's appearance. In many cases, the values espoused conflicted with those of the community. The behaviours the College seeks to enforce should be those that Aboriginal people themselves are seeking to change or currently observe. Much discussion has already centred on the achievement values which the school seeks to inculcate and the discontinuity they create with those observed at home. It has been stressed that the school should build on traditional values and use them to engender motivation. For example, the idea of weekly tests and competition between students for the highest marks could be abandoned. Competitive emphasis in sporting activities could be decreased, so that students are able to play games for the fun of it rather than to demonstrate superior sporting ability. The prizes awarded to the 'Most Improved Student' or to the Top Boy and Girl could be discarded. If prizes have to be awarded, perhaps students could determine on what criteria, and select the winners themselves.

The new system at Kormilda is far more flexible and provides greater freedom to students. Senior students are permitted to smoke in certain areas of the College; a 'leave pass' system allows students to leave the College to pursue their own interests; girls are permitted to go out with their boyfriends, including white boys. The 'total institutional' character of the College has been reduced through respect for the privacy of the individual and greater respect for his personal identity. No staff member may enter a student's room without first knocking; direct confrontation with students is avoided so that they might 'save face'; the rigid timetabling of activities has been varied so that meals are served cafeteria-style and there is greater flexibility in meal times; students do not have to participate in the same activities en masse at a programmed time but may elect to remain in the College or obtain a leave pass and do their own thing.

Fourth, the pattern of behaviour and values is closely related to the skills school endeavours to teach students. Too often emphasis is on the acquisition of knowledge and the retention of facts; perhaps the curriculum should be more concerned with the enhancement of educability than with emphasising specific learning in different curriculum areas. The school could focus on different learning strategies, learning

without a teacher, learning in small groups, exchanging teacher-learner roles in different situations, independent individual learning. Classroom activities could be less organised so that students have some responsibility for their learning and can take initiatives.

As far as curriculum content is concerned, the subjects of study might be selected to provide a wide basis and choice for further education, and a basic framework for adult learning. Because some bits of knowledge quickly become obsolete, emphasis would shift to the key concepts and those aspects that constitute the structure of the curriculum. The content of the curriculum should have vital links with educative experiences in home, community and work situations and should be organised, where possible, in terms of the real problems of the community. The members of the community could also be drawn into the study, so that the curriculum becomes community-based and participatory, not just preparation for passing conventional examinations. The curriculum content would therefore relate academic study and work situations wherever possible. These could either be real or simulated and should be designed so that the learner forms a habit of using work to enhance learning, and comes to perceive that learning inside and outside the school are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. By becoming involved in a range of community activities, the individual would hopefully develop an understanding about himself and his life role in the context of the home, the community and the world of work.

Students are now not streamed into post-primary and Transitional grades on arrival but are graded into groups according to the level of their competence and all students have the right to go to high school. Some might spend two years in this first year before they are ready to attend the community school. Teachers' responsibilities have also changed so that they teach a particular subject to all grades rather than being responsible for a single class. It is hoped that this system will enable students to cope more easily with high school, which is organised on a similar basis.

Fifth, the social organisation of the school is, as we have seen, another aspect that creates discontinuity with the home experiences of students and fails to provide learning experiences for both students and other Aborigines. The school might seek to open its organisation up to give Aboriginal people it is designed to serve substantial say in its functioning. At the time of the study the Director of Education had power of veto over

the principal, who was accountable to him; ideally the principal would be accountable to Aboriginal people who would make the decisions concerning the functioning of the school and its general objectives. Whether this is done through a school board or some other way is something Aborigines should work out. In the internal functioning of the school, the students had very little say; responsibility could be handed over to them to determine minimum sets of rules, forms of discipline and their imposition, innovations in the learning environment, and recreational activities.

Greater opportunity should be afforded to teachers to get together and discuss their work, and to share their understandings about the goals of Aboriginal education and about their role in the process. It is essential that all those working at Kormilda should see themselves more as contributing members of a team, than in their specific roles as teacher, recreation officer or house parent. Unnecessary distinctions between academic and support staff (professional and non-professional) might be abandoned, since this creates artificial barriers and brings about problems of communication. Teachers might be encouraged to see their role, not as confined to the classroom, but more as resources or learning consultants who can be called on at any time and who are as much learners in the situation as the students themselves. The role of house parent could be redefined so that individuals filling these roles are not merely disciplinarians, but have positive personal relationships with students. If students are given more responsibility and themselves undertake any disciplinary action required, the house parents would be substantially freed from this role. The creation of a minimum set of rules by students would also alleviate the problem that staff differed considerably in the behaviour which they sanctioned.

The principal now delegates authority to the staff and there appears to be better communication between staff members. Meetings are held regularly for all teaching staff and there are also regular meetings with the house parents and recreational officers. The role of the house parents continues to be a source of friction and to create strain for those filling those positions. This is despite the fact that the numbers of house parents have been doubled.

Sixth, the personnel of the school are usually thought to consist of students and staff; community should be added. Substantial changes should be made in the selection of students so that it is the community who decides whether a candidate would gain from attending the College,

rather than the head teacher. If the Aboriginal people also decide on the objectives of the College, then it may well be that the basis of selection would no longer be academic; criteria might rather be leadership potential or the likelihood that the student would gain from closer contact with the dominant society. This would also mean that the dichotomy between post-primary and high school would be eliminated and an individual student could choose for himself whether he wanted to remain at Kormilda or spend time at the local community school. Greater flexibility should be provided for students to move from one stream to the other, and eventually the need for post-primary classes might be eliminated altogether.

In the staffing of the College, Aborigines should be invited to join the staff wherever possible. They could be appointed as teachers, recreation officers, house parents, secretarial staff, and domestic staff. Formal qualifications would not need to be a barrier — Aboriginal identity would be a most relevant qualification. It is very important that the group belongingness be reinforced in this way. Trainee teaching assistants or Aboriginal teachers might also be encouraged to teach at the College, both to increase their own experience and to provide reference models for students.

