"THE KOORI WAY":
THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL DISTINCTIVENESS
IN SETTLED AUSTRALIA

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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A DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted in the past in substance for any degree, that it is the result of my own independent research, and that all authorities and sources consulted are acknowledged in References Cited.
ABSTRACT

This thesis is about Wiradjuri Aboriginal people in the town of Cowra, central New South Wales, Australia. Wiradjuri people refer to themselves as Kooris and describe the distinctive styles of interaction that they share, and which distinguish their way of life from that of other Australians, as "the Koori way".

The Koori way is constituted within a changing environment. Wiradjuri country is in "settled" Australia, where fertile plains enabled the early development of Australia's pastoral and agricultural industries by European colonizers. Non-Aboriginal Australians have expected that Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness in southeastern Australia would disappear as Aboriginal people became increasingly incorporated into European lifeways.

However, the distinctiveness of the Koori way persists and its study has necessitated a reappraisal of the way in which relationships established during processes of colonization are to be conceptualized. The material, social and ideological environment within which people live influences the ways in which they perceive and act upon social relations and develop a characteristic way of being in the world. Colonization changes an environment, bringing people of different lifeways into new sets of relationships.

The thesis re-evaluates earlier approaches to Aboriginal societies in so-called "settled" Australia; and tests the utility of the concept of domain as a means of analytically distinguishing Wiradjuri interactions from other sets of relationships in which they participate. It explores modes of structuring intra-Koori relations; Koori economic perspectives; and Koori notions of self and mechanisms of self-maintenance.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

After a study involving several years there are inevitably a great many people who come to contribute directly and indirectly. In the process of preparing this thesis my lifestyle has changed, the constellation of people around me has changed and so have my ideas — my own sense of what it means to be in the world. There are people, events and literature which stand out, which I can identify as having made their mark. At the same time I am conscious of many perhaps rather minor events — a chance remark — which influenced my thinking quite unbeknown to the speaker. Most of all, however, there are those people who supported me because they were willing to share their own resources.

I have been fortunate that my supervisor, Dr Jeremy Beckett, provided an encouraging and supportive context. He was ready to spend time with me as well as let me develop my ideas in my own way. Often I was not ready to hear what he had to say and I appreciate his patience. He had a knack of pointing me to ideas and literature I needed, often identifying where I was long before I did. Jeremy was very willing for me to consult with others. I particular want to note this because, in this encouragement to seek the ideas and assistance of others, I came to feel part of an academic community rather than a student tied to a particular relationship in a particular institution.

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I trust that the many people who have helped me in one way or another will feel the thesis itself goes part way towards an expression of my appreciation.
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PART I

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1: The Wiradjuri People

1.1.1: A background

This thesis is an ethnographic study of a Wiradjuri Aboriginal community in central New South Wales. I initially embarked on this study in order to discover what it meant for people who had been incorporated into Australian society to experience their being as Aborigines. It has generally been considered that Aboriginal societies were destroyed in southeastern Australia during the colonial encounter. However, I had not long been in the field when I realized that Wiradjuri people had a way of being which distinguished them in several respects from mainstream Australian ways. In addition, I observed that Wiradjuri people were active in creating the conditions of their own experience. If, as I shall argue, the Wiradjuri people have maintained a discrete social identity, how was this possible?

My task was to find a way of describing this experience and then to place it in some kind of context. The more conventional explanation that attributed differences to the problems Aboriginal people had in adjusting to their colonial status and the destruction of their previous way of life did not prove adequate. A major problem was finding a theoretical framework which would take account of the complex relationships which develop in a process of colonization - when the environment within which one people constitute themselves is radically altered by colonists who are constituted in a different environment.

Thus, the thesis also goes part way to developing a theory
of colonization which will have general applicability. The
development of theory assumes models and concepts which may be
employed in the analysis of situations and ways of
conceptualizing the relationships involved. The aims of the
thesis are as follows:

a) to present an ethnography of the Wiradjuri community in
   Cowra

b) to identify the components of a theory of colonization

c) to test components of this theory and determine their
   analytical utility.

In this introductory chapter I explain the reasons for the need
for such a theory which emerged as a result of my field study and
what part the thesis plays in its development.

The colonization of Australia by Europeans began in earnest
in 1788 on the east coast at Sydney and 27 years later reached
west into Wiradjuri territory. The Wiradjuri case thus provides a
time frame of 170 years within which to analyze the relations of
colonization. It is a readily assessable society. It has a
population of approximately 12,000 (see Chapter 4) and several
Wiradjuri population centres within an area covering 80,000
square kilometres.

The Wiradjuri people derive their name, as do neighbouring
Aboriginal peoples, from a characteristic of their language, in
this case the negative particle, wira, meaning "no" (Cameron
1899:217; Richardson 1899:164; Richards 1902-3) The term
Wiradjuri is used in various ways: it may refer to the people
themselves, the geographical area designated as Wiradjuri
country, or the language. Wiradjuri people often refer to
themselves as being members of the Wiradjuri "tribe". Although
not constituting a tribe in a political sense, this word has long
been used by both scholars and Aboriginal people as a means of
differentiating one Aboriginal society or language group from another (see below).

Wiradjuri people live throughout the same area of central New South Wales as they did prior to the advent of Europeans (Map 1.1; see also, Macdonald 1983). Wiradjuri country covers approximately 80,000 square kilometres (28,900 square miles) of savannah-mallee country, characterized as semi-arid with seasonally humid areas in the east. It starts west of the Blue Mountains (part of the Great Dividing Range) on tablelands of plateau form, about 500 metres above sea level, and takes in the westward slopes and plains to 75 metres above sea level. Average rainfall ranges from 500 millimetres in the east to 160 millimetres in the west. The country is prone to drought and flooding.

Map 1.1 about here

Wiradjuri people refer to themselves as Koori, a term many Aboriginal people in southeast Australia use to distinguish themselves from non-Aboriginal people and Aboriginal people elsewhere in Australia. There is no record of a Wiradjuri term koori. Curr (in Blake 1981:96) recorded the use of Koori on the eastern seaboard from the Lower Macleay Valley to the Hawkesbury and translated it as "man" or "people". The Wiradjuri equivalent was manji. Koori is now used extensively by Aboriginal people throughout south-eastern Australian (see Miller 1985).

There has been some controversy both within and outside of the Koori world as to who should be included in a Koori population. The understanding of what it means to be an Aborigine has long been contested by Europeans and has led to various definitions, often based on the degree of Aboriginal blood a
person could claim (for example, half-caste, quarter-caste, full-blood; see Rowley 1972:341ff; Hanks 1984:29ff). This is due in large part to the prejudices in a literature which has stressed the destruction of Aboriginal societies in southeastern Australia.

