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According to the perceptions of many people including anthropologists and other researchers, Aboriginal people of mixed descent, classified in earlier decades as 'part-Aborigines', have no distinctive culture (eg Bell 1964, 64; Barwick 1964; Beckett 1964; Rowley 1971; Hausfield 1977, 267; RM Berndt 1979, 87; and see Read 1980, 112). Fink (1957, 110), for example, has judged that the Aborigines of a New South Wales town simply possessed a common group identity as 'black' and an opposition to white people. In Eckermann's view (1977), the Aboriginal people of a southeast Queensland town have been assimilated and integrated, having a mode of life typical of working class culture (see also Smith and Biddle 1972, xi). To the Berndts (1951, 275–76; Berndt 1962, 88), the Europeanisation of so small a minority has seemed inevitable.

In contrast, others (and sometimes the same authors writing at different times) have detected a distinctive, even unique, culture or way of life, with its own folkways, mores and beliefs (Calley 1956; Bell 1961, 436–37; Smith and Biddle 1972, 124; Howard 1979, 98; Crick 1981). Langton (1982, 18) has remarked that 'loss of culture' should not be a matter of faith, but of investigation. Indeed, much of the substance of the publications cited above, as well as the results of current research, show that many features of the social life of these people are distinctive, and also display marked similarities to aspects of the cultures of Aboriginal peoples whose social lives have been changed to a lesser degree by the process of colonisation. Calley (1956, 213) wrote that the people of mixed Aboriginal descent possessed a society 'leaning heavily on the logic and outlook on life of the indigenous traditions', yet quite well adapted to the white community that surrounds it.

It was my familiarity with some ongoing anthropological research into the social life of Aboriginal people of southeast Queensland, New South Wales and the southwest of Western Australia, that led me to invite contributions to a volume on continuities in the culture of Aboriginal people living in what Rowley (1971, vii) called 'settled' Australia. The closely settled regions, by contrast with what Rowley termed 'colonial' Australia, dominated by pastoral production, are those which have been most radically transformed by people of European origin. They lie mainly in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the continent, extending on the east coast north to Cairns, and north to Carnarvon on the west coast. The category should also include Darwin, the major European and Asian settlement of the north.

This volume (*Being Black*), brings together some of the results of a continuing interest among anthropologists in the social life of people who used to be labelled 'part-Aborigines' or 'urban Aborigines'. Studies burgeoned during the post-war

decades when 'acculturation' was a major anthropological interest, although research dwindled somewhat through the 1970s. Meanwhile research by geographers and economists has greatly extended our knowledge of the social and economic conditions of Aborigines of these regions, and the new Aboriginal history has revolutionised our perceptions of Australian history. Aborigines themselves are increasingly writing (and making films and videos) about their own lives (eg Bropho 1980; Clare 1978; Davis and Hodge 1985; McLeod 1982; Miller 1985; Mum Shirl 1981; Pepper 1980; Perkins 1975; Rosser 1978; Simon 1978).

My purpose here is to set the themes of each chapter in this book within the broader context of studies of Aboriginal social life in 'settled' Australia. The chapters describe many dimensions of the social life and culture of Aboriginal people living in southeast Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, the southwest of Western Australia, and the Darwin fringe. The majority present the results of recent research; however Diane Barwick and Jeremy Beckett kindly agreed to the reprinting of two of their early articles here, and I thank Marie Reay for contributing the Foreword. I am especially grateful to Richard Barwick for consenting to the inclusion of Diane Barwick's article. This book is dedicated to her memory.

Cultural continuity

Many of the papers in this volume speak of continuities among elements of the culture of Aboriginal people of 'settled' Australia and of people more remote from the area of dense European settlement, implying the reproduction of some cultural forms from the pre-colonial era. Diane Barwick (Chapter 2) believes the Koori subculture to be compounded of indigenous and introduced traits, and points to the prohibition of close cousin marriage as well as certain beliefs as continuities from the past. On the other hand, practices such as modes of dress, certain patterns of speech and drinking habits were gained from European rural workers. Other features are typical of itinerant workers generally. Barry Morris (Chapter 3) takes a different view. With the increasing loss of conspicuous cultural forms such as ceremonies, Dhan-gadi culture in the assimilationist era was a culture of resistance in the context of manager-supervised institution, which attempted to inculcate the values of the dominant society. Forms of resistance included the control of information, illegal drinking and gambling, and the establishment of fringe camps free from institutional control. The emergence of idioms of stigma in a New South Wales town (Julie Carter, Chapter 4) is, of course, a response to relations with non-Aborigines in Aboriginal identity formation. In Jerry

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Schwab's opinion (Chapter 5), such identity among Adelaide Aboriginal boys is more ambiguous than in pre-colonial Australia.