The community, both the Aboriginal and the wider community, should be encouraged to participate in the activities of the College. Parents of students should be invited to visit the College or to stay there when they are in Darwin for short visits. Some of the older, more traditionally oriented men or women might stay at the College for a term or more and spend their time in traditional activities such as carving, painting, or weaving, so that they could be observed by students. If they were willing they might teach some of these skills to white children or staff. Aboriginal students themselves would probably not take formal classes, since transmission of skills does not occur in this way in their own community. The presence of older Aboriginal people in the school would demonstrate that the dominant society places value on their skills, and might thereby increase the pride of students in their own identity. Many other Aborigines have particular skills they could communicate to students and they should be invited to take part in the school's activities as resource persons — taking students out in the bush for a weekend, or helping them build up a catalogue of animal life in their own particular localities. They would also have a valuable role to play in the collection of resource materials for the school, particularly in such subject areas as natural science, or social studies.

A further way of maintaining contact between home community and students at school, and of developing a better understanding of what the College is about, would be through the use of video-tapes. These have been used in remote Canadian communities to foster interchange between parents and school children who had gone to a residential school in a remote and foreign environment. Such a communication system involves parents and children in the making of the film and provides a community setting for the screening if there is only one monitor in each community or College. Cassette tape recordings are less effective but serve a similar function and overcome the problem of illiterate parents who can neither read letters nor write to their own children.

Although there is still not a great deal of Aboriginal involvement in the College, some attempts have been made to encourage their participation. Aboriginal craftsmen from tribal areas are employed on an ad hoc basis to teach traditional arts and crafts and they also take an interest in the more traditional activities such as corroborees and hunting trips. Aboriginal recreation officers have also been appointed to the College staff and an Aboriginal teaching assistant (now called teacher) works in the classroom with students and is given a small measure of responsibility.

Seventh, the time structure and the sequence of activities must be relaxed. Substantial changes could be made at Kormilda so that students' activities are not programmed from the moment they get up until they go to bed. Greater flexibility in meal hours, for example, would give students latitude of time in which to eat; in the classroom students could have free periods in which they can choose for themselves whether they want programmed work, quiet time in the library, or perhaps some learning experience in the community at large. Those who want to sleep in at weekends should be given an opportunity to do so instead of having to be up as soon as the bell sounds and not before.

Eighth, flexibility could be extended to leisure activities so that small groups of students are able to follow their own pursuits instead of being obliged to join in activities white activity officers have programmed for the whole college. Students might be permitted to go hunting or fishing in the surrounding bush after school or go on camping trips over the weekend. They should be free to visit their own friends in Darwin or to invite friends to the College. Opportunities could be provided for students to participate in a whole range of traditional activities such as dancing at night round a

fire, eating meals cooked on the camp fire, or just sitting around at night talking. The latter activity is characteristic of Aboriginal communities, whereas whites place a high premium on doing, and try to plan activities so that the students are busy all the time.

The changes suggested here would go a considerable way towards reforming the system and creating more learning opportunities both for students and for Aboriginal people who are involved in the school. As we have noted, many of these reforms have in fact taken place following the appointment of a new principal to Kormilda College, and as a result of changes in educational policy.

More variety has been built into the leisure activities of students — a pony club is planned; driving lessons are given to senior students: one of the local community 'bikies' is teaching boys how to ride a motor-bike. In addition, one night a week is set aside for hobbies and teachers are responsible for different activities such as typing, beauty culture, square dancing, public speaking, men's cooking. A press club is responsible for producing the College magazine, writing articles and typing them. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides have been started and are particularly popular with the younger students; some of the more senior students have responsible positions such as Assistant Club Master.

Students are also given limited opportunities to engage in more traditional activities. These include weekend camps, often in conjunction with Scouts and Guides, and a regular gathering outside one evening a week for a corroboree. Students get together around open fires, usually in tribal groups and either dance or just sit and talk. This setting also provides an opportunity for parents and relatives who are in town to come out to the College and join in the activities. Students sometimes need to be rounded up for these evenings, but once there they actively participate.

An attempt has also been made to provide more opportunities for social learning experiences. One period is set aside each Friday afternoon for small groups to get together with a member of staff, house parent, or wives of resident teachers when they discuss how they plan to spend the weekend and determine what money they might need. They learn to make out bank withdrawal forms and to operate their own bank accounts so they are responsible for drawing out money they want to spend on a particular weekend — e.g. shopping, pictures, refreshments, bus fares. This setting also provides an opportunity for students to bring up things which are worrying them. Students in the senior

post-primary class also gain experience in coping with a social setting in the wider community through a scheme designed to integrate school with out-of-school experiences. Individual girls spend one afternoon each week with a Darwin community family and help do the shopping, get the evening meal, and spend the evening with the family. More opportunities are given to students to exercise responsibility, initiative and decision making as a result of a more flexible system which is based on greater trust between students and staff. A School Council now exercises disciplinary action.

Kormilda and lifelong education

The system outlined above is not radically different and is based on a continuation of the current principles underlying education and the role of schools in this process. It would seem desirable to consider some of the new educational principles being incorporated into the total educational process and to discuss their implications for a possible use of Kormilda College. The concept of lifelong education implies that schooling represents only first systematic steps in lifelong learning. This principle is consistent with the traditional Aboriginal concept of education, which was carried on throughout the life of the individual and did not simply stop with his first initiation — there should be access to education at all ages. Any individual, whether young or old, should have an opportunity to learn new skills or update old ones. Acceptance of this principle would mean that the dichotomy between young and old, which at the present time is expressed in terms of the educated and the uneducated in Aboriginal communities, would be greatly reduced.

If the system of school education is seen as a part of the total educational continuum, there should be no sharp break between different stages, and the movement from one stage to another should be as open and unrestricted as possible. This is consistent with the idea of discontinuing streaming of students into 'academic' and non-academic groups, and enabling students to find their own level of competence.

If these principles are incorporated into a system of education for Aborigines, then a college such as Kormilda might come to have a radically different role. If the community were able to select members it wanted to undergo some training in Darwin, then individuals from a range of ages could continue their education. This would enable a person to drop out of school if he was not motivated to continue, and to move into employment with the opportunity for further education at a later stage in

his life and personal development. It is quite likely that Aboriginal communities would rather the students of adolescent age remain in their home communities, since it is during these years that identity crisis comes to a peak and exposure to western society over an extended period can create culture conflict that is not easily resolved. The subsection marriage system is vital to the integration of Aboriginal society and if students are away from their communities at the time marriages are formalised then disintegration is likely to be a result. It has already been mentioned that one of the greatest fears parents had about Kormilda was the fact that their children would meet students from other places whom they might want to marry, and would not observe the traditional marriage system.