The debate also has political implications. It has recently become apparent that the notion of what constitutes an Aboriginal person is debated even amongst Aborigines themselves. Burnam Burnam maintained that Aborigines in the State of New South Wales were:

'Shamrock Aborigines' - the descendants of the ostracized Irish and Aboriginal groups who are now trying to prove their Aboriginal status (cited by Marshall 1985:10).

The play on words may not have been intended but Burnam Burnam's inference is clearly that any claim to "so-called" Aboriginality on the part of people in New South Wales is a sham, "far from representative of the true Aborigines". By contrast, Millie Butt from Cowra in central New South Wales argues:

We are a different culture, we are an equal culture to the white race, and ours is more beautiful, just as beautiful as any white Australian's. ... The more I learn about our history, our culture, our people, this is what makes you Aboriginal. You don't have to know the language, you don't have to be able to get up there and do a corroboree, or know all the Dreamtime stories. You have got to feel that Aboriginal is in you, and have part of it in you, and be proud of it (in Read 1984:141).

The 1981 Select Committee Report on Aborigines maintained that the New South Wales Parliament should:

... recognize the Aboriginal citizens of New South Wales as a distinct and viable cultural group within the New South Wales community and guarantee them the rights -

(a) to retain their own heritage, customs, languages and institutions as they may wish;

(b) of self-determination in respect of their social, economic, political and cultural affairs.
(Parliament of New South Wales 1981:xv)

However, identifying and then describing what it means to "feel that Aboriginal is in you" or what the "distinct and viable" features of the Aboriginal experience are in New South Wales, those which give it its particular distinctiveness, has not been an easy task: of all Aboriginal people in Australia those in New South Wales probably least resemble the prevailing stereotypes held by Europeans about what a "real" Aborigine is and does.

The most usual definition used today is some variant of that published in the Commonwealth Year Book 1980 which defines an Aboriginal person as one who is of Aboriginal descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives (Commonwealth Year Book 1980:751). This definition has been adopted for the purposes of the (NSW) Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983. The people identified as Kooris in this study are primarily those who overtly identified themselves as such and whom I observed to be unambiguously participating in some way in Koori social life.

Kooris are distinguished not only from Aborigines of other parts of Australia but also from non-Aborigines or Gabbas. Gabbas are divided into gabba, male, and wadin, female whites. The term Gabba is generally thought to be a corruption of "government man" or "governor" (guv'[nar]). Wadin is derived from "white gin" (way-djin), "jin" meaning woman. The term may also distinguish white people as Anglo-Australians from other Australians, for whom Kooris use colloquial labels such as "wogs" for those of southern European origin, and "Chinamen", for those of Asian origin. I have adopted the Koori practice of using "whites" to refer to Anglo-Australians, or "Europeans" which is the equivalent term more often encountered in the literature from
other parts of Australia. I use Gabba when I wish to draw attention to statements made by Kooris themselves.

Despite the use of terms such as "blacks" and "full-bloods", Kooris generally avoid using skin colour or "degrees" of Aboriginal blood (half-caste, quarter-caste) in distinguishing themselves from other Aborigines. Although they may do so occasionally when questioning a person's right to call themselves Aboriginal (see Chapters 4 and 7), they regard this practice as insulting and irrelevant (see also, Bell 1961:431). Among the Wiradjuri there are few who do not acknowledge some non-Aboriginal blood but they trace their ancestry as being historically, culturally and socially, as well as biologically, Aboriginal. Distinctions made by Europeans are regarded by Kooris as insignificant, at least in the present political context: no one is more or less Aboriginal except those who choose to reject their heritage in favour of a more incorporative relationship with Europeans. Wiradjuri people vary considerably in physical features and colouring. Such differences are of little consequence and people recognize each other on the basis of behaviour and speech styles as well as appearance.

Aboriginal people of New South Wales, including the Wiradjuri, have long been seen by Europeans generally as detribalized. The use of the concept of tribe has been much debated in relation to Aboriginal social organization. If one were to adopt a broad definition asserting that a tribe is characterized by communities occupying the same general territory, speaking a common language and following the same way of life, then the Wiradjuri may be acknowledged still to be a tribe. Self-designation as Wiradjuri is most pronounced in those who have developed a strong interest in their heritage. The use
of the term Wiradjuri by Kooris presupposes the existence of pre-contact cultural traits. Whilst these are in evidence in various ways today, they vary in their significance in terms of Wiradjuri claims for a contemporary collective identity and distinctive symbolic order.

Only a handful of older people in the western areas are known to still speak any of the Wiradjuri language. Its use as a spoken language ceased about two generations ago and people now speak a variant of standard English which is interspersed with Wiradjuri vocabulary. This is sufficient to distinguish them from both Gabbas and non-Wiradjuri Kooris. This lexical set, comprising about 50 words for most adults, is highly valued as an index of differentiation and as a cultural inheritance. Its use conveys a sense of exclusiveness and even these few words can be useful when it is desirable to communicate with some confidentiality in the presence of non-Kooris.

1.1.2: Methodological issues

Field work

My field work took place between 1981 and 1985, a year of which was spent living in the town of Cowra, 314 kilometres west of Sydney. I have been interested in obtaining a perspective on the Wiradjuri area as a whole and have used observations in other Wiradjuri communities to make generalizations and to test hypotheses about Koori life in Cowra. The need for detailed knowledge of the history of relationships, and the logistics of covering over 80,000 square kilometres necessitated a narrowing down of the area.

Wiradjuri communities vary: it is not feasible to select any one as typical. Cowra was the first Wiradjuri community I visited
and after discussing my objectives with various community members, I made Cowra a base from which I visited several other communities. I lived with a Koori family in town for a year and both before moving there and since leaving I have made short visits every few months. Over this time I frequently travelled with Cowra people to other communities throughout the Wiradjuri area. I got to know Wiradjuri people living in Sydney and Canberra and was able to attend Wiradjuri Region Aboriginal Land Council meetings as well as maintain contact with various Aboriginal organizations in Sydney.

There are many Wiradjuri people who are cynical about the role of anthropologists and exasperated at being the subject of studies over which they have no control but which they see as being used to control them. The term "anthropologist" has come to be synonymous with almost any research of a social scientific nature. I discovered, for instance, that one "anthropologist", who had caused great offense to some Kooris in the past through published writings, was a British journalist visiting Australia to write a book for a popular white audience. However, I found that Aboriginal people in Cowra were prepared to accept me and respect the serious intent of my proposed study. They willingly expressed concerns and discussed problems they foresaw in my work. They stated their appreciation, after some months of field work, that I was prepared to make a long-term commitment to learn from them, and expressed contempt about people who did "two week stints and then posed as experts".