Other continuities are documented (or posited) by contributors here: between the forms and use of Aboriginal English on the one hand and indigenous languages on the other; in the extent and form of kin networks; in the structure of the exchange economy, into which money is assimilated; in the forms and contexts of swearing and fighting; in beliefs; and in attitudes to the past. However, our purpose is not simply to tally culture traits, but to describe the way of life of a particular category of people—what 'being black' is.

Aboriginal identity

Aborigines in 'settled' Australia form part of a distinct, though heterogeneous and loosely bounded ethnic category. In this volume Diane Barwick (Chapter 2) addresses the question of identity within a broad sketch of the social life of Aboriginal people in Victoria. The chapters by Barry Morris, Julie Carter and Jerry Schwab (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) outline social processes through which a distinct Aboriginal identity has been formed and reproduced.

The categories 'Aborigine' and 'Aboriginal' arose, of course, through interaction with colonising peoples mainly from Europe (Crick 1981). In pre-colonial Australia, as now in areas more remote from European settlement, manifold ethnic categories divided the Aboriginal population according to criteria of language, locality and descent (Berndt 1961; Merlan 1981). People of mixed descent who are a part of 'settled' Australia identify themselves variously as 'Aborigines', 'dark people', 'coloured' or 'blacks', and employ labels with regional application such as Murri, Koori, and Nyungar, which mark internal divisions, and contrast with terms such as 'Gubba' (white person). Markers like Wiradjuri or Gooreng Gooreng ('tribe' or language names) are more specific still.

In spite of the ambiguities of imposed categories (Jordan 1985), identification as Aboriginal is no post-Whitlam phenomenon. During the late 1950s people of mixed descent in Adelaide and La Perouse (Sydney) identified themselves as Aborigines or dark people regardless of skin colour (Berndt and Berndt 1951, 262; Inglis 1961, 201; Bell 1961, 432; Barwick 1963, 28). In the late 1960s only 4.4 per cent of a sample of the population of Aboriginal descent around a coastal New South Wales town did not identify as Aboriginal (Hausfeld 1977, 266). The erosion of the numbers of 'half-castes' in the census data from the period before the World War II is due to people

re-identifying as Aboriginal as much as non-Aboriginal in Smith's opinion (1980, 264). Jordan (1985, 31) also reminds us of the uncertainties of identity. A person could be classified in official transactions as 'white' and 'half-caste' on the same day.

Whereas many have denied Aboriginal people of mixed descent the status of Aboriginal, some have denied their own identity as Aboriginal, and affirmed half-caste status (Gilbert 1977, 143). Restrictive protectionist legislation motivated people to adopt a European style and identity in order to gain exemption from the terms of legislation, and to 'be treated like a human being' (Jordan 1985, 33). However, working in the 1950s and 1960s, when the prevailing government policy was one of assimilation and subsequently integration, several anthropologists have stressed that far from desiring assimilation, many Aboriginal people feared the threat of group extinction, and did not see assimilation as realisable (Barwick 1962, 18, 22; 1964, 28; Beckett 1964, 46). Fearing extinction, Melbourne Aboriginal people pursued self-consciously Aboriginal activities (Barwick 1964, 21–24). Freedoms from restrictions associated with the 1967 Referendum and the self-determination policies of the Labor government have led some who previously did not identify as Aboriginal to identify or re-identify.

Prejudice and disapproval on the part of non-Aborigines, together with discrimination in employment and social exclusion, have in part engendered the cohesion of the Aboriginal category (Calley 1957, 209; Fink 1957, 102), an example of a more general phenomenon (Spicer 1971, 797). However, the degree to which Aboriginal people have experienced prejudice varies (Inglis 1961, 206). What has been referred to as the 'caste barrier' (Calley 1957) was maintained in northern New South Wales during the 1950s: Aboriginal employees ate separately from non-Aborigines, and were excluded from local dances and pubs (Calley 1957, 196). Only in sport were individuals treated as equals (1957, 197). Segregation had the effect, in Calley's opinion (1957, 202; see also Berndt and Berndt 1951, 174; Howard 1979, 94), of turning Aborigines' attention inward toward the potentialities of their own group.