If Kormilda catered primarily for mature age students, then it would no longer function as a school or an institution but rather as a resource centre. Such a centre could be managed by Aboriginal people and be responsive to the needs of particular individuals, groups or committees. It could have ties with the Darwin Community College, but remain separate from it. While this might lead to charges of apartheid, it may be defended on the ground that Aborigines want to exercise control over the sorts of influences that impinge upon them. Participation in courses at the Community College with other whites might enable them to acquire specific skills, but they would also be exposed to a resocialisation process and to the values and attitudes of the dominant society. An Aboriginal resource centre, on the other hand, would enable them to get only the skills they want and in a more protected situation.

Given the amount of accommodation currently provided at Kormilda, it would seem unlikely that sufficient numbers of Aborigines would be in residence at any one time, so parts of the College might be converted into hostel accommodation for transients coming into Darwin for medical treatment, visits to relatives, or in the off-work season. Aboriginal people have already expressed a wish for this type of accommodation, since the existing Aboriginal community in Darwin cannot cope with the influx of numbers.

A schooling model for Aborigines

If Aborigines see their future not as integrating with the dominant society but as remaining separate from it and determining their own nature and pace of development, then an alternative model might be required. If they were given viable alternatives to secondary education in large towns like Darwin and Alice Springs, then it is quite likely that they would choose

not to send their children to institutions such as Kormilda College. The challenge facing educationists is what sort of alternative model to offer to provide real learning opportunities for Aborigines. The suggestion made here builds on Aboriginal culture.

Aboriginal clan groups did not traditionally have any formal system of education as we know it; 'education' was life itself and some care was taken to ensure that the younger people learned the skills necessary for their survival. To some extent this education was institutionalised or ritualised, as certain areas of knowledge, especially in the religious sphere, were not revealed to the young men until they had passed through a series of rites of initiations, which followed a special time sequence. Education in this traditional sense was totally bound up with the culture and a necessary part of day-to-day living. The imposed European system of education, however, takes place in a vacuum and is divorced from the Aboriginal culture and way of life — it is exogamous rather than endogamous. Accepting the premise that Aborigines cannot return completely to their former way of life and that they do not want to, the system must enable them to acquire new skills that will enable them to function in their present environment, which has been impinged upon by whites. Since learning is enhanced when it builds on the culture of the group and has meaning for it, the most meaningful system of education for Aboriginal people would be one that builds outwards from the existing structure of Aboriginal society. Education should be functional, and it should enable learning to occur in the daily activities of the particular community, instead of being hived off into a school classroom for only a certain number of hours of the day.

If all members of the community are to have access to education, then rather than establishing schools which traditionally have been defined as institutions for the young, it may be better to establish community centres which can co-ordinate both formal and informal learning opportunities, and encourage all members of the community to participate in the learning process. Such a community centre would draw on the total resources of the community for its teachers, rather than confining this role to those formally qualified. Community members would be encouraged to see themselves as both teachers and learners in a variety of different contexts. In this way, the dichotomy between young and old might be reduced. There would continue to be a role for qualified teachers, although they might be more appropriately defined as resource persons. Their particular function in the process of lifelong learning would be to act as animators for group work and individual studies, to act as co-learners in certain

situations, and as co-ordinators of learning activities, and to become facilitators of self-learning at appropriate points. Hopefully, Aborigines would be employed in this role, but in the initial stages it may be necessary for some whites to work alongside Aborigines and to demonstrate and set an example by their own natural behaviour. The idea of a primary or secondary teacher or adult educator would be abandoned, since one individual would act in the capacity of all three.

As far as the young children are concerned, there *may* be a need to provide universal, basic education during the period of childhood and adolescence, picking up the thread of initial learning that occurs informally during the pre-basic or pre-school stage. However, multiple and alternative methods for performing the task should be found in order to deformalise the school system, to merge school and out-of-school learning, and to reduce the rising costs of education where there are financial constraints. For example, some period of time in a formal setting might be interspersed with work; open-plan classrooms could be organised for children from the one clan group so that they could communicate in their own language and be guided by one of their own kinsmen; parents could be encouraged to play a greater part in the education process; white resource persons in the community could see a vital part of their role as teachers, whether on-the-job or in a more formal classroom situation, rather than having a maintenance role as they do at the present time.

Post-basic education would be provided as a matter of course and would be available to all. In some situations, it may be necessary to provide some formal learning opportunities such as for the teaching of basic literacy skills. However, it must be stressed that concepts of literacy should not be taught in an isolated way but incorporated into a functional program so that what is learned is immediately relevant to a particular problem the individual wants to solve, or to his immediate work or home environment. The acquisition of numeracy skills, for example, might be best achieved through spending time on the cash registers in the local store, or through playing cards, with which most Aboriginal people are familiar. Many of the other skills Aborigines need in order to take responsibility for their own affairs could be better and more easily developed in natural settings. The community centre might include council meeting rooms where much of the business imposed on the council by the dominant society could be discussed. Here, the community adviser has a vital role to play. If invited to the meetings, he can help members of the community present to understand the wider society of which they are a part, to develop greater insight into the bureaucracy, to make responsible decisions, and to anticipate

some of the consequences of different courses of action. In this process, he might facilitate the learning of new words, thereby increasing Aborigines' linguistic skills, improve literacy, and help those present to have a better grasp of financial matters and of the political process. It is my contention that such individuals, who have an ongoing role in the functioning of communities, are first and foremost resource persons; their prime concern should be to pass on their particular skills to the Aboriginal people themselves so that they later become redundant. The positions of 'adult educator' which have recently been created in Aboriginal communities make sense only if at the same time the individuals performing this role see themselves as community development workers.

In many cases, on-the-job training might be more effective than formal training courses. Where this does not apply, however, workers should be given time off on full pay to upgrade their qualifications or to learn new skills that cannot be developed in the community context. Where such situations do arise, it is essential that a job requiring those skills be available for the individual on completion of the particular training course and on his return to the community.