I compiled extensive genealogies for Cowra Koori residents which were requested by several people who had begun this process themselves. I kept diary style notes and talked over events and issues so as to come to a better understanding but conducted few
formal structured interviews. My approach was much more one of participant observation, supplemented by people giving me stories and filling in gaps in my understanding. There was, overall, an interest in teaching me, including correcting my mistakes, and no reluctance to discuss the negative as well as positive aspects of Koori life as different people perceived them. There were occasions when I was able to contribute with my own skills, which ranged from making clothes with the sewing machine I was requested to bring along, assisting with report writing, taking minutes of meetings and dealing with white officials in the town.

I have taken special steps to protect the privacy of those people who provided information for this study. I found most Kooris willing to discuss aspects of their society and provide stories and illustrations but I was often specifically requested not to use their names or refer to them in such a way as to identify them. Thus I refer to case studies only in general terms. However, where identification of specific individuals is desirable I have used a person's surname to distinguish them from fictitious first names. It is not possible to supply all the detail available without jeopardising the privacy of individuals involved or restricting the audience of this thesis and I have chosen to write an account which may be made public.

Approaching the study

This study has posed the inevitable question as to what should be included and what excluded, and what approach should be taken both to analyze and then to communicate something of the Koori world. My first task was to decide how to communicate the variability I encountered; how to avoid a level of generalizing which seemed to assume a sameness which does not exist. A second problem was posed by my desire to avoid the analysis which seems
divorced from reality, from the "flavour" of Koori life. This was important for two reasons. The first had to do with my own interest to communicate something of the little known "inside" of the Koori world which I was able to participate in. The second reason has a political dimension. Kooris, as I have mentioned, are often hostile to the research process, not so much because they do not want the research or its product but because they feel alienated from the end results: they resent the jargon and levels of analysis which confound them. However, it is not always possible to meet the requirements of analysis and, at the same time, present material in what one might call "layman's" terms. A third intention has been to address some of the major reasons for much perjorative assessment in studies of Koori culture in southeastern Australia (see further below) - studies in which Kooris have often been described as being "cultureless", suffering from "cultural deprivation", or as being in a state of "cultural breakdown".

The first question to ask is, Who are Kooris? Who is to be included in a study of this kind? Kooris are identified in terms of their own self-definitions, and also in terms of external definitions: legislation in Australia over the years which has specified who is or is not be to called an Aborigine. The resulting boundaries are not clear-cut. As will be seen, there are those who call themselves Kooris only in certain contexts, those whom others call Kooris but who do not choose this form of identification themselves, those who would like to be considered as Kooris but who do not have support from other Kooris to do so. But beyond this: in what sense is there a "Koori society", a "Koori culture"? We are not dealing with a social isolate in the classic ethnographic sense, still less with a political unit such
as a nation-state, or even an integrated coherent system, clearly bounded, which structures people's lives and thoughts.

There is an extraordinary diversity in the behaviour of people who call themselves and who are called Kooris, even within the Cowra area. Nevertheless, as Geertz (1973:17) maintains, a cultural system must have a minimal degree of coherence to be identified at all. The notion of a Koori society needs to be understood in broad terms. It is not an independent social system in political, legal or economic terms. What I refer to as the "Koori domain" consists of those localities and sets of relationships in which Koori culture takes on a character and legitimacy of its own (see further below). The Koori domain can be analytically distinguished from non-Koori domains (as other localities and sets of relationships) with which Kooris also interact.

The way in which Kooris themselves refer to their culture indicates that they use the term very broadly. It includes ideational aspects, patterned behaviours, shared meanings, having a common history (as colonized people), material items, including those used in the past. They often give their notion of "culture" a concreteness, the status of an agent. It is the totality of all the ways in which they see themselves, or would like to see themselves - both past and present - as being different to non-Kooris.

I want to define culture broadly for my present purposes. Geertz (1973:5) has described it, following Weber, as the webs of significance which people spin and which are amenable to interpretative analysis. The study of culture seeks out the meanings of those webs. This thesis is not a study of Koori culture in any totalizing sense. Rather, it focusses on
particular aspects of that culture. Culture does not imply single sets of options and my priority has been to identify and conceptualize the variability which exists. I have approached the study in two ways. First, I have identified structural properties of the Koori social system, including its key structural principles. Second, I have analyzed what Kooris themselves refer to as the "Koori way". These notions are expanded below. The study does not purport to present this social system as a coherent whole, or demonstrate the interrelatedness of it as "a system". Whilst the end result may seem unfinished, one cannot simply package structural properties together and label them "the system". The reality is more complex and there are, in the Koori case, many loose ends. A certain open-endedness is, perhaps, what it is most appropriate for me to convey about the Koori world. There is not one holistic and integrated picture which I feel I can draw of that world: rather, there are different, interconnecting but often contradictory logics informing Koori perception and action. This is not a denial of the existence of a Koori social system or culture: rather it is a tentative step towards depicting a complex system which is not readily amenable to analysis in terms of either the consensus nor conflict approaches to structural studies.

Structural properties of the Koori world

After establishing a historical, geographical and social context for the study, I proceed with an analysis of certain structural properties in the Koori world. Structural properties are the values and practices and constraints which operate to establish reproducible systems over time — as in the kinship system. In identifying these I have needed to encompass the variety which is also evident. In other words, these principles
do not explain all Koori action at either a group or individual level. They enable identification of broad patterns: a range of what is expected, or predictable behaviour or attitude in certain situations. If they constitute a framework, they do so in a very elastic sense.

I have borrowed the term "structural properties" from Giddens (1984:24,377). There is much that is attractive about Giddens's approach although it is designed for macro-level analysis rather than the present kind of case. Structural properties, such as institutionalized features, stretch across time and space. They are not, however, static. Giddens (1984:25-28) has argued for an approach which emphasizes the duality of structure: "the structural properties of social systems do not exist outside of action but are chronically implicated in its production and reproduction". Structural properties thus tend to recursively organize and reorganize social experience, but not in such a way that they lead to uniformity or unchanging continuities in the institutions or practices in which people participate.

Thus, structural properties do influence, enable and determine action, especially if seen in the sense of providing models or precedents which point people in certain directions, but they should not be considered as sole determinants. The actions of human agents - and the variability of these actions - influence social structures in a dynamic relationship (see, for instance, Sahlins 1981 and Comaroff and Roberts 1981 on the dialectic between structure and process). In the present study I am dealing with structural properties which establish limited internal constraints, so that their ability to determine is weak. They refer simply to the general range of possibilities which
take place within particular spheres of interaction and which have recursive potential. Koori social experience is only loosely structured, and then only at certain points.

Identifying these structural properties in the Cowra context will enable us to look at the extent to which this part of the Koori world sets out to determine the behaviour and thought of its members; and the extent to which it succeeds in getting people to conform to patterns of behaviour. It is possible to distinguish areas of social life which are not structured. Overall, the capacity or the will of the Koori social system to coerce members is limited. There is lack of organized power to control people. As will be discussed, Kooris have many options, including being able to move in and out of the Koori world, including, for some, the option of disassociating as Kooris when out of it.

