

THESES, SIS/LIBRARY
R.G. MENZIES BUILDING NO.2
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200 Australia

Telephone: +61 2 6125 4631
Facsimile: +61 2 6125 4063
Email: library.theses@anu.edu.au

USE OF THESES

**This copy is supplied for purposes
of private study and research only.
Passages from the thesis may not be
copied or closely paraphrased without the
written consent of the author.**

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

David Trudinger

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

CHAPTER NINE: 'Justice is already the first violence'¹: the Control of the Indigenous Body



Mission Stations operated not only as sites of research but also as locales of discipline and surveillance, where the logic of Foucault's panoptical gaze could be articulated.

Governmental agencies such as Aboriginal Protection Boards, and church bodies like the Boards of Missions, kept a close bureaucratic eye on Aboriginal people, requiring from

superintendents annual reports, numbers, names, permissions, acquittals for monies provided, punishments for minor infractions, police action for misdemeanours and crimes.² The mission station represented the related ideal of fixing the wild, nomadic, indigenous Body to a settled place where it could be inscribed with the marks of civilization, cleanliness, dress, domestication, good behaviour, law and order, the marks of control.

Even Ernabella, with its Duguidian policy of minimal interference in traditional life, was involved in efforts to re-form the Aboriginal body, to control and clean it, and to re-order it, by various means of 'uplift' and 'policing' actions, in terms of European conceptions of civilised existence. Yet the Presbyterian mission was unusual in the extent to which it resisted this almost universal missionary imperative to reform and remake the indigenous body in an 'improved', European image.³ Its interference with the indigenous body was less intrusive,

¹ Emmanuel Levinas in "Being-Toward-Death" and "Thou Shalt Not Kill", in Jill Robbins, ed., *Is It Righteous To Be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 136. The inset photograph is in the South Australian Police Archives and is taken from Mattingly and Hampton, eds., *Survival in our own land*, p. 28. The caption reads 'British Subjects'. The origin of the prisoners is not stated.

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

³ See, for example, Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vols. 1 and 2, for a magisterial account of London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries among the Tswana in Southern Africa establishing what the Comaroffs see as hegemonic regimes through the combined imposition and acceptance of European forms and structures involving more or less radical modifications to traditional life and culture.

for example, than that of Hermannsburg. The Lutherans had always insisted on strict adherence to regimes of clothing, work and abandonment of traditional customs and ceremonies.⁴ At Ernabella, colonial actors such as administrators and police who entered the contact zone of the Mission during the Love regime noted, some with distaste, others with approval, the relatively unregulated nature of the indigenous interaction with the mission. When the feminist and activist Constance E. Ternent Cooke visited Ernabella in 1943 in her capacity as a member of the South Australian Aboriginal Protection Board (APB), she was impressed with 'the complete freedom the native people enjoy. Mr. Love does not interfere with them in any way, they come and go as they please.'⁵ A police officer, on the other hand, who noted the refuse left behind by the moving of camps, was disgusted and held a recalcitrant Love to account.⁶ The anarchic quality of the mission existence that Ternent Cooke observed did not mean that there was not purposive economic activity (from a European point of view) occurring amongst the Pitjantjatjara: sheep were shepherded and sheared, building, fencing, and domestic work was going on, but the mission attempted to encourage this activity to occur within the rhythms of a traditional life, of ceremonies and walkabout. Workers were expected to leave after three months; schoolchildren were told to follow their parents into the bush. The Body of the Other was given, and often took for itself, some space to exist on its own terms, across the *karu*, the creek, away from the missionaries and the mission compound.

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

⁴ See Albrecht, "The Finke River Mission approach to mission work among Aborigines in Central Australia": 7-15; also Albrecht, *From Mission to Church*; John Morton, "Country, People, Art: the Western Aranda 1870-1990", in Hardy, Megaw and Megaw, eds., *The Heritage of Namatjira*: 23-62, pp. 52-53.

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

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

saving the indigenous body

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

⁷ Although not all indigenous peoples were seen at the same 'degraded' level. Anna Johnston has shown how 19thC missionaries as well as other colonial actors considered Australian Aborigines to be on the lowest rungs of the evolutionary ladder of racial hierarchy. By the early 19thC understandings of racial hierarchies included a respect for Polynesian races, for example, which would never be accorded to Australian Aborigines where European conceptions of racialised and sexualised orders of 'savagery' profoundly influenced missionary practices and representations. The comparative savagery of the Australian Aborigine was thus seen as contributing to the widely acknowledged failure of benevolent missionary attempts to ameliorate their condition and elevate their character: Anna Johnston, "Antipodean heathens", pp. 72-73.

allowed to attend ceremonies or practice polygamy.⁸ And, conversely, at the Lutheran mission, where a 'congregation' existed, as it did not yet at the Presbyterian site, its members were privileged and set apart from other, 'bush' natives. The native evangelists, especially, must have seemed to embody the 'new life' to which the Arrernte were encouraged to aspire: they could read and write, they wore suits, they were given powerful responsibilities such as handing out rations and running stores.⁹ Yet even there the Arrernte generally ensured they created sufficient space to survive on their own terms.¹⁰ At Ernabella, they were often provided this space as a matter of policy. Both Love and Duguid acknowledged the precariousness of the condition of indigenous bodies, and accepted on behalf of their indifferent countrymen a powerful moral burden to 'save' indigenous bodies as a consequence, a burden not linked only to a desire to seek redemption for indigenous souls before the Christian God.

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

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

⁹ For a similar situation regarding the position of indigenous evangelists, in a much later time frame and in a different environment, see Edward L. Schieffelin, "Evangelical Rhetoric and the Transformation of Traditional Culture in Papua New Guinea", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (Jan 1981): 150-156, p. 153.

¹⁰ A core part of Paul Albrecht's narrative in *From Mission to Church* (2002) of the shift at Hermannsburg, from the patriarchal regimes Carl Strehlow and, to a lesser extent, his father FW Albrecht established to an 'indigenization' of the mission regime in the 1970s and 1980s, was his realization of the extent to which Christianised Arrernte retained (usually discretely and hidden from the missionaries) what they saw as important parts of their traditional beliefs and cultural practices: see Albrecht, *From Mission to Church*.

attempted and disputed. Discourse battled with discourse. Praxis was brought to bear heavily on policy and principle. And JRB Love was in the thick of it all.