In this alternative model of education, a school such as Kormilda College would not be required, since most education could be undertaken in the home communities, making full use of the resources of the community for teaching purposes. However, as we have seen, advantage could be taken of Kormilda as a resource centre. Individuals might be sent in by their communities to learn particular skills — manual skills or the more intangible skills that increase confidence in dealing with whites, and lead to a better understanding of society and the way things work. Such an understanding is essential if Aborigines are to secure for themselves the power to play the bureaucratic or systems game, and to secure the resources they need to fulfil their own needs and their ambitions for the future of Aboriginal people.

A model based on advanced telecommunications

In education systems of the future, telecommunications may have a vital role. Innovations such as two-way television, videophones, computerised data information services, dial-a-program, etc., might all be located in the home or in a community centre. Library services could be plugged into a national computerised information centre and an individual would be able to select the information he wants from a punch out of all available sources. Self-directed learning could be enhanced by a data bank of

educational programs the individual could call up on his home receiver. He could quickly get in touch with a network of people having particular skills to share through a programmed learning exchange. Innovations such as these are already becoming a reality and were discussed at a Workshop of Innovations of the Australian Advisory Committee on Bibliographical Services in Canberra in July 1974.

The availability of telecommunications in remote areas opens up a range of opportunities in educational, social and leisure fields that were not previously possible. The most likely development in the immediate future in Australia is satellite television, which allows reception over a very wide area and could cater specifically for remote pastoral and mining areas, providing there was adequate national subsidy (Australian Post Office, 1974). The possibility of television in Aboriginal communities has many implications for educational and social development, and marks a critical point for decision making. Access to visual mass media would open up access to learning opportunities and could reduce the need for individuals to move outside their own communities to learn specific skills or to acquire certain knowledge or understanding.

If exchange *between* communities were possible this would enable cross-fertilisation of ideas, be a stimulus to social change, and reduce the feeling of isolation in remote communities (and perhaps reduce the need for travel, since relatives could keep in touch with one another through a visual medium). Radio and television are seen by Unesco (1967) as playing a vital role in education and development in Asia. In primary and secondary education, broadcast media are seen to fill four distinct though closely interrelated functions: enrich formal lessons, provide illustrations, introduce new material not available in textbooks, link the school closer with the outside world; provide direct instructions in subjects where the school teacher may have inadequate qualifications or where educational materials are lacking; serve in-service training of teachers, especially when coupled with correspondence teaching and programmed instruction. Media also enable a network to be established and maintained among educators, and provide a forum for the discussion of important issues; enable people to have access to learning opportunities where there are no formal schools or teachers. In addition to these direct educational objectives, television is also seen as having an informal educational impact through increasing political awareness of the wider society, causing exposure to the values, attitudes and norms of the dominant society, and familiarising the viewer with social issues wider than his immediate environment.

The reception of television in Aboriginal communities would enable individuals to supplement their learning with specific programs and provide a broader base for education for the whole community, especially if television sets were located in the camp setting. The increase in learning opportunities might alleviate the need for individuals to undergo special training courses in Darwin or other cities, and would thereby encourage group cohesion. Aborigines might also come to develop a better understanding of white society — its values, ethics, behaviour patterns and diversity — without having to be immersed in it. Television, in this way, could contribute to basic educational policy, which according to Reimer (1971) must guarantee not only freedom of access but an adequate supply of resources required for everyone to learn how society really works.

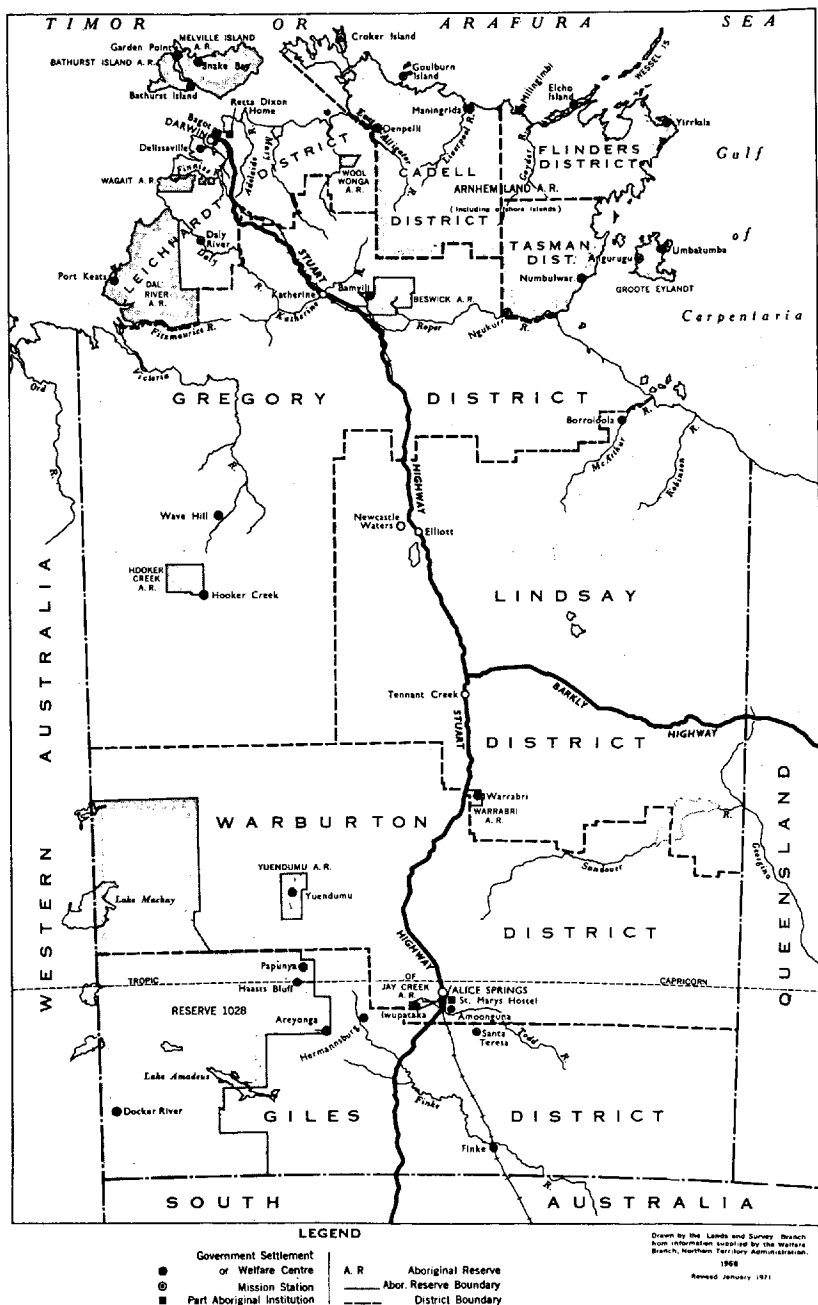
While this emphasises the positive elements of modern advances in telecommunications for remote areas, it is quite possible that television and other innovations in this area could contribute to the disintegration of Aboriginal communities. Pawley (1973) maintains that consumerism in western society is leading to the destruction of the family, the community and society, and that current emphasis on these words is a false reality. The products of the affluent society, such as the car and television, reduce personal interaction between individuals, and make more private the life of each member of society. Each family has its own T.V. set, becoming self-sufficient, and no longer needing to sustain a mutual dependence on other families.