Whilst structural properties establish internal constraints, the Koori world is not a social isolate and external constraints often cut across those constructed internally, making demands which pull Kooris in different directions. The lack of coercive capacity may partly be seen as due to the location of Kooris within Australian society - a society which produces alternate forms of coercion. The total range of constraints form boundaries for action but these are not fixed.

Giddens (1984:180-5) defines the most deeply embedded structural properties in a social system as structural principles. These can be said to be definitional or constitutive of Koori culture: they influence almost everything else which takes place. The thesis identifies two key structural principles: kinship and locality. These are then discussed in relation to two perhaps equally important values: autonomy and sharing.
As mentioned above, I have not attempted to integrate these properties in terms of "a coherent system". My principal question has been, What is the structural logic within which Kooris operate? The study of structural properties reveals contradictions between one property and another. Structural contradictions may be reconciled by other properties which camouflage the ways in which such contradictions might otherwise be actually experienced by people. On the other hand, structural contradictions may promote conflicts observed "on the ground", in inter-personal relationships. Not all structural contradictions lead to conflict, nor is all conflict the result of structural contradictions. In fact, I shall argue that certain structural properties of the Koori world encourage inter-personal conflict. Conflict, whether or not it is analyzed as being a result of structural contradiction, does not necessarily suggest "a breach" in the system: it may constitute an integral property of the system, values and practices which are part of the social dynamic. Thus structural principles are not just those which seem to promote continuity, cohesion or unity.

The Koori way

There have been many significant changes in Koori culture over the two hundred years since Europeans first entered their country. It is, however, possible to conceptualize and assert the continuity of a community over time: old family lines, the constant presence of Kooris in the Cowra area, attested to by both archaeological and historical records. Kooris have lived over generations in "communities of familiarity": in relationships which are intimate and often constant through life. Individuals may move in and out of the area, temporarily or permanently, from one well-known community to another, but there
is always a Cowra Koori community.

It is in this experience of the "community of familiarity" that the expression "the Koori way" finds its content. Kooris have grown up together and share a great many of their experiences, including the ways in which their perceive their history. This is an important part of what it means to be a Koori. It is hard to describe this experience in terms of formulas: it is an ingredient which can be discerned in Koori discursive practices and in their styles of relating to each other. Kooris themselves regard this "way" as part of what it means to be a Koori, and thus as part of their culture.

What I have called "a way of being" among Kooris is realized or experienced by those who perceive themselves as sharing in particular sets of experiences or knowledge. It can be described as a way of "knowing". It gives Kooris a feeling of oneness in relation to each other, of feeling that they are "on the same wavelength", whether in amicable or conflict situations. Thus it is an experience Kooris do not expect to share with most non-Kooris, and this contributes to a sense of difference, often alienation, when with non-Kooris. It infers that styles of interaction amongst those who share a way of being is intelligible and meaningful but not that all individuals necessarily share the same beliefs or values, or engage in similar practices.

I have selected various aspects of interpersonal relations - the effects of values placed on autonomy and sharing, exchanging debts, and shaming - through which I hope to communicate some of this experience. In analytical terms, this task is not an easy one. The more the notion is subjected to analysis, the more it tends to disappear. In fact, the expression, "Koori way", is a
rhetorical statement. When Kooris are asked to explain what they mean they also tend to resort to rather vague descriptions or assertions. Often they will simply turn to another Koori present, stating: "Well, you know what I mean don't you!" and the agreement is the confirmation of substance. Yet the term is used repeatedly. It is not explicated by Kooris nor is its meaning explicit. Nevertheless, it is not a hollow term. Its lack of content is a strength. It refers to a notion of what is there, in the content of social relations, but it is not spelt out and therefore does not become contentious. In this way, ambiguity avoids any contradictions or conflicts which might arise from too close an inspection of meanings, and thus of differences. There is a sense it which it needs to be contentless. This is especially important in a world in which structural properties only weakly determine social action or conformity. The term asserts unity and, to some extent, uniformity. In reality, it compensates for a great deal of individual variation which is, albeit in contradiction, equally highly valued: for Kooris, individualism is a collective representation. In fact, the Koori emphasis on autonomy— in a situation in which people are not able to determine or control others— makes a virtue out of a necessity.

Nevertheless, as a rhetorical statement, it is an important part of the way in which Kooris conceptualize their relations with a non-Koori world. It represents a great deal of what Kooris perceive they have that non-Kooris cannot share: their cultural distinctiveness. In recent times, as the Koori world itself has expanded to take in other Aboriginal people from different parts of Australia, the emphasis on unity is articulated in terms of a shared Koori history. The rhetoric Kooris use in searching for
those qualities or experiences which distinguish them from non-Kooris now includes the notion of Aboriginality. This also
denotes the unity of a "community of familiarity" but on a larger
historical and geographical scale. This notion also lacks
precision for the same reasons as the Koori way.

Whilst Kooris talk about their way of doing and thinking
about things, they have no reflexive practices, no analysis or
fully formulated ideology to offer themselves. My task, then, has
been to articulate the bases upon which they operate, to
interpret their practices in the light of what they say about
what they do, and to describe it in such a way as to enable
others to understand it. However, my intentions should not be
confused with a desire to conduct a study of Koori interaction in
terms of approaches which have been labelled "methodological
individualism". Rather, "the Koori way" should be interpreted as
the way in which Kooris themselves identify the structural
principles of their world: a part of its structure.

1.2: A literature survey

1.2.1: Wiradjuri literature

Wiradjuri social life has not previously been the subject of
long-term anthropological research. The largest volume of
ethnographic recording on the Wiradjuri was performed by R H
Mathews, a licenced surveyor who took a keen interest in
Aboriginal people as he travelled in his work (see listings in
Bibliography). He was primarily interested in their traditional
way of life, even though, at the time he wrote, there were few
people who continued traditional practices. The earliest
analysis was a brief outline of Wiradjuri social organization
written by Howitt in 1891. He followed this up with reports of
Wiradjuri practices in a general study published in 1904. Most other descriptions of nineteenth century Wiradjuri life are anecdotal, contained in personal journals (see especially, Graham 1863; Meredith 1884; Musgrave 1926) or as snippets in the journal \textit{Science of Man}. These early records have not yet been analyzed except for a study of traditional Wiradjuri boundaries (Macdonald 1983). In 1947 Ronald Berndt published material on Wiradjuri "clever men", based in part on the memories of older Wiradjuri (and Ngempa) people.