saving the 'half-caste' body

We have seen how, in 1941, Love supported, with the approval of the authorities, the removal of mixed-blood children or 'half-castes' from the 'sordid camps'.¹¹ In 1942, Love was again involved in attempts to 'rescue' such children. It is worthwhile examining one incident closely as revelatory of contemporary discourses of removal among missionaries and other colonial actors. James Lennon, a white man, had written to the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) requesting that his five children by M., an Aboriginal woman, be removed to Colebrook, although he was not sure where they were, adding he had given their ages to the previous superintendent, Mr. Taylor, at Ernabella.¹² The UAM forwarded the letter to the South Australian APB, saying they were prepared to take the children, although they qualified this by adding that 'if the oldest two become a disturbing influence due to their age, after a fair and honourable trial, we would ask that they be removed...'¹³ Secretary Penhall then wrote to Love in some quandary about this 'difficult' case:

I understand the family roams between Oodnadatta and Ernabella. I [also] understand M. is a very devoted mother and would probably feel it very keenly if she were separated from her children. If M. and family are at or near Ernabella at the moment, please take soundings as to whether M. would consider parting with her children. This is rather a difficult case, and as I have not come into contact with the family, I am rather at a loss to know whether or not it is desirable to remove these children from their present environment. As they are half-castes, it is not desirable that they should be attached permanently to the Ernabella Mission. At the same time, it might be difficult for them to be brought into contact with the children at the Quorn Home [Colebrook], who are more or less sophisticated.¹⁴

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

¹¹ See chapter 8, above.

¹² SA State Records, "GRC 52/1": No. 69 of 1943, Lennon to UAM, 7 Jul 1942.

¹³ Ibid., No. 69 of 1943, UAM to APB, 21 Jul 1942.

¹⁴ Ibid., APB (Penhall) to Love, 29 Jul 1942 [most correspondence to the SA APB was both directed to Penhall and answered by him].

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

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

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

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

¹⁵ Ibid., Love to Penhall, 16 Oct 1942.

¹⁶ It is instructive that Love seeks support from the opinion of the schoolteacher, RM Trudinger. As I've indicated elsewhere in this thesis, the two men clashed both personally and ideologically during their 'partnership' at Ernabella. Love appears to have been aligned with what might be called the Moderate wing in the Presbyterian Church, whereas Trudinger represented a more evangelical, fundamentalist wing. This difference translated into significant missiological differences in relation to educational and language policies at the Mission, as well as a profound divergence in their interpretation, in the mission contact zone, of the discourse of indigenous 'salvation'. These issues are discussed below, especially in chapter 11. For the moment, the temporary coalition of the two on the matter of separation of 'half-caste' children seems to indicate the general support for such policies in missionary circles in Australia, even in groups that disagreed about almost everything else.

sooner than would be the case with a normal white mother of a family. The two children...who were removed from here last year to [Colebrook] were seen by my wife recently when she was passing through Quorn. She found them happy, clean and they spoke very nicely to her when she met them on the road going home from school. Their departure from here caused little sorrow and they are undoubtedly far better off where they are now. Obviously James Lennon does not feel his girls will be happy and safe if left with their mother. I think I agree with his concern.¹⁷

Love's somewhat breathtaking (to us) presumptions, which appear to have been shared by Trudinger, do not appear to have convinced Penhall entirely. The APB Secretary reiterated to the missionary that 'this one requires special consideration, partly as I understand the elder children of this woman are very intelligent, and the mother herself is very good to them.'¹⁸ Penhall had already contacted the Oodnadatta police, asking them to make enquiries as to 'how the children are faring' and if the mother was willing to send them to a children's home. If necessary, the APB said it 'might bring M. to Port Augusta to be near her children.' It was conceded that M. was a 'very good mother' but 'the Board feels that there is no future for these half-caste children unless they are given some education.'¹⁹ A further letter to the Oodnadatta police passed on new information provided by a Mr. Holt of Evelyn Downs Station that M. was living there, 'under tribal laws with an aborigine named T'. Penhall again asked for advice from the police on removal of the children, and added:

I may state that Lennon deserted the family some time ago and, as far as I am concerned, the children will be removed only if it appears wise to do so, not because he has made the request.²⁰

After sending this letter, Penhall was contacted by Mr. Holt who advised the APB that the mother 'refuses to part' with her children:

¹⁷ Ibid., Love to Penhall, 16 Oct 1942. Love represented orthodox Presbyterian thinking in characterising the UAM children's institution at Colebrook as a 'fine Christian work', a judgement in which Duguid also would have concurred but which has generally not survived a post-*Bringing Them Home* analysis. In 1943, when a similar Presbyterian 'Home' was mooted, Love expressed caution: 'is this intended to oust or rival the UAM Colebrook Home at Quorn? If it is, I would not touch it...I cannot contemplate a possible attack on another branch of Christian work. My opinion of Colebrook is that it is a fine Christian work, being done well': Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1943": Love to Matthews, 3 Apr 1943.

¹⁸ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No. 69 of 1943, Penhall to Love, 24 Oct 1942.

¹⁹ Ibid., Penhall to OIC, Police Station, Oodnadatta, 17 Nov 1942.

²⁰ Ibid., Penhall to OIC, Police Station, Oodnadatta, 26 Feb 1943.

She is married to a blackfellow who is a very good stepfather and very kind to the kiddies. They have been with us for 2 years and are contented and well cared for. Both parents are working for us and the 2 eldest children are being trained for domestic work and intend teaching and training the others as they grow. J. Lennon does not contribute anything to their help.²¹

The police recommended leaving the children 'with the Holt family for the moment'. The police knew of Lennon and did not consider him 'to be a suitable person to make suggestions as to the welfare of aborigines.'²² Emboldened by the police recommendation, Penhall replied that 'I have always regarded Lennon's request ...as a piece of impertinence in view of his neglect of those children. Moreover, in my view, most of the children are now too old to be placed in a Home for Children, and they appear to be very well treated at Evelyn Downs Station.'²³ Another letter from Holt confirmed that the children were 'well and perfectly happy here...well supplied with an abundance of goat's milk and other wholesome foods and also well clothed and encouraged to better themselves to learning to read and write.' It ended with the poignant observation that 'M. is extremely fond of her kiddies and would [be] terribly upset if her children were forcibly taken from her.'²⁴ Soon after the receipt of this letter, the APB decided to take no action 'for the present'.

It is curious, and surprising, that in the case of M. and her five children, out of the missionary, the administrator, the policeman, and the pastoralist, it was the exemplary missionary who appears to take the least progressive, hardest-hearted line. It is probable that all these colonial actors supported removal policies as a general rule and it was only the particular circumstances of this case that militated against separation; we note Penhall's reiterated edict that 'half-caste' children should not be permanently attached to the mission. In the end, it was the ages of the children, the support of the pastoralist, and the fierce determination and love of the mother that 'saved' the children. This was one aspect of 'saving' to which JRB Love was not prepared to stretch his conception of 'salvation'. Indeed, in this respect, his conception was precisely the obverse.

²¹ Ibid., GA Holt to Penhall, 28 Feb 1943.