In Aboriginal communities, each family might not own a television set, but there could be several community sets. While this might not lead to the death of the family, it could nevertheless contribute to the disintegration of the community. Television programs could become more important than corroborees, just as alcohol has led to increasing lack of interest in traditional activities. A series of studies in New Zealand on the effect of television on Maoris indicated that it led to a disintegration of Maori culture and prompted migration of large numbers of indigenous population to urban centres to acquire the goods of the affluent society. Television might be expected to have similar effects in Aboriginal communities. Aborigines would begin to be governed by time, as T.V. programs its viewers in this way; it might increase the dichotomy between young and old by exposing the community to the consumer society and developing among the young in particular an increasing desire for its products. The net result might well be dissatisfaction by many members of the community with their current way of life, and a drift to the city for the 'goodies' of western society. It is therefore essential that Aborigines should

be given the chance to accept or reject technological advances of this nature. The likely consequences of direct access to mass media should be discussed with them, so that they can make an informed choice. Too often, technological innovations are seen only as contributing to the advancement of society. Aborigines should not be victims of the affluence of western society.

The alternative models of education discussed here represent only a small range of the possible alternatives. Any model adopted will be continually evolving since Aboriginal society, itself dynamic, interacts with the dominant society, which is experiencing unprecedented turbulence or 'future shock'. What is of utmost importance is that Aboriginal people be involved in all stages in discussion of alternatives in education, and have access to resources that will enable them to implement the programs they see most likely to fulfil the community's goals. This may well entail a diversity of approaches among different communities, and the bureaucracy must be flexible enough to cope with the many different demands placed upon it. Increasingly, responsibility should be devolved to the local level. Perhaps in an educational utopia schools, learning centres and structured learning situations would no longer be required since education would be life itself. The words of Margaret Mead might then have universal application: 'My grandmother wanted me to have an education, so she kept me out of school.'

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA



Map of Aboriginal communities (redrawn, with the permission of the Department of Administrative Services, from a map prepared for Welfare Branch *Annual Reports*)

Appendix 1

Home communities of 1970

Kormilda students

	Number of students	
	Post-primary	Transitional/ high school
<u>Settlements</u>		
Amoonguna (Alice Springs)		3
Areyonga	2	
Bagot (Darwin)	2	4
Bamyili	1	2
Borrooloola	6	
Delissaville	3	
Hooker Creek		8
Jay Creek		2
Maningrida		5
Roper River		7
Snake Bay	2	4
Warrabri	1	6
Yuendumu		3
<u>Missions</u>		
Angurugu		5
Bathurst Island		1
Croker Island	3	5
Daly River	1	
Elcho Island		13
Goulburn Island	13	
Hermannsburg		1
Port Keats	6	
Oenpelli	13	
Santa Teresa		1
Yirrkala		5

<u>Pastoral Properties</u>		
Aileron	1	
Banka Banka	1	
Humpty Doo	4	
Mainoru	5	3
Maryvale		2
Monteginnie	3	
Mount Doreen	3	
Mudginberri	2	
Newcastle Waters	5	
Rosslyn Plains	3	
Sterling	1	
<u>Town Environs (other than reserves)</u>		
Darwin		1
Katherine		1
Elliot	7	

Appendix 2

Measuring instruments

Value scales

An adaptation of Kluckhohn's and Strodtbeck's (1961) instrument for measuring values was used in the present study. Three scales of items relating to the time, relational and man-nature values were compiled. The value schedule of seventeen items was then pre-tested with a group of Aboriginal students and eight items were retained for the final scale. All the items pertaining to man-nature were eliminated, since they lacked construct validity. The final schedule consisted of four items on the relational value and four on the time value. Responses to items in the scales were scored 2 for selection of the achievement orientation and 1 for non-achievement orientation. Each individual could therefore have a score ranging 4-8 for each of the time and relational values. The scale was administered individually to each student. The student had a copy of the items and the experimenter went through each item with the student. If an individual could not understand an item, the experimenter explained it in different words, while retaining the same meaning. An example of one of the items from the relational scale is given below.

Story:

Three young people were talking about marriage

Ideas:

1. One said when it is time to get married, the marriage should be arranged by the old people and everyone will be happy that way.
2. The second person said that young people should choose who they want to marry by themselves.
3. The third person said that young people should be able to choose themselves who they want to marry but they should still talk about it with the old people and marry someone who is right for them.

Questions:

Which person do you think has the best idea?

Which of the other two persons has the better idea?

Further information about the construction of the scale and the final set of items can be found in Sommerlad (1972).

Attitude measures

The semantic differential technique was used to measure attitudes towards Aborigines, whites and self. The main interest in this particular study lay in the evaluative aspect and thus only scales used by Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) to measure the evaluative dimension were selected. The particular pairs of adjectives or scales chosen to represent this dimension were those found by Western (1969) and Taft (1970) to occur commonly in the stereotype of Aborigines: happy — sad, friendly — unfriendly, lazy — hard-working, clever — stupid, proud — ashamed, good — bad.