Whilst I have drawn on much of the historical information available about the Wiradjuri, it has not been my intention to give a comprehensive history. Historical sources have been used where they advance the argument. The most significant recent work has been that of Peter Read (1983) who wrote a history of the Wiradjuri covering the years 1883 to 1969. This covers the time when Aboriginal people were being administered under the Aboriginal Protection Board and Aboriginal Welfare Board. Carla Hankins (1982) has also written about the abduction of Aboriginal children in New South Wales during the same period. She includes Wiradjuri data. Chaffe, Hankins and Thompson did a report for the Aboriginal Legal Service in 1979 on early massacres and conflicts in the Wiradjuri area. Materials for educational use have also been prepared (Whyman, Morgan and Hepworth 1981; Hepworth 1982). Wiradjuri Kooris have recently published accounts of nineteenth century (Coe 1986) and early twentieth century (Keed 1985) events.

The Cowra Wiradjuri community has been the subject of specific studies focussing on various aspects of the recent history or social welfare of the Aboriginal people. Cowra was included in a study of social and economic patterns in New South
Wales conducted by Monk (1972). Peter Read recorded extensive oral histories of Aboriginal residents, extracts from which are now contained in *Down There With Me On the Cowra Mission* (1984). Deademona Foster and Katie Mellick (1981a, 1981b, 1981c, 1981d, 1981e) and Cathy Chaffe (1981) have collated material on various historical and current issues relating to Erambie reserve. Robert Merritt (1978), a Cowra Koori, has written a well-known play entitled *The Cake Man*, which depicts Koori/European relations on Erambie reserve, Cowra, in the mid-twentieth century. I have also been able to extract information from various government sources, including reports of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

1.2.2: Anthropological studies of Aboriginal people in New South Wales

The late nineteenth century saw a great interest in the traditional lifestyle of New South Wales Aborigines, occasioned by what Stanner (1968:33) referred to as "a remarkable flowering of intellectual interest in the widest possible world of human customs, ancient and contemporary" which occurred in England, Europe and America between the 1860s and 1870s. This was the period in which anthropology began to gain support as a scientific discipline. However, as far as New South Wales was concerned, it was already considered too late to do anything but put a few pieces together and to record the last of Aboriginal ceremonies and practices.

The belief that the old ways would not survive long meant that anyone in the State who had knowledge about Aborigines, however slight, was encouraged to record or publish it. A P Elkin referred to this period as the "compiling and collating phase" in Australian Anthropology (see discussions in Sutton 1986:49; McCall 1982:7). The journal, *Science of Man*, in particular,
contains various articles and snippets, including descriptions of initiation rites, word lists, accounts of social organization and some patchy information about leadership. These accounts are rather formal and lifeless in contrast to earlier observations recorded in journals by explorers, travellers and settlers. It is in these latter studies that some of the vibrancy of Aboriginal life is glimpsed: in accounts of everyday life, hunting, cooking, fighting and playing games. However, there are many gaps: almost no information about the world of Wiradjuri women and children or the relationship of the Wiradjuri to their ecological setting. The concern with preserving information about the past meant that there were few descriptions about how Aboriginal people spent the years from their first sightings of Europeans until the 1890s.

The assumption that all would soon be gone was seemingly realized by the turn of the century and there followed decades in which New South Wales Aborigines were no longer of scientific interest. There were supposedly no more "real" Aborigines left — only "the Aboriginal problem", people living in a "culture vacuum", able neither to hold on to their old ways nor to adapt to those of Europeans.

The study of Wiradjuri society or the nature of colonial relations was not addressed. Europeans largely assumed that Wiradjuri society was destroyed and that Wiradjuri descendants were being absorbed, with various levels of success, into Australian society. In the presumed absence of a Wiradjuri society, the question of how relationships developed and what adjustments were involved became a non-issue. If Wiradjuri people engaged in activities which seemed not to conform to those of Europeans, these could be taken as indices of the collapse of the society or as vestiges of the past.
The end of World War II saw increasing demands for national independence by former European colonies in various parts of the world. Many colonized peoples were mobilizing nationalist movements to regain sovereignty. Civil rights movements also gathered momentum in many countries, one focus of which was equality and equal opportunity for people of different racial backgrounds.

Sovereignty for Aboriginal people was not seen as an issue; however, civil rights were. Australian governments were being challenged more and more by civil rights activists to bring about change in the status of Aboriginal people and in their general living conditions. A number of Aboriginal people were involved, including several Wiradjuri notables. Indices of oppression were highlighted in a planned campaign to bring about a greater awareness amongst the Australian public: Aborigines were not entitled to Australian citizenship as a right; few had adequate housing or sanitation; health standards were well below Australian norms; and mortality rates were very much higher.

The "Aboriginal problem" was proving an increasing embarrassment to the Australian Government in both national and international terms:

By the end of the 1930s the whole world had changed its attitude towards dependent peoples, and we [Australians] responded at least as much to events and sentiments outside Australia as to events and sentiments within it (Stanner 1968:16-17; see also Stanner and Barwick 1979).

Efforts were now directed towards discovering how the social conditions in which Aboriginal people lived could be ameliorated: in other words, how they could be better assimilated into mainstream Australian society.

Assimilation was the keynote of the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board policy. The Welfare Board was set up in
1940 to replace the Aboriginal Protection Board. In its new approach the Welfare Board argued that greater efforts had to be made to turn Aborigines into "responsible, active intelligent citizens" (Aboriginal Welfare Board 1948:1). According to the Board, 95 per cent of "the so-called Aborigines of New South Wales" had had their social fabric torn asunder and, "if left alone would have neither the traditional background of the aboriginal way of life nor the culture of the white man to stabilize and guide them" (1948:1).

Thus, when the second wave of publications commenced in the later 1940s, researchers were still primarily influenced by the assumption that Aborigines had lost the past and their only future lay in assimilation. Assimilation assumed adherence to a set of values, expectations and behaviours believed by European policy makers to characterize an acceptable Australian lifestyle. The force behind the consequent research conducted in southeastern Australia was A P Elkin, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney (see Berndt 1982; Wise 1985). Elkin himself worked only briefly in New South Wales but students conducted several studies of acculturation processes throughout the State. These included J H Bell (1959, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1965), Malcolm Calley (1957, 1959, 1964, 1969), Ruth Fink (1955, 1957, 1964), Russell Hausfeld (1959, 1960), and Marie Reay (1945, 1946, 1949; Reay and Sitlington 1948). One of the only exceptions to this orientation was Berndt's (1947) study of Wiradjuri magic "as it lives today in the minds of a few old men".