²² Ibid., OIC, Police Station, Oodnadatta to Penhall, 3 Mar 1943.

²³ Ibid., Penhall to OIC, Police Station, Oodnadatta, 15 Mar 1943.

²⁴ Ibid., GA Holt to Penhall, 7 Apr 1943.

For Love, to 'save' the half-caste body was to 'rescue' it, 'uplift' it from the 'sordid blacks' camps' and re-form it among the white and educated exemplars of civilization. From our perspective, sixty years on, to imagine indigenous grief as less than 'civilized' grief, and to believe a photograph could in any way adequately replace a son or daughter appear as serious failures of sense and sensibility from someone who was attempting to deal wisely with the Aborigines. We should note, however, that Love's blind spot was shared by a mission, a church and a nation anxiously obsessed about whiteness, blood and race.²⁵

saving the female body

Another 'rescue' surfaces from this period of Ernabella history, another narrative revelatory of congealing and contesting discourses: a female body is 'rescued' by the missionaries from the supposed clutches of a white man, not a 'civilized' white man but a mailman and shearer, approximate to the 'low white' whom the missionaries constantly feared would 'contaminate' their Aborigines. In June 1943, the Ernabella schoolteacher, RM Trudinger, was assigned by the APB to 'rescue' a young Aboriginal girl N. who it seems to have been assumed by almost everyone involved had been 'abducted' by a Mr. Quinn from her family at Ernabella. Love had contracted Quinn to bring the mail and do some shearing at the mission station. The girl left in his truck. This was now an exercise, note, not in removing the child, a full-blood Aborigine, but recovering her and bringing her back to her home, a sort of reverse removal. During her 'abduction', the young girl had apparently 'smuggled out' a letter written in her native language that found its way to her schoolteacher, who was in Adelaide at the time. The letter indicated that she had been 'taken' with a 'tribal elder sister' to Cooper Pedy and was 'living in a house, eating and drinking with whites' utensils, and sleeping in a bed.' According to Trudinger's report, this 'indicated a very possible undesirable intimacy with whites in that place.'²⁶ The schoolteacher set out on what he called in his subsequent report to the APB 'a week's journey to Cooper

²⁵ Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*; see also Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997).

²⁶ Ibid., 'Report on a week's journey to Cooper Pedy': (Trudinger).

Pedy and beyond, for a young Pitjantjatjara girl'.²⁷ He had in his pocket a letter from the Secretary of the APB, Penhall, formally directing Quinn to hand N over to Trudinger. Failure to do so would result in 'appropriate action [undertaken] for the recovery of the child.' Quinn was advised that 'removal' of the girl 'should not have been undertaken without the permission of the Aboriginal Protection Board'.²⁸

Anxiety and heightened fantasies about the girl's assumed predicament led Trudinger, armed with the APB's letter, to travel 'incognito and under my second name' in search of her to Cooper Pedy. He eventually arrived at the place to where the child had been 'abducted'. The facts turned out somewhat at variance with the fevered representations: the mailman had been travelling to Ernabella with his Aboriginal assistants, P. and his wife T. It was T. who had persuaded her younger tribal sister, against Quinn's wishes, to come with them to Cooper Pedy. The child was perfectly well and had not been mistreated in any way. The mailman himself had 'delivered' the letter to someone who had forwarded it to Ernabella, and initiated the 'incident'.²⁹ Thus, Trudinger 'secured' N.'s 'release', although it was in fact the sister 'who was very unwilling to part with the girl and it was only after forcible action on the part of Quinn that we eventually wrested N. from [her] grip and placed her safely in the cabin of the truck'.³⁰ On her 'safe return' to Adelaide, and later to Ernabella, letters of thanks were passed around, from the APB to Trudinger and to Duguid, and from Duguid to Penhall and the APB.³¹ An official letter was also sent to Quinn from Penhall advising him that 'my Board regards your conduct in agreeing to [the] removal as extremely foolish and that under no circumstances must you do such a thing again.' Quinn's attention was drawn to Section 34A of the Aborigines Act, the recent prohibition

²⁷ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 16 of 1943, 'Report on a week's journey to Cooper Pedy and beyond, for a young Pitjantjatjara girl': (Trudinger), n.d.

²⁸ Ibid., Penhall to Quinn, 21 Jun 1943.

²⁹ The letter became quite famous in Ernabella missionary folklore since it suddenly displayed to the Adelaide world and beyond the unexpected ability of a thirteen-year-old Aboriginal Pitjantjatjara girl to be able to write and communicate effectively in her own language.

³⁰ Ibid., 'Report on a week's journey to Cooper Pedy'.

³¹ Ibid., see letters Penhall to Trudinger, 15 Jul 1943; Penhall to Duguid 14 Jul 1943; Duguid to Penhall/APB, 15 Jul 1943 (on behalf of Board of Missions).

on 'habitual consorting with' or 'carnal knowledge of' an Aboriginal female.³²

This 'incident' reveals something of the near hysteria that was generated in missionary circles when what were regarded as the riff-raff of white settlerhood, the low whites, encountered Aboriginal women. It is apparent that these sorts of situations invited an inflated rhetoric of 'rescue' not dissimilar to that of reverse 'rescues', of mixed-blood children from their Aboriginal mothers and the 'sordid camps'; extraordinary measures are taken, disguises assumed, names changed, letters of authority are carried as weapons – all measures that demonstrated missionary fixations with the moral universe of the indigenous female.³³

The representation of the 'rescue of the young girl' affair in the Ernabella missionary historiography is revealing. N.'s narrative was retold and updated in 1952 in a Presbyterian Board of Missions pamphlet.³⁴ Her narrative remained fixed in terms of 'rescue' rhetoric but it was now 'rescue' from the 'pre-mission', primitive past represented by her 'tribal sister'. Ernabella Mission now represented, in the form of the photographed N., the modernized young Aboriginal 'body', dressed, healthy, happy, literate, intelligent, 'self-respecting and respected' because, according to Duguid's contribution to the pamphlet, her language and culture was in turn 'respected' by the missionaries.³⁵

There was an interesting sequel to this affair.³⁶ We note Love's absence from this particular narrative. In fact, the white man at the center of the 'abduction', Quinn, later returned to Ernabella, showed the Board's letter to Love, apparently taking exception to the 'aspersions' contained in it. Love then wrote acerbically to the APB, supporting Quinn, suggesting Trudinger should apologize to him (Quinn) 'if he had made any statements reflecting...on the personal character of Mr. Quinn'. He also complained to the APB that he had not been consulted in

³² Ibid., Penhall to Quinn, 30 Jul 1943.

³³ Tony Scanlon, "'Pure and Clean and True to Christ': Black Women and White Missionaries in the North," *Hecate* 12 (1986): 83-105.