The test was administered individually to students. The middle point of the 7-point scale was described as 'in-between' or 'don't know'. In order to obtain the ratings, a wooden doll was used and the student was told: 'Imagine this is an Aboriginal person just like you'. He was then instructed to move the figure to the position on a long ruler which best described that person. On each scale, the subject made judgments for an Aboriginal person, a white person ('I want you to imagine this is a white person who is as old as you are') and self ('I want you to imagine that this person here is you'). The order of concepts was invariant for each of the scales and the same instructions were repeated for each.

For each scale, scores ranged between 0 and 6; a high score indicated a favourable attitude while 3 represented the middle category and 0 the unfavourable extreme point. Since each attitude measure comprised six scales or pairs of adjectives, the total range of scores was 0-36. Each individual rated three concepts on the same six scales and thus three attitude measures were obtained. All but one item had a significant positive correlation with the tested score.

Indices of stress

Social maladjustment

Verville (1968) has compiled a list of behavioural problems of children symptomatic of maladjustment, and those considered by staff to have regularly occurred at Kormilda in previous years were noted. Data were recorded throughout the year for each individual in the College on this list of behaviour disorders. Sources of data included observations by the

author and reports by house parents, other staff members and students. A day-book recording the names of students caught breaking the school rules, established in second term, provided another source of data and was used to validate individual reports. Students themselves frequently informed the author of their own misdeeds or those of their peers since she had taken care to disassociate herself from disciplinary action. The second state in the construction of the index of tension-discharge or social maladjustment involved establishing which of these behaviour disorders were considered by students to require the attention of social-control agencies (that is, staff). An ideology questionnaire (discussed in Chapter 5) concerning good and bad things to do at home and at Kormilda was administered to all students and responses in reply to the question 'What are the worst things to do at Kormilda that you get into trouble for' were analysed. Students were told that they themselves did not have to do these things, but should write down any behaviour which evoked punishment by staff. Items considered symptomatic of social maladjustment according to Verville, and which at least 75 per cent of the students perceived to require attention, were combined to form a final index of social maladjustment.

Although data had been collected on a long list of behaviour disorders, individuals were scored only 1 or 0 for presence or absence of those items of behaviour included in the final index. Some items required the occurrence of the behaviour on only one occasion to score 1, while others which were more commonly observed depended on frequency of occurrence.

The items included in the index were subjected to an item analysis and a final list of ten was retained with significant item-total correlation coefficients. This index corresponds to the tension-discharge syndrome Nurcombe and Cawte (1967) indicate as a pattern of behavioural disorder characterising Aboriginal children. There are two deficiencies on this scale. First, students who dropped out could not score as high as those who did not, since scoring was based on observations of behaviour over a year. Second, the scale makes no allowance for the student's perception of the relative gravity of each type of deviant behaviour. More details concerning the construction of the scale may be found in Sommerlad (1972).

Psychological symptoms

The adolescent adjustment interview devised by Wintrob and Sindell (1968) for use with the Cree Indians was modified for use in the present study. This schedule included sections on anxiety, depression, and

inadequacy with questions pertaining to psychosomatic symptoms of maladjustment and stress. Individuals scored 0 or 1 on each item, depending on the presence or absence of symptoms. An item-analysis resulted in a final scale of ten items with significant ($p = .05$) item-total correlation coefficients (point-biserial r). More details concerning the construction of the scale may be found in Sommerlad (1972).

Validation of scales for maladjustment

There was no opportunity to validate these scales against independent criteria. However, previous research has indicated that certain relationships occur between the two indices used and other variables included in the study, and thus some measure of construct validity can be obtained. The scales themselves are internally consistent and an ethnopsychiatrist working among Aboriginal adolescents confirmed that the symptoms are all valid indices of maladjustment for this ethnic group.

Although Erikson (1964) argues for a unitary concept of maladjustment, the weight of evidence appears to favour a multidimensional view. McQuitty (1954:22) states that 'one might expect that mental illness might develop within any one or more patterns. In order to understand the mental illness of a particular subject, we must isolate the pattern, or patterns, of characteristics to which his mental illness pertains'. Thus tension-discharge, or social maladjustment, and anxiety-inhibition, or psychosomatic symptoms, may be independent dimensions of maladjustment, even though both correlate with external diagnostic criteria. The inter-scale correlation coefficient is 0.007, which supports McQuitty's argument for a multi-dimensional approach, and necessitates separate consideration of the two scales.

Identity orientation

Three variables were selected to define identity orientation — values, aspirations and acculturation. The significant correlations between them justified their selection as variables reflecting the reference group adopted. Individuals who adopted whites as a reference group were characterised as having high aspirations, achievement orientations on values, and high acculturation scores. Individuals who were traditionally oriented, on the other hand, were characterised as having low aspirations, a non-achievement orientation on values, and low acculturation. The remaining individuals were defined as synthesising white and traditional models. This latter group was divided further into three groups: individuals who had high scores on two variables were located towards the

white identity pole; individuals who had medium scores on three or on two variables or a high, a medium, and a low score were located in the middle of the continuum; individuals who had low scores on two variables were located towards the traditional pole.

When students were classified in this way, the following groups were identified. (The sample size is reduced to ninety-three, since two students did not respond to items on aspirations.)

White	Synthesis	Traditional
12	19 36 14	12

Scales used to define identity orientation, mean scores on each of the variables, and intercorrelations between them are given in Sommerlad (1972).

Aboriginal adjustment review

Name	Sex
Age	Class
Tribal Group	Skin Group
Language	Settlement, Mission, Station

1. How many years have you been at Kormilda?
2. Are you pleased to be here at Kormilda, or would you prefer to be home with your relations?
3. Are any of your friends from here with you at Kormilda? (Specify)
4. Are they your best friends, or are your best friends still at ?
5. Were you a bit scared about coming to Kormilda?
6. What do you like best about Kormilda?
7. What don't you like about it?
8. Were your mother and father pleased that you were coming to Kormilda?
9. Who are your best friends here?
10. Do they all speak the same language as you?
11. What language do you speak when you are with them?
12. Do you think it is hard to make friends with some of the other children here?
Which one is it hardest to make friends with?
Why is that, do you think?
13. Are you looking forward to going home for the holidays?