Internally, group conformity has been enforced through gossip and the fear of being 'shamed'. In Chapter 2 of this volume, Barwick describes how the levelling process among Victorian Aborigines has inhibited some individuals from 'getting ahead' and from neglecting their obligations to kin. Those who have separated themselves off from the group identifying as Aboriginal have been the objects of mockery, and few Melbourne people have tried to leave the Aboriginal community (see also Barwick 1964, 27). Several other studies have described similar processes. Aboriginal people of Robinvale in northwestern Victoria, for instance, have expressed

antagonism toward those who have moved out of town and cut off ties, or who have succeeded in activities seen as typical of white Australia—such as buying a block of land for fruit growing. These people are said to live like a 'gub' or 'white fella' (Bryant 1982, 77; see also Fink 1957; Beckett 1964, 35). People of Yarrabah in Queensland accuse one another of 'talking like a white' if they use inappropriately 'big words' (Hume nd).

Paradoxically people have also been prevented by shame from continuing with conspicuously Aboriginal practices in the face of managerial hostility, or the indifference and mockery of the young. Morris (in Chapter 3) argues that the pervasive levelling mechanism of shame prevented some individuals and families from succeeding in European terms, but people have also been 'too shamed' to continue with obviously Aboriginal practices because of European hostility. As a result of indoctrination on missions and government settlements, or of the dormitory system, or for other reasons, expressions of embarrassment about performances of traditional songs and ceremonies by older people, or about the telling of stories to do with the pre-colonial past, have frequently been recorded. Younger people have said they were 'shamed' to hear them because they were 'like white folks now' (Calley 1957, 206; Fink 1957, 109; Beckett 1958, 32), while older people have been afraid of mockery by the young or by white people (Koepping 1977, 173). Cherbourg people had internalised mission values of cleanliness, orderliness, strong punishment, belief in authority, and a negative attitude to their 'uncivilised' past (Koepping 1977, 173).

Some Aboriginal people have adopted the stereotypes about themselves held by European Australians (eg Calley 1957, 209). Fink (1957, 103) interprets this adoption as 'an aggressive assertion of low status' (see also Gilbert 1977, 267); whereas Jordan (1985, 32) interprets it as a refuge from ambiguous identity. Bell (1961, 438) on the other hand implies that La Perouse people have had a more positive attitude to their own knowledge of totemic ancestors and sites, use of indigenous language and lifestyle, all of which marked them off from the non-Aboriginal population.

Criticisms of perceived aspects of Euro-Australian social life have also been recorded, for example the lack of family care of the aged, individualism and lack of concern for relatives, meanness and insincerity. These criticisms have not been so strongly subscribed to among city dwellers (Inglis 1961, 205), and perhaps this is not surprising given the high incidence of intermarriage between Aborigines and non-Aborigines in the cities (discussed later).

Ambivalent attitudes to identity are apparent in patterns of socialisation. The children of a southeast Queensland town were made aware from the earliest years

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of their identity through the use of terms such as 'black', 'boong', 'blackfella', 'dirty black' and so on, which prepared them for later experience of racism. (Robert Bropho [1980, 6] and Jimmie Barker [see Mathews 1977] have documented their own experience of hostility.) But children are also taught that Aborigines are people of a superior kind—more trustworthy, kind, warm and ready to share than non-Aborigines (Eckermann 1977, 300). This theme is developed by Julie Carter in her essay in this volume (Chapter 4). Identity development presents Aboriginal children of a coastal New South Wales community with a problem, for when they enter high school they usually form a minority and their social identity is challenged. The socialisation of stigma, Carter argues, prepares them for this experience. Idioms in the language of teasing, jokes and stories strengthen corporate identity through the use of epithets incorporating the word 'black'. In this way parents invest the idioms with positive values and associations. Carter suggests that this process is found in other cultures of pariah status.

Among Aboriginal boys in an Adelaide hostel, identity is reflected in a distinctive style including the use of elements of indigenous language (Lingo), mode of dress, music, body language and etiquette, as well as support for key issues and a degree of local knowledge. In Jerry Schwab's account (Chapter 5), the identity of some boys in the hostel is ambiguous, unconnected as they are to the others by kinship or common experience. Skin colour is important in such cases, but it is important also not to try to force the pace: a person has to wait for recognition. Outsiders, however, are unlikely ever to be fully accepted.