These anthropologists recognized that vestiges of the past could still be discerned here and there but agreed that, overall, traditional life was a thing of the past. One view was that the old ways had been destroyed by the activities of Europeans who
had taken over land around which economic and ritual life once revolved, had discouraged the use of Aboriginal languages, and had attempted to enforce conformity to European standards of behaviour and morality. An alternative view was that Aborigines themselves had discarded their former practices in favour of options presented by Europeans. These included the desire for European foods and housing. What did remain from the past had been distorted and was often seen as dysfunctional:

Generally speaking, the part-aborigines of New South Wales have no culture of their own to preserve. There is the odd exception of a settlement where a few attenuated features of traditional life hang on, but these have little relevance to the people's way of life (Bell 1964:64).

Bell (1964:63) pointed out that assimilation was difficult because of the prejudice which existed at the time on the part of Europeans but may have ignored the extent to which this affected his own interpretations. He dismissed any notion that Aborigines had a different culture, maintaining that their distinctive "tightly knit groups" were solely a product of social, economic and cultural depression: "In other words, these groups are just like groups of poor whites" (1964:68).

To these anthropologists the lives of Aborigines at that time seemed in a state of disarray or anomie. On the basis of her work in rural New South Wales, Reay (1949:112) argued that:

When the culture of a group fails to adjust to radically changed external conditions, the group is apt to be characterized by the pathological condition of disequilibrium. ... A cursory glance at the place of the mixed-blood communities in the larger, predominantly European society, indicates that it is a pathological part of that society. ... Clearly, incompatible goals can be pursued, conflicting values held, without the group approaching disequilibrium, if the group is adequately structured. But a strong institutional structure is lacking here.

This ethnocentric, organicist and synchronic approach attempts to
account for the oddities of Aboriginal lifestyle as consequences of an Aboriginal failure to adjust to European domination. It presents Aborigines as a sick organism which has failed to respond in ways required of it. It does not acknowledge that Aboriginal people had a variety of responses, or that some responses were not available to them (see Chapters 2 and 3).

Anomie is not to be gauged by the extent to which vestiges of traditional culture persist, or get in the way, or in such factors as economic activity, household composition or other activities as they are assessed in terms of European norms and values. For instance, Kitaoji (1976:VII-52), in her study conducted in northern New South Wales, drew attention to the distinction that should be made between the destruction of tribal social organization and social deprivation: "The former is an historical fact; the latter is an inference". Calley (1957) did give some weight to the efficacy and influence of Aboriginal ways. In particular, he argued that Aborigines of the north coast had been able to reconcile some of their beliefs with those of Christianity, as did Hausfeld (1959). Both writers attribute the retention of traditional traits, however successfully incorporated, to the need to ameliorate their low status in Australian society by sustaining an alternative world from which Europeans could be excluded (see also, Rowley 1972). How this could have been achieved is not clear.

Such evaluations reflected the assumption that there was a continuum which could be drawn from "traditionally oriented" Aborigines to those who were "to all intents and purposes European" (Berndt 1963:386). For those in the centre of this continuum the analyst was required to decide "when the life of the people is no longer meaningful in traditional Aboriginal
terms, but is meaningful only or predominantly in European terms" (Berndt 1963:387). Aboriginal studies required that one or other of two determining cultures be selected as the reference point. In settled Australia, the European world was assumed to be all powerful and Aborigines were evaluated in predominantly European terms. The term "settled Australia" was introduced as a model by Rowley (1972:v) to denote the southeast and southwest regions of Australia "in which those enumerated as half-caste are approximately equal in number with those enumerated as Aboriginal in the 1961 census". Rowley described Aboriginal people in the mid-west of New South Wales as having "approached a higher degree of acceptance and integration" - to the extent that "one is forever looking for people where this has happened, since they may not be thought of as Aboriginal at all" (1972:vii). This last comment is curious. Aboriginal people would appear to have been very visible to Europeans in "fringe camps" and reserves. Bell, in fact, maintained that differences were obvious. He argued that the Aboriginal value system was "diametrically opposed to that of the European population" and that this was "one of the chief factors distinguishing them from Europeans" (1965:406, 1962). However, these differences were not interpreted as characteristics of Aboriginal societies but only as examples of why Aboriginal people were failing to enter into the relations expected of them.

The next wave of studies came primarily from the impetus provided by W E H Stanner, with Diane Barwick (1963, 1964, 1978) who conducted extensive research in Victoria, and Jeremy Beckett (1958, 1959, 1964, 1965) who worked in western New South Wales among the Wongaibon, Barkinji and Maljargapa people. Their contributions proved much less evaluative and thus more enduring.
Beckett was the first to argue for the New South Wales context that Aboriginal people had distinctive modes of interaction, as in kinship relations, drinking styles, and in mobility patterns - the Aboriginal "beat", which marked them off from Europeans. It was not the world of poor black whites. In many ways Beckett's work was before its time and was largely unheralded until recently (see, for example, Sansom 1982). Barwick's work took a similar approach, identifying social structures and activities which illustrated a coherence in Aboriginal social life. Studies elsewhere in settled Australia still focused on the success or otherwise of assimilation (see, for instance, Gale 1964, 1972; Inglis 1961, 1964; and Pierson 1972 in South Australia; and Eckermann 1974 and Smith and Biddle 1975 in south eastern Queensland).

The 1960s and early 1970s saw little research conducted in New South Wales. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, established under an Act of Parliament in 1964, was set up to "promote aboriginal studies". It focussed its brief on studies of traditional Aboriginal life. Ronald M Berndt was amongst those who would have liked to have seen this brief broadened. He maintained that:

To widen the Institute's focus at that time was quite a struggle. For a matter of several years, the Institute officially resisted studies of non-traditional themes, especially when these concerned the southern regions or political issues - these were considered to fit more appropriately within the frame of Aboriginal administration (Berndt 1982:57).

However, Berndt does not not recognize the constraints operating on the Institute. It was set up as a response to the call for urgent action to be taken to conduct Aboriginal studies before "the source material of many aspects of study in this field" disappeared (Mr Freeth, Minister for Shipping and Transport.
Commonwealth of Australia 1964:1943). The parliamentary debate stressed that the new Institute was to be academic: "It is not intended that the new institute should rival existing institutions" (Commonwealth of Australia 1964:1944). It was to be restricted to collection, processing and preservation of material about traditional Aboriginal society before it disappeared. Beazley, Member for Fremantle, was well aware of the tensions which were associated with the setting up of the Institute:

There can easily develop, among welfare officers and many authorities who are administering aboriginal affairs in the Commonwealth and in the States, a possessive attitude towards aborigines, a resentment if somebody else comes into the field and a particular resentment if somebody else's study reveals things which are inconvenient ... I believe that there is a clear contradiction between a general policy of assimilation, which means the disappearance of the aboriginal culture, and this battle to preserve, at least in record form, the aboriginal culture. A contradiction can easily develop between two sets of persons - the people who believe they are administering a policy of assimilation and the people who, for the sake of their studies, are encouraging the performances of ceremonies, recording the languages and so on (Commonwealth of Australia 1964:2160).