14. What sort of things do you do at home?
15. What do you like best about being home?
16. Is there anything you don't like about home?
17. Do you live with your family at home?
18. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
19. Does anyone else live with you?
20. What sort of place do you live in?
21. Is it all right living in that sort of place? or would you like to live in a different sort?
22. Does your father work?
What sort of work does he do?
23. How about your mother — does she work or look after the family?
24. Can your mother or father speak English at all?
Can they write?
25. What places have you visited on holidays? Have you been to Darwin or Alice Springs before? What for? How many times?
26. Have you lived anywhere else besides
(present community of S)?

Educational, occupational and social aspirations

27. How long do you want to stay at school?
28. How long do you think you really will stay at school?
29. What sort of work would you like to do when you leave school?
(Reason for choice)
30. Can you tell me how long you would have to stay at school to get a job like that? What else would you have to do to get that sort of job?
31. Is (job mentioned) the sort of work you really think you will be doing?
32. Can you tell me three jobs which you think would be the best jobs a person could have. They don't have to be jobs you want to do yourself; but just the very best sort of work that any person could have?
33. Where do you think you would like to live when you leave school and it is time to get a job?
(If town) Do you want to live on the Reserve, then, or somewhere else?
34. Do you really think you will live there?

School

35. Do you find school hard?

36. Is it harder than last year?
37. What lessons do you like best at school?
38. Do you feel nervous when your teacher asks you a question in class?
39. (If yes) Is it because you don't know the answer, or because she is asking you in front of all the other children?
40. Does it worry you if all the other children laugh when you answer a question?
41. Does it make you feel nervous when you're with people you don't know?
42. Does this happen more often when you're with Whites or with other Aborigines?
43. Does it make you feel nervous (scared) when you are asked to do something you've never tried before?

Depression

44. Do you often feel unhappy (sad)?
45. Is this because you are missing your family or are homesick?
46. Do you often feel like crying?
47. Do you cry then?
48. When you feel worried or unhappy, do you tell anyone about it? (Who?)
49. Do you often go to Sister? What for generally?
50. Do you get a lot of headaches?
Do you often feel sick in the stomach?

Anxiety

51. Do you often have trouble going to sleep at night?
52. Do you ever have bad dreams that wake you up?
53. Can you tell me about one you have had while you've been here?
54. Do you often feel scared like you were shaking inside?

Identity

55. What sort of person do you think makes a good leader?
(Probe for age status vs education and responsibility)
56. What do you think about the promise system?
57. Have you been promised to anyone? Are you going to marry your promise?
(If not) When it is time to get married, do you think it is important to marry someone who is right skin for you?

58. When it's time to get married, do you think you would like to marry an Aboriginal from or just anyone you liked?
59. Why would you make this choice?
60. When the time comes to sing in the Darwin Eisteddfod, would you rather sing with the people from or with Kormilda?
61. When you think of yourself, do you think of yourself as being a (tribe), an Aboriginal or an Australian? Which one comes first? Which one comes next?
62. Do you ever join in ceremonies at home?
63. What sort of music and dancing do they have at home?
64. Do you like the pop music they play at Kormilda, and jiving?
65. Which sort of music and dancing do you like best — the sort all the people do at home, or the European sort you have at Kormilda?

Modified Bavelas ideology test

A.

1. What are some things you could do at home (Kormilda) which are *bad* things to do and you get into trouble for?
2. Which one of these things is the *very worst* thing to do?
3. Who is angry with you for doing them?
4. How do they show you that they are angry with you?

B.

1. What are some things you could do at home (Kormilda) which are *good* things to do and which make other people pleased with you?
2. Which one of these things is the *very best* thing to do?
3. When you do these things, who tells you they are pleased with you?
4. How do they show you they are pleased with you?

Appendix 3

Enrolments for intake years 1968, 1969, 1970

	Post-primary				Transitional/high school			
	1st Term		3rd Term		1st Term		3rd term	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Intake year 1968								
1968	32	23	25	18	16	15	16	15
1969	14	10	10	9	11	11	8	8
1970	6	2	5	2	8	8	3	7
Intake year 1969								
1969	37	18	23	16	22	17	13	16
1970	17	11	9	6	10	15	7	8
1971	4	3	0	3	4	6	4	6
Intake year 1970								
1970	26	17	25	14	17	26	14	16
1971	20	13	17	13	10	13	9	10

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Index

- Aboriginal: definition, 22; identity, 55-6, 130, 132
 Aboriginal Ordinance 1918-53, 25
 Aboriginalisation, 31
 Albrecht, P., 42
 Angyal, A., 83, 132
 anxiety-inhibition, 121
 apartheid, 31
 assimilation, 25, 26
 attitudes to: Aborigines, 91-2, 106, 113, 129-30;
 whites, 92, 106; self, 115; Kormilda students,
 130
 Aubert, V., 87
 Australia Day 1972 statement, 28
- Barker, R., 75
 behaviour settings, 75
 Berndt, C., 126
 Berndt, R., 44-53, 55
 Bernstein, B., 23
 Berry, J., 121
 Bianchi, G., 121, 125
 black consciousness, 95
 black power, 13
- Calley, M., 55
 Carmichael, S., 14, 95
 Cawte, J., 37, 56
 Chance, N., 51, 121, 134
 Cibrowski, T., 3
 Clairmont, D., 86
 Clinard, M., 119
 coeducation, 141
 Coleman Report, 139
 community, 31; centre, 150; schools, 4
 compensatory education, 2-5, 82, 131-2
 competition, 91, 132
 conflict, 88-94, 111, 115
 consultation, 11, 66, 140-4, 152-3
 continuity, 85, 86, 107, 148-56
 Coombs, H., 24, 145
 Cornell Medical Index, 121
 cottage homes, 149
 Cree Indian education, 8, 87, 125
 cultural deprivation, 2-5, 82, 131-2
 Curle, A., 134
 curriculum, 150
- Dawson, J., 56
 De Vos, G., 82, 83
 decentralisation, 11, 23-4, 31, 145
- Deloria, V., 9
 demographic data, 22
 Dexter, B., 31
 discontinuity, 7, 85-6, 87-94, 105, 148
 Downing, J., 35, 66, 128
 Duke, C., 115
 Duncan, A., 53
- Eckerman, A., 54
 educational aspirations, 104, 106, 110, 114
 educational equality, 12, 14, 139
 educational processes, 136-40
 Egan, E., 24, 146
 elites, 130-1
 Elkin, A., 45, 52, 53, 54, 81
 Embassy, Aboriginal, 30
 employment opportunities, 40-2
 Emery, F., 32, 87, 131, 132-3
 Erikson, E., 95-6, 119
 Erikson, K., 100, 170
 Eskimo education, 7, 85
 expectations of teachers, 139-40
- Francis, S., 35
- Gallacher, J., 50, 52, 53, 82, 141
 Gibb, C., 135
 Giese, H., 128
 goals of education, 8-9, 50-1, 131-6;
 incompatibility between, 80, 81, 131-6
 Goffman, I., 6, 127
- Haldane Principle, 59
 Hamilton, A., 39, 90
 health, 36
 Hermannsburg, 143
 Hetzel, B., 33
 Hobart, C., 7, 85, 86-7, 93
 homonymy, 83-4, 132
 housing, 34
 Hughes, C., 51
- IQ of Kormilda students, 65
 identity: crisis/conflict, 95, 99, 100, 125, 126, 156;
 orientation, 96-9
 Illich, I., 4
 Inkeles, A., 100, 121
 integration, 27
 interaction between Aborigines and whites, 75-8,
 136