Aboriginal identity has been maintained despite the high incidence of marriage between Aborigines and non-Aborigines in the cities. Gale (1972, 171–72) posited three broad stages in the history of biological interaction between Aborigines and other ethnic categories: first, matings between Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal men on the frontier; second, relatively closed communities under protectionist policies that restricted contacts and encouraged endogamy; and third, renewal of contacts following migration into the cities. The older reserves such as Point McLeay near Adelaide tended, in the 1960s, to be endogamous, and the majority of mixed marriages were between Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal men (Gale 1972, 168). In Brisbane and Adelaide in the mid 1960s about forty per cent of Aboriginal marriages were to non-Aboriginal partners, and by 1980 more than half (53.7 per cent) of female Aboriginal marriages in Adelaide, and forty per cent of men's, were to non-Aboriginal partners (Gale and Wundersitz 1982, 37), a level of out-marriage similar to that recorded in a southeast Queensland town in the period 1969–71

(Eckermann 1977, 295). The incidence in Victoria as a whole in the early 1960s was lower, with eleven per cent of women's and thirty-seven per cent of men's marriages being to non-Aboriginal partners (Barwick 1974, 202). Barwick pointed out that intermarriage had been highest in the towns and cities, where prejudice was less strong (1974, 202). Eckermann explained this high rate of out-marriage as due to a long period of interaction between non-Aborigines and a stable Aboriginal population, in conjunction with rising living standards. This degree of intermarriage does not seem to imply assimilation in any simple way, for members of a southeast Queensland Aboriginal community have identified non-Aboriginal spouses as members of the 'clans' into which they marry (Eckermann 1977, 294); however, Diana Eades (Chapter 6) shows that southeast Queensland people who marry non-Aborigines tend to drop the extended use of kin terms.

A heterogeneous category

Neither the social and economic conditions nor the culture of Aboriginal people of 'settled' Australia is homogeneous. We can distinguish a variety of Aboriginal styles of life (Bell 1965).

For the most part Aborigines have been a rural population in these regions but the focus has changed. Between 1947 and 1976 the proportion of Aboriginal people living in towns and cities in New South Wales rose from twenty-eight per cent to eighty per cent, and has reached ninety per cent in Victoria (Young 1982, 1). (In 1981 over Australia as a whole forty-one per cent of Aborigines were residing in cities, and thirty-four per cent in towns.) Now, throughout Australia, people live in communities of various kinds: on reserves, missions and government settlements, many of which are now Aboriginal townships; in temporary dwellings on the fringes of country towns; and in European style housing in towns and cities. The degree of long term association of local Aboriginal populations with the area in which they live varies greatly. Some populations are the descendants of groups with traditional ties to a region (Donaldson 1984); some come from settlements of long standing such as Point Mcleay near Adelaide, and have formed attachments with these localities. In settlements such as Cherbourg, the first residents were drawn from all over the State. Others, such as Robinvale in northern New South Wales (Bryant 1982, 41) and the populations of major cities, consist mainly of people who have moved to the community from far and wide within the last few decades, although networks with different origins tend to remain discrete.

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People of the older reserves have developed a rather settled and isolated existence. New South Wales people have identified with the community and have a strong sense of belonging to it. Their attitudes have been ethnocentric, combining continuing tribal identification and hostility toward other Aboriginal communities as well as Europeans (Bell 1964a). Extensive kin ties have bound members of a community together. European and Aboriginal spheres have been kept separate and marked by hostility (see Fink 1955, 35–39; cf Trigger 1986). The kin network at Cherbourg in southeast Queensland, an isolated and somewhat endogamous community, led to strong community feeling as well as shared values and attitudes (Koepping 1977, 171).

People have migrated into the cities from communities such as these, as well as from country towns and reserves, in increasing numbers up until the 1970s, maintaining contacts with the home community through mutual visiting. City populations have provided the staging houses for migration (Gale 1972; Gale and Wundersitz 1982; Lickiss 1971, 218; Inglis 1961, 202; Smith and Biddle 1972). A route of migration is referred to by Nyungar people as a 'line' (Chris Birdsall, Chapter 8). Despite dispersal, migration to towns and cities, and patterns of visiting between towns and between town and country, people remain attached to a general locality of origin (see Young 1982, 9).

Some Aboriginal communities living in isolated country towns appear to be divided by what have been described as class attitudes, forming upper and lower categories, either within the same town or separated as town dwellers and fringe camp or settlement residents (Reay and Sitlington 1948; Fink 1955, 1957; Bell 1965, 409). These categories are better described as status categories rather than in class terms (Gerth and Wright-Mills 1970), for they are based on evaluations according to criteria of lifestyle, values and prestige, and are not associated with radically different economic roles. Nor are these categories very clearly defined.

The upper category in one New South Wales country town (Reay and Sitlington 1948) aspired to live in European style houses, and discouraged reserve people from settling in the same area of town. Their standard of living was similar to that of working class Europeans. Upper category people preferred to marry among themselves where possible, and espoused values of sexual morality, thrift, romantic love, and 'good family', and disapproved of habitual drunkenness. They regarded the lower category people as dirty and polluting, to the extent of forbidding their children to drink out of the same vessels. Although they did visit the reserve to gamble, they would ignore reserve people in public places and dubbed them 'uncivilised'.