³⁴ Presbyterian Board of Missions, "From Desert to School: the Story of an Aboriginal Girl", in *Ara Irititja Archives* (Adelaide, 1952), 12pp.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

³⁶ There may still be other 'sequels' to the story of the 'rescued girl', even after the time that has elapsed. The whole story may not yet have been told.

the matter.³⁷ Penhall replied diplomatically, saying there was no intention to cast aspersions on Quinn, and he defended his letter to him, explaining ingenuously that the 'advice' to Quinn had been in the nature of a 'friendly indication' of a 'protective provision in the law for native women in general'. He apologised for not communicating with the 'highly regarded' superintendent, as 'the matter had seemed so urgent'.³⁸ The urgency built into the psychologies of these 'rescues' of the half-caste body and the female body may be taken as a significant marker of missionary anxieties about the indigenous body.

Tony Scanlon has argued that while mission sites may have provided a sanctuary for indigenous females from 'low whites', and from what missionaries saw as the 'innate immorality' of these women themselves, this situation tended to circumvent tribal marriage arrangements upsetting traditional tribal equilibrium.³⁹ While this may have been true on some or most mission sites, Duguid and Love were very careful not to overturn tribal law and custom at Ernabella, although along with most Europeans they disapproved of polygamy and the betrothal of young girls to older men. Love put down his views in an exchange of letters with the WA Commissioner of Native Affairs Bray in 1944. Bray wrote to Love as a respected former missionary in Western Australia wanting advice on the 'advisability of Christian marriages in contravention of tribal custom'.⁴⁰ In his response, Love emphasized two points: one, the European system of marriage, he said, does not, and must not, apply to the Australian Aborigines; and, two, the main principles of the tribal marriage must not be broken:

Marriages within the same moiety were always forbidden and must, on every mission or any other station controlled by white people, remain forbidden. Where numbers are in decline, the only solution is to modify the tribal system (but keeping within the rule of no marriage within the moiety) and marriage with the consent of the main men of tribe or to find wives or husbands from other tribes.⁴¹

³⁷ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 16 of 1943, Love to Penhall, 6 Sep 1943.

³⁸ Ibid., No 16 of 1943, Penhall to Love, 15 Sep 1943.

³⁹ Scanlon, "Pure and Clean and True to Christ", pp. 89-90.

⁴⁰ Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1944": Bray to Love, 18 Sep 1944.

⁴¹ Ibid., Love to Bray, 12 Oct 1944.

As no conversions to Christianity occurred at Ernabella during JRB Love's regime, we are not sure whether Love would have continued to follow this policy in praxis on the mission site when put under pressure. He did make an exception to his policy of non-interference in tribal custom: 'unless the application of the custom is definitely harmful to a man or woman concerned', and went on to observe that 'in case of marriage, tribal custom is not infrequently harmful to the woman.'⁴² Despite these reservations, we have no record of Love interfering with traditional arrangements and relationships at Ernabella, apart from the removal of half-caste children from the 'sordid camps'. Not for Love the spectacular and fervent 'rescues' of 'poor native women' that occurred on other mission sites across Australia.⁴³

how merciful and loving God is

At Hermannsburg, the mission regime was more interventionist in traditional arrangements. In 1948, Albrecht sought advice from his Chairman Reidel regarding a 'difficult' case of a man, A., who had left his first wife, 'taken another', had a child with her, and now wanted to come back to the congregation:

He had tried to become reconciled to his first wife, but she avoided him and ran away to another place. What is one to do in a case like this? Is he to return to his first wife, and leave this one with the child? Or is it sufficient if he becomes reconciled to her and then continues to live with the one he has now? I have given him no reply....⁴⁴

Albrecht seems to have had doubts and was moved by the man's predicament but Reidel was adamant: the guiding rule was that marriage is indissoluble by man, and only God can dissolve it by death.⁴⁵ In this case, where the man's first wife did not wish to be reconciled to him, he had to leave his second wife (and child) and live alone until the first wife died. Despite 'feeling sorry' for him, Albrecht informed him of this ruling. The Arrernte man listened quietly, and

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ See, for example, FX Gsell, *The Bishop with 150 Wives: Fifty Years as a Missionary* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1955).

⁴⁴ Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Reidel, 21 Mar 1948.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Reidel to Albrecht, 22 Apr 1948.

then provided a marvellous riposte: 'He pointed out how merciful and loving God is, and left.'⁴⁶ Hospitality sometimes consisted of gently throwing the sermon back in the pastor's face.

an inglorious brawl

Back at Ernabella, JRB Love's 'hospitality' was complex, and occasionally hostile. While non-interventionist in matters of custom, at other times, in the interests of order and discipline, and the imposition of a missionary 'pastorale' on the local indigenous people, Love was not slow to intervene. A curious incident occurred at Ernabella in August 1942 after Love had been concerned about what he called 'sophisticated natives' from Northern Territory stations selling dog scalps at Ernabella at the South Australian value of 12s 6d in contrast to 7s 6d in the Northern Territory. Entrepreneurship from primitive blacks made him uncomfortable. Love was also convinced that 'men of this sort' had introduced swearing and gambling into the camps of 'our mission people'. The tension generated by this contaminating of the primitive indigenous body and mind (ironically by other indigenous bodies albeit 'spoilt' by contact with 'low whites') led to trouble. Love asked from where a particular native man had come. He described what followed to Duguid:

He replied with abuse, I told him to take his scalps away and go. He struck me in the face and laid open my cheek. I hit him. A melee ensued. Mr. Ward came to my help. I found myself held by several men...After a few minutes this unseemly and inglorious brawl died down, without serious consequences to anyone (except that I carry a mark that will take some time to heal). I told all the men to take their scalps away, as I would not take any. At intervals during the day I had depositions from several men, asking me to sell them stores for their scalps, as they were good men. I replied that one bad man could make things bad for all. I would take no scalps.⁴⁷

indignation and impertinence within the pastorale

What do we make of this episode? Love was an official Receiver of Dog Scalps and was obviously not averse to using his powers, such as excluding certain traders or shutting up shop, to advantage. He did so on other occasions; for

⁴⁶ Ibid., Albrecht to Reidel, 24 Jul 1948.