- Jahoda, G., 56
 Japanese family system, 82
 Jencks, C., 5
 Jessor, R., 6
- Kearney, G., 55
 kinship system, 44, 53, 91
 Kirke, D., 40
 Kormilda: social organisation, 68, 129; staff, 66-8;
 parental involvement, 66, 140-4, 152-3;
 student population, 63; selection of students,
 64, 131, 153; behaviour settings, 75
- Lengyel, P., 42
 Lewin, K., 148
 life-style, 42, 88
 lifelong education, 156
 Likert, R., 69
 Lippmann, L., 57
- McClelland, D. 83
 McMahon, W., 28
 McQuitty, L., 170
 maladjustment, 99-101
 man-nature value, 52-6
 Maxwell, G., 37
 media, 92, 161-3
 membership groups, 56, 80, 97
 Merton, R., 57
 Moffit, P., 3
 Money, J., 125
 Moodie, P., 36, 37-9
 Mullard, C., 14
- Native Welfare Conference, 25, 26
 Newcomb, T., 57, 124
 Nurcombe, B., 3, 57, 120, 121, 125, 130, 169
- Objectives of Aboriginal education, *see* goals
 Oeser, O., 75
 Osgood, C., 168
- Pawley, M., 162
 Peak, G., 54
 permissiveness, 91
 personal identity, 7-8, 85, 87, 95; *see also* self-
 image
 Philp, H., 3, 84
 policies, 24-32
 Postman, N., 137
 promise system of marriage, 43, 104, 107, 111, 157
 psychosocial crisis, 96
 psychosomatic symptoms, 100, 121
- reference groups, 56-7, 80, 97
- reform of Kormilda, 148-56
 Reimer, E., 7, 162
 relational value, 52, 55-6, 82, 83, 132
 resolution of identity conflict/crisis, 98, 107, 134
 Rogers, P., 41
 role conflict, 69, 87
 Rose, F., 43
 Rosen, B., 83
 Rowley, C., 25
- Saslow, H., 87
 Schapper, H., 32
 Schoenheimer, H., 4
 Scott, W., 100
 self-determination, 16, 30-2
 self-image, 6, 87, 88
 social life, 46, 93
 social maladjustment, 100, 119
 socialisation, 42-4, 97
 socio-economic environment, 32
 Sommerlad, E., 53, 125, 134, 170
 Stanner, W., 52
 streaming, 60-1, 65, 129
 stress, 100-1
 synthesis orientation, 97-9; case study of, 107-11
- Taft, R., 57, 168
 Tatz, C., 5, 33, 40, 49, 59
 tension-discharge syndrome, 120
 time value, 52, 56
 total institutions, 6, 10, 33, 87, 128
 totemism, 45
 Townsville community school, 4
 traditional education, 158
 traditional orientation, 97-9; case study of, 102-5
 training allowance, 41, 134
 transitional colleges, 61-2
- values: Aboriginal, 8; white, 8; time, 52, 56;
 relational, 52, 55-6, 82, 83, 132; man-nature,
 52, 56; changes in, 80-1, 127-8
 vernacular teaching, 46
 Verville, E., 168
- Waller, W., 138
 Wards Employment Ordinance, 26
 Watts, B., 5, 132
 Watts-Gallacher Report, 49-50, 61-3, 129, 131
 Welfare Bill 1953, 26
 Western, J., 57, 168
 white accommodation, 32
 white orientation, 97-9; case study of, 111-16
 Williams, D., 9, 57, 69, 92, 127, 130
 Wintrob, R., 7, 51, 87, 96, 98, 100, 124-5, 169
 Woodward, A., 146

Dr Elizabeth Sommerlad is a graduate of the University of Sydney and The Australian National University. In the course of her study of Kormilda she spent a year living at the College. Since then she has made several visits to the Northern Territory and has spent some months on a Lutheran mission station in Central Australia. While a Research Fellow in The Australian National University's Centre for Continuing Education she worked on Aboriginal community development. In 1975 she was appointed Head of the newly established Unit in Community Work at Prahran College of Advanced Education, Victoria.



Aborigines in Australia are demanding a kind of education that does not estrange Aboriginal children from their culture and their kin. This book discusses a situation in which such alienation was brought about. Kormilda College, a residential school for tribal Aborigines in the Northern Territory, is the focus of the study. In the college Dr Sommerlad observed young Aborigines trying to reconcile their own values and behaviour with those of the white teachers and administrators. Some students were unable to choose between black and white societies and became marginal members of both. Some felt their black identity degraded by the experience and were left in a state of confusion and self-doubt.

If the education of these children is to be in harmony with the values and ideals of the community in which they live, educational reforms will have to be undertaken. From her experience at Kormilda, and drawing on the experience of United States workers with American Indians and Eskimoes, Dr Sommerlad suggests directions such reform might take and pitfalls it will need to avoid.

This book must be read by all who wish to see Aborigines take their place in Australian society without losing their unique cultural identity.

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