Thus, the Institute's existence was predicated on two lines of thought: first, Aboriginal traditional life ways were destined soon to disappear and, second, the operation of the policy of assimilation (and the protection of the industry set up to ensure it) was to remain paramount. It was hardly surprising that anthropological studies in "settled Australia" - which also had particularly entrenched welfare agencies - would not have been valued. In fact, amongst a people considered well on the way to assimilation, if not very successfully, such studies may have seemed to constitute a threat to this policy direction. The conflict Beazley identified was not confined to studies in remote areas of Australia.

It was not until the mid-1960s that the political climate in
Australia changed with considerable significance for Aboriginal people. This change stemmed from events in the international arena (such as the return of sovereignty to colonized nations). The 1967 Referendum in Australia awarded greater powers to the Commonwealth Government to intervene in Aboriginal issues and granted to Aborigines the same citizenship rights accorded to other Australians. In 1972 the Whitlam Labor government's policy of self-determination led to the setting up of a federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and to the increased funding of specific programmes for Aboriginal communities. The emphasis in the assessment and interpretation of Aborigines in Australian society began to change, at least for the politically liberal minded. For many Aborigines, Aboriginality became something to be proud of, to assert and exploit as greater financial resources became available to people of Aboriginal descent.

The "culture vacuum" approach, with its assumptions about the inevitability of an (unspecified) Europeanization, was then replaced with others that emphasized cultural integrity and the persistence of distinctly Aboriginal traits. Eckermana (1974, see also 1980) held that despite similarities with working class whites, urban Aborigines had a distinctive nexus of folk-lore, in-group identity and emphasis on "Aboriginality" which enabled individuals to distinguish themselves from whites. However, she still assumed that assimilation was inevitable: Aborigines would lose any distinctiveness and become indistinguishable from their European neighbours. The notion of assimilation rarely has any objective force. What assimilating into "Australian society" really means, or where the ideals and activities it presupposes come from, are not spelt out and can only be assumed to stem from the researcher's own background of beliefs and experiences.
Nevertheless, the dichotomy between the traditional and non-traditional was no longer seen as clear-cut by anthropologists. For example, Hausfeld (1974:11; also Long 1970:35; Lippmann 1973:187) argued that, in the case of "urban" Aborigines, there was "ample evidence that the traditional past maintains an influence on their life-styles and particularly on their thinking". The overwhelming tendency to study Aborigines with a view to change or conversion gave way to a consensus that Aboriginal communities in south-eastern Australia possessed characteristics which marked them off from both traditional and European peoples (see, for instance, Berndt 1974; McKeitch 1974). Kitaoji (1976:Ch.7,p.58) traced what she calls a reconstruction process, dating from the late nineteenth century, in which Aboriginal people of northern New South Wales developed a conscious and distinctive Aboriginal social identity. McKeitch (1974) also found the "part-Aboriginal" world view to be "a creative internal socio-cultural system" as well as a response to external influences.

What all these studies have in common is what I shall call a "vestiges approach" to Aboriginal life: Aborigines in settled Australia are credited with having maintained vestiges of the traditional past as a means of ameliorating the processes of change. Extended family structures, for instance, were still primary and extensive because of the need to stick together in times of adversity; their modes of sharing persisted because of poverty. Aborigines had retained, in modified form, features of the past which had come to have survival value. These features suggested that Aboriginal people had developed a new kind of social world, made up of traits extracted from both their traditional world and the European world. The approach is
primarily concerned with discerning the ways in which Aboriginal society can be distinguished from that of Europeans. In most research conducted through to 1970 there is an explicit or implicit evaluative component. The point of comparison, by which the Aboriginal world could be understood, was that of the values and structures held to be integral to white Australian ideals (or to the projections of the researcher). Thus, Aborigines suffered from broken down families (see Kitaoji's 1976:1.5-7 review) because they were not "nuclear" in composition or seemed unable to maintain stable marriages; "grandmother dominated" households were "often a last resort against disintegration" (Rowley 1980:138); Aborigines proved difficult to incorporate into viable economic or work-related relationships. The influences of the past were recognized but all too often seen as impediments rather than strengths. A high rate of alcohol use and of fighting between members have been common ways of illustrating the inability of Aboriginal people to cope with new circumstances. The focus was on their difficulty in adjusting to membership of Australian society.

The late 1970s and the 1980s have yielded another more dynamic emphasis. Not only were Aborigines in settled Australia seen to have a distinctive lifestyle but this was attained through resistance to European domination. This was the first real attempt to conceptualize colonial relations. Resistance or struggle are popular themes among historians at present (see Reece 1974, Reynolds 1981; Ryan 1981; Read 1982, 1983) but are also making their mark amongst anthropologists. As Stanner (1968:40) once commented:

[Anthropology] has shown itself ... to have been very susceptible to intellectual fashions exotic to itself, and especially to the particular science, philosophical
school, or general mode of scholarship that happens to be attracting attention.

What Stanner highlights here is the need to appreciate the political realities current at the time when field work and writing are being done. Beckett and Barwick, for instance, conducted their field work in the era of civil rights movements which were influencing attitudes about the status and rights of people in situations of relative powerlessness. This was also a time when the composition of the Australian population was changing with new waves of migration. A critique of the New South Wales literature in earlier decades must acknowledge that Australia as a whole was then a much more oppressive and homogeneous society.

The theme of struggle coincided with a broadening of political perspectives; it was an attempt to insert within the historical record the fact that Aborigines were actors as well as acted upon. Aboriginal civil rights issues had been brought to the forefront of Australian politics and this also highlighted another glaring omission: Aborigines had been written out of Australian history. There was an attempt in the late 1970s by historians such as Reynolds (1981), later supported by Aboriginal people themselves, to redress the balance in the presentation of an Aboriginal viewpoint regarding contact events and their aftermath. This was a laudable advance. However, in giving credit to Aboriginal action it is important to appreciate the constraints within which Aboriginal people had to live - and not only those imposed by Europeans. Constraints derived internally from within the Aboriginal world as well as from local, national and international political and economic contexts.

How the term resistance is being used is not always clear.
Is it intended to mean passive resistance as a refusal to comply with the wishes of Europeans? Or does it refer to a resistance movement of some kind? The argument would seem to state that, if Aborigines have retained distinctiveness, they must have achieved this through resistance to domination, whether in terms of social organization or of ideas - but how did they retain distinctiveness and for what reasons? Often what writers appear to be talking about is Aboriginal protest about the denial of access to resources, such as facilities and services - to share in the experiences of other Australians.