⁴⁷ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 32 of 1942, (copy) Love to Duguid, 1 Sep 1942.

example, about two months after this episode, some more trouble occurred:

Yesterday I refused to issue any stores for sale, as some of the people, against instruction, had pulled up saltbush in front of the station to make windbreaks. Much indignation and some impertinence. Old people and workers got their Saturday issue, then the store closed.⁴⁸

Notice the spirited indigenous reaction here: the missionary exercises power but, 'impertinently', it is resisted by (almost) equal combatants. The flow in the capillaries of power do not run one way. Even the 'inglorious brawl' seems to have ended in something like a draw. A battle was being fought in the contact zone for the bodies and minds (and souls) of the natives but it was also a battle of wits. Wit was ever-present on the mission site. Love noted once that he was always on the lookout for 'fake' scalps since a native had tried to pass one off from the back skin of a dingo already handed in: 'these natives of the Musgraves are not without cunning or roguery.'⁴⁹ Or sly (in)civility, we might say.

disrupting the pastorate

Discipline and surveillance were deemed necessary on this site, as on other colonial sites. The politics of hospitality was qualified; it did not preclude watching the indigenous body carefully and attempting to read the indigenous mind for signs of unruly or lawless behaviour threatening the 'pastorate' of the mission site. The APB in its annual reports to the South Australian Parliament was keen to publicise its vision of this 'pastorate':

Ernabella Mission 1942: The superintendent, the Rev JRB Love, reports that the largest number of aborigines counted at the Station on any day during the year was 350. 2 patrols by camel team were undertaken into the adjacent Reserves, and the country was found to be in good condition, food was plentiful, and the health of the people very good...Aborigines are employed as shepherds at Ernabella, each flock being in charge of a married couple. Mr. Trudinger is in charge of the Mission School, and is rendering excellent service. The roll strength [of the School is] 140 but attendance varies between 20 and 70. This is due to children going with their parents on hunting and other tribal excursions...Fruit and vegetables are grown to meet local needs...The conduct of the natives is stated to be very good.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Love, "Logbook": 25 Oct 1942.

⁴⁹ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 49 of 1942, Love's Report for Ernabella for year ended 30 Jun 1942.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Report of APB for year ending 30 Jun 1942.

As usual, life was more complicated than the representations of reports. A missionary's wife in 1942 reports boys 'stealing' carrots from the garden. Love asks some women to bring them to him; they say they cannot do so. Love refuses them supper. Soon the boys are sent. 'I gave them a few smacks with a piece of board, then issued a meal to the women who missed yesterday afternoon.' The same day, two young men had chased an emu behind the stockyards with some mission horse and bridles. Again Love asks for them to come to him, again he is refused. 'I said that all the men could bring them both before the store opened on Saturday. The two soon afterwards came.' Love fines them and hopes 'it will prove a lesson in discipline' although he notes: 'it did not seem to worry them much.'⁵¹ The resistance of the Ernabella Aborigines appears carefully calibrated and calculated; when it is 'cowed', it is only because they are getting something for it. The momentary dropping of resistance is perhaps itself a form of 'foraging' for something valuable.⁵²

Love attempted to involve the senior men of the Pitjantjatjara in discipline.⁵³ In July 1943, after three initiates kill a sheep, Love persuaded the fathers that they must punish the boys, saying that he did not wish to call the police in. The initiates were duly delivered:

I called all men to a meeting in the bed of the creek, away from the women, who are not allowed to be near the initiates, and told the assembled men what had happened, and that it rested with them to punish the boys. They agreed, and said it was the duty of the kuta to administer punishment...Each boy in turn received half a dozen hits across the backside from a kuta.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Love, "Logbook": 12 Nov 1942.

⁵² On 'foraging' see Judy Birmingham, "Resistance, creolization or optimal foraging at Killalpaninna Mission, South Australia" in *The Archaeology of Difference: Negotiating cross-cultural engagements in Oceania*, ed. Robin Torrence and Anne Clarke (London: Routledge, 2000), 360-405.

⁵³ It is important to note again the rapport that both Love and Albrecht established with the senior men or elders of their respective missions (see n. 14, chapter 3, above). Perhaps the bond was the compatibility of patriarchal worldviews, as some might suggest. Possibly gender and age were factors. From the perspective of this study, these relationships could be said to epitomise the politics of hospitality, although there were times, as below, when these exemplary missionaries were not able to carry the elders with them, or the Other staked out the ground of their own agency and autonomy.

⁵⁴ Love, "Logbook": 14 Jul 1943. *Kuta* is defined in Goddard as 'a senior brother or close male cousin. Your own older brother or the cousin whose father is the older brother of your father': Goddard, *Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English Dictionary*.

Tensions existed on the mission site despite the vision of the pastorate and qualified the politics of hospitality. During 1943, after Love had been at Ernabella for over two years, he felt, increasingly, the threat of violence. He confided to the Logbook: 'Ernabella has the unpleasant possibility of violence breaking out any day such as I never experienced in 25 years on the tropical north coast.'⁵⁵ But Love was always involved in the project of restoring the pastorate: after a fist was raised to another missionary, Love mused:

We cannot use violence in our work; we shall have to work quietly and carefully; some of these men are inclined to be insolent. In time I believe the mission attitude will win the respect and obedience of the men, in a better way than violent dealing could do.⁵⁶

across the creek

The project of restoration was, however, an unstable one. On occasion, the exemplary missionary felt constrained to abandon the 'pastorate' and call on the colonial constabulary. After a misdemeanour, when the garden was 'robbed', Love suspended Christmas celebrations for 1943. A week later, the store was broken into. Love gathered the men and told them the police would be called. The young men responsible for the break-in were named but were protected as initiates. Love reacted like an angry parent or schoolmaster:

The men of the tribe have them under full control and have chosen to side with the thieves against the mission; therefore I have taken the view that it would be mere foolishness to issue gifts to the community at present. I plan to hold a day for sports and gifts later when the lesson of missing Christmas has reached the people...⁵⁷

Love contacted the Oodnadatta police, advising them of the break-in 'by A. and three others'. He suggested that it might be difficult to 'effect an arrest as A. is intelligent and cunning...[Nevertheless] I ask for his arrest if possible.'⁵⁸

On 17 January 1944, the people assembled for a day of sports and Christmas

⁵⁵ Love, "Logbook": 14 Jul 1943.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1 Jan 1944.