Similar attitudes divided the Aboriginal community in another country town in New South Wales (Fink 1955; 1957). The upper category consisted of generally light skinned people who disowned their mission relatives, even in some cases repudiating sibling links (1955, 30). They identified themselves with European values and lifestyle 'even to the point of adopting its colour prejudice and stereotypes of the aborigine' (Fink 1955, 5). Marriage to Europeans was common in the upper category, but absent in the lower. Here, the upper category held its own parties, card games and dances (Fink 1957, 106). In Chapter 8 Chris Birdsall relates a case in which an Aboriginal girl's family put pressure on her not to marry a young man because his skin was too dark, suggesting divisions of a similar order in the southwest.

The style of the lower category in these cases (Bell 1965, 411–12) has included living in humpies, shacks and derelict houses with minimum domestic equipment. Employment has been casual, intermittent and often seasonal in nature, supplemented by welfare payments and borrowing. Many have considered the government to be obliged to support those unemployed on the grounds that white people took their land (Fink 1955, 4). Marriages have tended to be short-lived, and drinking has been heavy. People have symbolised their style by eating damper and tea and cooking in ashes (Fink 1955, 53). They have said they differ from white people in not acting 'flash', not being interested in saving or becoming rich. The upper category has been crtised for being 'flash' and 'stuck up', or 'black whitefellas', and for failing to uphold kin and group obligations. (Robert Bropho's 1980 personal testament of the fringe dweller's life illuminates the experience of severe economic hardship as well as subjection to the power of authorities.)

Some families in towns such as those mentioned in the above studies, known by the Aboriginal community to be of Aboriginal descent, have married into the European community, broken their ties with Aborigines completely, and do not identify as Aborigines (Reay and Sitlington 1948, 180; Bryant 1982, 29). Eckermann (1977, 300) found no evidence of 'passing' in the region of a southeast Queensland city, but a greater degree of interaction between Aborigines and Europeans than reported elsewhere among fringe dwellers on the outskirts of towns.

Some ex-residents of reserves living in Adelaide have deliberately cut themselves off from other Aborigines of the city in order to pass as white (Inglis 1961, 204–05). The community was heterogeneous in origin and style in the 1940s and 1950s, divided into rather distinct kin networks who used rather different terms to refer to themselves: 'Narrinyeri' for Point McLeay people, 'Nunga' for Point Pearce people and 'Murrall' for northerners (Inglis 1961, 202–03; see Berndt and Berndt 1951, 236). People from

the north of the state, brought as children to be raised in children's homes, had few ties with other Adelaide Aborigines or with their own families, and moved into skilled and semi-skilled occupations (Berndt and Berndt 1951, 239; Inglis 1961, 204). These general divisions have remained (Gale 1972, 249; Gale and Wundersitz 1982, 75).

Some Aboriginal people of the southwest have also restricted their ties to the rest of the Aboriginal community (Howard 1979, 94). Barwick (1962, 18) found that in Melbourne, however, there was no upper class of outsiders who were the product of hostels or mission training schools. Residents were migrants from mission stations in search of improved living situations, and divided themselves on the basis of regional associations. Most people married within the regional group, and saw strangers as different or inferior (Barwick 1964; see also Schwab, Chapter 5).

Differences in relations between Aborigines and non-Aborigines are striking in Lyons' comparison (1983) of two country town communities and a Melbourne suburban Aboriginal community. Unemployment was high in one town as well as the Melbourne suburb. In the other town the Aboriginal population had been resident for much longer, relations between Aborigines and non-Aborigines were more amicable, and Aboriginal unemployment was lower. Another important dimension of heterogeneity lies in the differences between generations (Read 1980, 113). The views and attitudes of older men of Erambi in New South Wales has differed from those of younger men as a result of changes in European attitudes toward Aborigines, as well as changes in economic and social conditions. The older men have adopted the European work ethic and respect for authority (Read 1980 101, 108), and have shown little interest in the pre-colonial past. Younger men, with experience of greater hostility, have looked back to the pre-colonial culture for a model of a stable past (Read 1980, 111).

The above studies reveal a great variety in Aboriginal styles of life, but the gulf between these and the social life of other Australians is even greater.

The Aboriginal domain

Trigger (1986) uses the term 'domain' to capture the very distinct networks of interaction, with spatial correlates, which divided Aborigines and non-Aborigines on a remote Queensland settlement. Aboriginal communities in 'settled' Australia also occupy a distinct domain. The main loci of intensive interaction with non-Aborigines are education, employment, social service and legal agencies, and community associations. Extensive contact with social service agencies is ensured by high unemployment, and consequent reliance on social security payments. Outside such