⁵⁸ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 24 of 1944, Love to OIC, Oodnadatta Police, 6 Jan 1944.

gifts, a day, said Love, 'delayed on account of stealing'.⁵⁹ As the people assembled, A. appeared and an instructive drama ensued. Immediately, Love told A. to go 'to the other side of the creek.' The missionary instinctively wishes to expel the offender from the mission compound, from 'his home', which, as he knew, was also the 'home of the Other'. The politics of hospitality were breaking down. As instinctive probably was the indigenous reply, according to Love's report that evening in the Logbook: 'A. retorted that he would go where he liked. Slowly he walked as far as the corner of the fence and stood there.' A hurried consultation of the white staff took place. One can imagine the discussion: what to do with this recalcitrant body? They agreed to try to chain A. to a tree and hold him there until police could be summoned. Love recounted the events:

We took a [...] chain and moved towards A. He withdrew, took off his hat, shirt and trousers and peeled off and picked up a handful of spears and spear-thrower. As we approached he moved across the creek, then dropped his weapons and [...] his clothes and ran away. At the sheep yard he [pulled?] out two sticks and threw them. I called on all the men to hold him. None would do so. A. threw several stones and ran away. We then returned to the homestead, dismissed the people and I am waiting to get a telegram to Oodnadatta police, asking for the arrest of A.⁶⁰

This is a haunting episode, poignantly metaphoric of some of the dealings between the missionaries and 'their' Aborigines. It is full of noncomprehension, difference, hostility, hurt, as Love orders A. 'to the other side of the creek', across the *karu*, back to the other world, the Other's World. We see A's immediate reaction: he removes his 'white', 'civilized' accoutrements, the shirt, hat, trousers, so apparently desired by indigenous bodies, and picks up the traditional weapons of indigenous power and aggression, the spears and spear-thrower (woomera), and moves across the creek, toward the 'sordid camps', away from the liminal zone where missionary and native had met in some sort of hospitality. We note, too, the response of the 'men' of the tribe: in that moment of response, of *non-response*, they too move across the *karu* and leave the isolated, anxious missionaries with no apparent recourse but to 'call on their own men' now

⁵⁹ Love came in for some criticism from colleagues (including Trudinger) for 'giving in' and holding the Christmas celebrations albeit delayed.

⁶⁰ Love, "Logbook": 17 Jan 1944. Note the Superintendent's Logbook was handwritten, and while it has been transcribed, some words are illegible, accounting for the omissions and queries.

for assistance. So the telegram to the police: the police come and A is arrested.⁶¹ The pastorate is restored. Or is it?

fixing up the boys

When to call in the police? FW Albrecht had written about this problem to Duguid in 1935 after an incident involving the notorious Constable William McKinnon and the 'hiding' of two boys at Hermannsburg that had prompted an official inquiry.⁶² Albrecht was not sure if he would have called on McKinnon to 'fix up these two boys' (Albrecht had been away from the mission at the time) but admitted that he would have handed them over if the policeman had been available:

However, during the time I have been in charge of this place I have neither sent anyone to jail nor handed them over to the police for punishment.. I always managed to straighten these things up with the advice and aid of the old men at the place, and there has never been a need to touch anyone myself or call on other members of the staff to do so.⁶³

Yet the Lutheran missionary conceded that 'although it is very seldom a Native receives corporal punishment here', he could not deny that 'it has some effect on the community life here, and a very beneficial one at that':

If anyone, even from the Government quarters, comes along, I shall make no secret of this my opinion, even if severe criticism should follow from people who don't know anything about Natives.⁶⁴

a police matter

Yet the 'two sides' of the colonial relationship were not always as neatly defined as they were in these incidents. Nicholas Thomas has pointed out that colonial discourse was a fractured phenomenon of a 'dispersed and conflicted character'.⁶⁵ Love also had an ambivalent relationship with the police. While

⁶¹ Ibid., 21 Jan 1944.

⁶² Australian Archives CRS F1 Item 1938/636, 4: JB Cleland, VJ White and JH Sexton, 'Report of the Board of Inquiry', cited in Hill, *Broken Song*, p. 234. Hill writes of this incident, and another more serious one involving the killing of an Aboriginal man at Ayers Rock, since TGH Strehlow, his subject, was the translator for the Cleland Inquiry into the two 'incidents': see *Broken Song*, 'Farce of an Inquiry', pp. 231-235.

⁶³ Albrecht, "Burns-Albrecht Collection": Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 24 Apr 1935.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Albrecht to Duguid (copy), 24 Apr 1935.

⁶⁵ See Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*, especially Thomas's Introduction.

occasionally willing to 'call for the police', he was at other times quite hostile to police action when it appeared unjust. But what was just or unjust was problematical. Another episode is worth examining. In June 1943, Penhall asked Love ('in your capacity as Protector of Aborigines for that area') to investigate a report that Oodnadatta police had used 'unnecessary force' in removing natives from a neighbouring station.⁶⁶ Love reported that some Aborigines had apparently been hit with whips and chained. The proprietor of the station had claimed 'the Natives' had kept his cattle from coming to water at his wells. Love concluded that the proprietor was entitled to police assistance in protection of his cattle, although he questioned the police methods:

Is the use of physical force ever justifiable in dealing with uncivilized aborigines? Two years ago to this question I should have given and indignant No! Now, after two years of experience in Central Australia, I am not so sure. I am compelled to admit that the aborigines in this part of Australia can quickly show signs of becoming 'cheeky'. I will not advocate the use of violence; yet possibly a summary treatment might prevent the development of a position that might become disastrous to black and white. The main point is: what course is most likely to benefit the aborigine? In the present case, I am of the opinion that further action is not likely to benefit the Aborigines.⁶⁷

The APB files contain the police reports on this matter. In his report to his inspector, the police officer involved, MC Connell, denied whipping the natives but said he had threatened to do so if they came back to the station. He had used force on only 'particularly cheeky one'. Marks observed on Aboriginal bodies were 'probably' made in the 'process' of their running through the scrub in the attempt to evade police. He admitted to chaining two Aborigines at Kenmore Park but had subsequently released them:

I know Mr Love does not approve of chaining aborigines to hold them in custody, as he has informed me that even though an aborigine had committed a murder of a white person he would not chain him up, but would allow him his freedom as it was the job of a policeman to apprehend murderers and not his.⁶⁸

Connell noted that the station proprietor ran ten thousand cattle, which were so

⁶⁶ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 90 of 1943, Penhall to Love, 21 Jun 1943. The station was Kenmore Park.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Love to Penhall, 13 Jul 1943.

⁶⁸ Ibid., copy of police report, MC Connell to Inspector Bourke, Port Augusta, 8 Aug 1943.

‘terrified by the aborigines’ that they would not drink at the wells. The cattle stations were ‘developing the country’ and would ‘lose money’ if ‘this sort of situation’ were allowed to continue.

he resented my intrusion

It was the constable’s private view that it was ‘healthier’ for the ‘average aborigine’ to be left to hunt their own food than ‘congregated in large numbers’ on the mission. He noted a visit he had made to Ernabella in November of the previous year when over two hundred Aborigines had been camped in ‘filthy conditions’ with ‘half-starved dogs everywhere’. When he had suggested to Love that it was better to keep the Aborigines in the Reserve than in ‘these insanitary conditions’, the missionary had ‘strongly resented my intrusion’.⁶⁹ The police officer, claiming that he had detected possible violence in the air (‘one or two aborigines told me: ‘Missionary soon be finished’’), advocated ‘firm measures’ to control the natives, lest they ‘get cheeky’ and ‘out of control’. He concluded, in the manner of police reports into police action, that ‘my dealings with the aborigines at Kenmore Park was in the best interests of all.’⁷⁰

In light of the police denials and Love’s opinion that further action was not likely to benefit the natives, Penhall recommended the APB take no further action. However, the combative Duguid, still on the Board, entered the fray. Commenting on the matter to other members of the APB, Duguid noted that ‘MC Connell has never liked Ernabella and is the most anti-missionary MC Ernabella has had to deal with.’⁷¹ He called the policeman’s story into question, characterized his threat to whip the natives as ‘illegal’, and pointed out that under the Pastoral Acts Aborigines possessed the legal right to hunt game on pastoral leases. He was particularly contemptuous of the constable’s arguments regarding the disruption by the Aborigines to the efficient running of the station: ‘against that we have the coming of the station causing the efficient dislocation of a tribe of about 700 natives.’ He dismissed the notion of station owners ‘developing the country’ for the national benefit: ‘These station owners are interested in nothing

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., comments by Duguid to APB, n.d. (but probably between 20 Aug 1943 and 3 Sep 1943).

but their own welfare and are heedless of the result to aborigines'.⁷² On Duguid's recommendations, the APB thanked the police for their report but noted the legal rights of Aborigines on pastoral leases and advised that the Board could not approve of threats to whip natives. The station proprietor was also advised of the relevant part of the Pastoral Act.⁷³

a proper footing between blacks and whites

In the wake of the above affair, Love was supplied with a copy of the police criticisms of him.⁷⁴ These were, specifically, that no rations had been available at the mission, and Love had advised the natives 'to go bush' and look for food; the 'filthy' condition of the native camp at Ernabella; the alleged assault by a native on Love, and the subsequent closing of the store as a punishment; and Love's attitude towards the chaining of Aborigines. Love's spirited reply contained a denial that he had told the natives to go bush: 'this is their normal procedure'.⁷⁵ He insisted that the Ernabella Aborigines did not rely on rations (through scalps) for subsistence: 'they buy when they have scalps to sell and Ernabella has rations to supply.' These arguments over rationing were preshadowing and rehearsing the more serious debates over 'underfeeding' that ensued over the following two years.⁷⁶ At the moment Love was penning this letter to the APB, the two female members of the Board who in part initiated these debates, Constance Ternent Cooke and AM Johnston, were at the Mission site, keenly scrutinizing the exemplary missionary at work. Love continued his

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ The relevant section of the SA Pastoral Act dealing with the rights of natives as to game and water read in part: 'And reserving to aboriginal inhabitants of the said State and their descendants during the continuance of this lease full and free rights of access ingress egress and regress into upon and over the said lands and every part thereof, except such parts as improvements have been erected upon. And in and to the springs and surface waters thereon, and to make and erect such wurlies and other dwellings as the said aboriginal natives have been heretofore accustomed to make and erect, and to take and use for food birds and animals...in such manner as they would have been entitled to do if this lease had not been made': quoted in *ibid.*, Penhall to Frazer, 23 Sep 1943. Similar provisions were enacted in the Pastoral Acts of the other Australian States but were observed more in the breach than in the observance: see Henry Reynolds, *The law of the land*, 2nd ed. (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1992), pp. 150-153; also see Reynolds, "Native Title and Historical Tradition" in *In the Age of Mabo: History, Aborigines and Australia*, ed. Bain Attwood (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 17-34. See also now the landmark case of *Wik*, which dealt with Aboriginal rights (native title) on pastoral leases.

⁷⁴ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 90 of 1943, reference to APB Minute Book Folio 226. See also *ibid.*: Penhall to Love, 28 Sep 1943.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Love to Penhall, 7 Oct 1943.

⁷⁶ See chapter 10, below.

defence: attributing much of the police comment, as had Duguid, to 'jealousy' over the large Ernabella blocks 'being held as an Aboriginal Mission', he reiterated his strongly held view that:

the Musgrave Ranges should be retained in perpetuity as a home for the aborigines. The three [Ernabella] blocks would not support more than 20 whites, yet now they support about 300 blacks. Surely Australia owes 300 aborigines their own territory, which they can hold without hindering the progress of Australia.⁷⁷

Love thought the comments on the 'filthy conditions' of the camp 'rather exaggerated' but observed that he was not 'championing the sanitary habits of these Aborigines': he felt that 'in time, they will stay in one site and observe sanitary rules.' In relation to the question of the chaining of Aborigines, Love called this method 'the most humane and only feasible method of restraining them'.⁷⁸ He noted tartly that 'it is the job of the police to apprehend murderers', but adding that 'the citizen will do what he can to assist.' While Love admitted the 'assault' on him, he expressed the hope that 'although these are new experiences to me, after so many years of work among the aborigines, yet the Mission methods will succeed in establishing a proper footing between blacks and whites.'⁷⁹ JRB Love did not here elaborate on the precise nature of that 'proper footing'.

Charles Duguid, however, was not completely convinced by Love's defiant defence. He was sufficiently disconcerted by the criticisms made of 'his' Mission and its head that he recommended to the APB that 'the administrative head of the Aborigines Department and a representative of the APB should without delay visit Ernabella and report to the Board.'⁸⁰ The Board did not follow this

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ We have already seen that he and other missionaries at Ernabella considered using them in the above case of A.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., comments and recommendations of Duguid to APB, n.d. (but probably between 20 Aug 1943 and 3 Sep 1943). It is somewhat curious that Duguid seems unaware that Ternent Cooke and Johnston of the Board were planning a visit to Ernabella. I am assuming that those visits were already under consideration. It is possible, but unlikely, I think, that the visits were planned after Duguid's recommendation. It also may be that the APB did not adopt Duguid's recommendation of sending the administrative head of the Aborigines Department and an APB member to Ernabella because of the planned visits (if they had been planned at this

recommendation.⁸¹ As it happened, Love in fact was 'investigated', more or less inadvertently, by Ternent Cooke and Johnston. Their reports to the APB following their visit to Ernabella generated the 'underfeeding and underpaying' controversy that seems to have finally ruptured the Duguid-Love partnership which had guided the Mission from its early imagining and the battles with the Flynn forces through to its successful establishment.⁸²

black and white law

Love's attitudes to the complex issue of the interplay of black and white law were equivocal. He appeared willing occasionally to privilege indigenous justice over white law but at other times supported the hegemony of 'the white man's law'. In October 1942, for example, he sent a report to the APB about the death of a native at Ernabella, indicating that he thought the man had died as a result of a 'tribal killing', following a blow on the neck and a superficial spear wound in the shoulder. Love doubted whether the injuries the man received had directly killed him: 'rather do I think he was struck, given to understand that he must die, and accepted the sentence'.⁸³ While he did not believe 'in the present uncivilised state of these people' that police action would be 'useful', he thought that some police visibility at Ernabella 'might have a good effect, in showing the people that they are under the eye of the white man's law'.⁸⁴

Late in 1944, another man P. was speared at the Mission site 'after sexual misconduct'. His wounds alarmed the staff and he was taken by mission truck to Kulgera to meet a plane for Alice Springs. A few days later, Love was informed by wireless that P. had died in hospital. Love noted in his Logbook:

A deputation of men came to me tonight, asking if policeman is coming out to take men, for death of P. I said, No. The elders had justly speared him for wrongdoing, and I would write a letter to Adelaide, telling Mr. Penhall the circumstances.⁸⁵

stage). However, I think it more probable that the APB was seeking to shield the respected Love from any perception that he was under official scrutiny.

⁸¹ See reference in *ibid.*, No 90 of 1943 to Minute Book Folio 226 (3 Sep 1943).

⁸² See chapters 10 and 11, below.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, No 32 of 1942, report by Penhall, 28 Oct 1942, quoting Love.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Love to Penhall, 1 Oct 1942.

⁸⁵ Love, "Logbook": 27 Dec 1944.

Love duly communicated to Penhall his view that it was a 'tribal matter'.⁸⁶ Penhall agreed, saying that in the circumstances it was 'almost impossible to prove intention to murder'. He reported in these terms to the full Board, which in turn supported the Love/Penhall position.⁸⁷ The police, however, got wind of the case and Penhall was forced to write to Inspector Bourke at Port Augusta defending the APB's decision to take no action in the matter:

As the incident was considered to be the usual tribal proceeding following the breaking of a tribal law, my Board felt that it was unnecessary to take any further action in the case, especially in the apparent absence of any intention to seriously harm the deceased. It would appear his death was due to an infection, and the delay in getting him to hospital.⁸⁸

In his response, the Inspector, after giving the Secretary of the APB a brief lesson in the law of homicide and manslaughter, and suggesting that the decision not to prosecute ought to have come from the Attorney General's Department, argued against the limited recognition of indigenous justice that the APB, and Love, were proposing:

I can only regard it as my duty to treat the whole matter from the standard of the white man's law and disregard tribal customs, which, in my opinion, if allowed to predominate would be a serious thing for the security of cattlemen, pastoralists and bushmen who by virtue of their calling in the bushlands where the natives predominate would be in constant peril.⁸⁹

Diplomatically, Penhall advised Bourke that he welcomed a police investigation and assured him that if the police decided to prosecute, he was sure Love would cooperate and 'render all assistance'.⁹⁰ Two months later, Love reported that F., one of the men who had initially wounded P., had been arrested and had admitted spearing P. Love, as a Justice of the Peace, had hastily convened a court at Ernabella. He reported on the matter to Matthews (well after the event):

A court was constituted here, at which I found F. guilty of maliciously wounding P and remanded him to Port Augusta for sentence. I

⁸⁶ SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 11 of 1945, Love to Penhall, 1 Jan 1945.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Penhall to Love, 11 Jan 1945; also APB agreement, 31 Jan 1945.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Penhall to Bourke, 12 Feb 1945.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Bourke to Penhall, 15 Feb 1945.

⁹⁰ Ibid., Penhall to Bourke, 19 Feb 1945.

communicated with the APB. Penhall agreed to use his influence to have this case treated as one dealing with tribal law. I think I rightly interpret the mind of the Board if I say that we do not wish to break down the administration of tribal law; but the Aborigines cannot be allowed to kill. In this case, death was not intended, but supervened, and the facts should be taken into consideration.⁹¹

The APB in fact did lodge an application with the Crown Law authorities to the effect that the offence be regarded as 'the outcome of tribal misdemeanour and consequent punishment' and no further action ought to follow.⁹² However, the matter proceeded to court, where Penhall gave evidence on behalf of the defendant. F. was found guilty of malicious wounding. He was only sentenced to seven days imprisonment as he had already been in custody for ninety-nine days.⁹³

How then do we assess JRB Love's discourse on law and the Aborigines, as well as on the broader matters of 'control' of the indigenous body? We note, as in other parts of his thinking on indigenous Australians, an independent, progressivist ideology sat side by side with a considerably more conservative ideology. It was Love's tendency to proclaim a general policy of non-interference with indigenous matters, whether in law, or morals, or marriage arrangements, and then to detail significant qualifications to that policy. It should probably not surprise us that his attitudes in the sensitive area of European law/traditional law were in some regards similarly ambivalent and cautionary. It can be argued that the complexities of this fundamental matter still remain and continue, nearly seventy years after Love's struggles with them on the mission site, to prevent a resolution or the achievement of a satisfactory balance. We can say,

⁹¹ Presbyterian Church of Australia, "BM correspondence: ML MSS 1893/Folder 4/1945": Love to Matthews, 9 Jun 1945.

⁹² SA State Records, "GRG 52/1": No 11 of 1945, Penhall to Love, 26 April 1945.

⁹³ Ibid., report of the case in unidentified newspaper in APB files. Interestingly, there were attempts made after this case to integrate the legal systems. In 1945, JB Cleland, Chairman of the APB, brought before the Board a proposal to establish a Special Court to adjudicate on so-called 'tribal' offences: note *ibid.*, No 78 of 1945. In his submission Cleland claimed that 'the arraignment of tribal natives in Criminal Court on serious charges because of the punishment of wrongdoers according to tribal laws is a source of embarrassment to the Court and of bewilderment to the persons on trial.' He recommended that the Aborigines Act be amended to provide for the establishment of Courts dealing with trivial or 'purely tribal' offences. Cleland's recommendations were approved by the APB and went to Cabinet. The file has a note: 'no action this session'. Two years later, in March 1947, Duguid brought the matter forward at an APB meeting in an attempt to keep the matter before the Board.

however, that Love's discourse of 'a proper footing' for relations between black and white Australians included the 'saving' for indigenous Australians of some autonomous legal space within the larger reality of European colonial hegemony.

In the broader issues of 'control', with the exception of the 'half-caste' body, we have seen that discipline and surveillance, while present at Ernabella as elsewhere, were exercised in a looser fashion than almost anywhere in the missionary world. In some ways, we are provided a picture in this particular contact zone, of an equivocal and uncertain life, on the edge of financial, spiritual and even a moral bankruptcy, where it was often perceived by a civilization grown used to exercise power and dominance, that the Aborigine also held (occasionally, frustratingly, annoyingly at times) considerable influence in the dialectics of power and control between white and black. Except, of course, when the 'colonial constabulary' was called in. This of course on one view represents the limit of Aboriginal agency and autonomy. The use of this 'last resort' on both the Ernabella and Hermannsburg mission sites was rare, although its existence in the background must be acknowledged. But it ought not blind us to the dynamics of the quotidian negotiations between missionary and Aborigine regarding the politics of hostility and hospitality on the mission site.