Beckett (1965) and Pink (1955) have both argued that alcohol abuse among Aborigines was a form of defiance. Calley (1959) interpreted religious movements on the north coast in a similar vein, as a form of millenarianism (see also, Rowley 1972:241ff). But if this is the case, why? What was it that was so significant about being Aboriginal in the new context that encouraged them to fight against the odds? Was there a conscious profit-and-loss type of comparison being made by Aboriginal people? How real were their options? Were they just a "contra-culture" group (Yinger 1960), defining themselves in terms of a rejection of the dominant society's values (Goldschmidt 1971)? Or were they defending something specifically and definably Aboriginal?

The resistance approach assumes that European society was dominant, powerful and necessarily engulfing, but that Aborigines were strong enough to withstand at least some of its pressures through defining themselves in contra-distinction to Europeans. It is a popular approach in current political and ideological stances, although it does not lead anywhere. It tells us nothing about the nature of Aboriginal society or about the relations in which Aborigines became involved. It could be argued that the
power of Europeans to bend Aboriginal people to their will was not sufficiently great and allowed scope for Aboriginal society to maintain a degree of autonomy. Alternatively, it might be that Aborigines were locked into their own history and unable to escape from it and adapt to the challenges of the new relationship.

This brief survey indicates successive stages in thinking about the ways in which Aborigines responded to the disturbance to their traditional life. As far as Aboriginal studies were concerned, the argument persisted that Aboriginal societies in southeastern Australia had disappeared — but what had happened to Aboriginal people? At first it was assumed that Aborigines would lose all aspects of traditional culture and would, in time, acquire European modes of thought and action. Stage two was based on a recognition that this was not taking place: Aborigines had been left in some kind of vacuum with neither the past to direct them nor success in adopting European modes in order to mould a new social environment. There was deprivation but no apparent acquisition. Then came an appreciation that traditional traits had persisted as vestiges to aid the adaptation process.

Underlying these approaches is the assumption that the "real" Aborigines are somewhere else. Inert and passive Aboriginal people are compared with two ideals to which they should conform. The point of comparison was either towards a traditional Aboriginal past, usually undescribed and evidently unmodifiable, or towards a world of Europeans, unspecified and apparently homogeneous. Later, the hailing of Aboriginal resistance and struggle to maintain aspects of their own ways of life led to a more dynamic appraisal of Aboriginal activity but still with no clear sense of what was being resisted and why.
Part of the problem in earlier studies has been the use of the notion of culture as, to use Sider's (1980:1) description, "ahistorical, non-processual and totalizing". It tended to assume an unchanging continuity over time: if Wiradjuri society did not display the characteristics with which it was associated early in the nineteenth century, it could be presumed to have disappeared. This methodological approach was current at the time when the government policy towards Aborigines was "assimilation". In discussing Ryan's 1981 review of Phillip Pepper's personal family history (Victorian Aborigines), Barwick (1981) pointed out what can only be described as a truism, however often neglected:

Culture is the current pattern for living, not just the 'traditional' pattern of life. We recognize the continuity of our own culture although beliefs and practices have changed. Our identity did not disappear when we adopted ideas from neighbours and conquerors and made them our own. Yet Ryan's comment that Pepper identifies as a "poor white" exemplifies the assimilationist thinking that denies a similar capacity to Aborigines (see also, von Sturmer 1973)

The relative lack of interest in the southeastern Aboriginal people among anthropologists may have been because remote Aboriginal cultures provided a greater degree of difference and were consequently seen as of value in comparative studies conducted on a global scale. However, it may also reflect the general Australian attitude which, according to Barwick (1981:81), had, until the 1940s, assumed homogeneity and monolingualism as the proper foundations for nation-building. The uncomfortable past of Aborigines and other minorities "deliberately encouraged an already deep-rooted belief that maintenance of group boundaries by people of different origins is improper and divisive". It would not have been prudent to encourage studies of Aboriginal people in areas of "settled" Australia which emphasized their difference from mainstream.
Australian values and lifestyles:

Except for a few students sent to study acculturation in the 1950s and 1960s, anthropologists virtually ignored the southern communities which had stubbornly preserved their identity despite the abandonment of ... rituals (Barwick 1981:82).

This charge could also be levelled at other social scientists, such as economists, political scientists, historians and sociologists. Of these, only historians can be said to have begun to redress the balance.

The "culture vacuum" argument was the result of taking traits — activities such as ceremonies, beliefs, styles of dress, modes of living and eating, skin colour and speech — and claiming that these had changed to the extent that nothing of the past remained. But such features are not the sum of a society's "pattern for living". Nor does the argument admit that social change as a factor in the on-going life of a colonized people does not necessarily constitute a movement towards westernization.

Aboriginal people in New South Wales no longer continue in unchanged form the ritual activities or the particular structures of kinship and marriage arrangements of the past. They now wear western-style clothes, purchase food from shops, and live for the most part in conventional Australian housing. The colonial experience has brought about significant and irreversible changes, including the changes in the use of Aboriginal languages, long assumed to be major carriers of culture and without which it has been presumed to die (see Dixon 1980; also critique of Dixon in Eades 1981). Most of what constitutes the European stereotype of "real Aborigines" is no longer apparent.

Earlier anthropologists saw Aboriginal society in New South Wales as a demolished building with rubble fast being carried off
and the foundations eroded away. For most New South Wales Aborigines activities such as initiations, corroborees and dreamtime myths are part of a history which now lies in the past. Time is spent at football knockouts and debutante balls, in card games and drinking sprees (see Chapter 5). Are Aborigines existing uneasily in a framework constructed for them by Europeans, or have they, consciously or otherwise, with the limited range of materials made available to them by the wider society, constructed a new edifice?

Dependence on Europeans was established early in the history of the colonization of Australia. However, while this is an objective fact, it does not explain how Aboriginal people have created a political rhetoric or discourse about it. In what sense do Aborigines today design their own world or have it designed for them? To what extent are factors in European society responsible for what they are or for limiting their options? How are these to be identified? Barwick (1981:74) succinctly identifies the issue as:

...the discrepancy between the concepts of Aboriginal identity and culture held by present-day Aborigines in south-eastern Australia and those of other Australians, who have for almost two centuries claimed power to decide which people should be permitted to define themselves as Aborigines and what Aboriginal culture should consist of.

Barwick's comment may be expanded to explore the extent to which the claiming of the power to define Aborigines and their culture has in fact been exerted in the past.

Collapse and decay was what was expected of traditional cultural forms in the face of colonization, and many did decay or disintegrate. What is not obvious is why this should lead Europeans to assume a static state of culturelessness and anomie in the twentieth century. Certainly it was expected that, to
borrow from Veliz (1976:6), Aborigines would become:

... a more or less adequate reflection of other people's creativity, or a dutiful transmitter of a received cultural inheritance to which little or nothing is added except what is imported from elsewhere.

Aborigines in New South Wales were presumed to be failures because the only norms with which they could be compared were those of "traditional" Aborigines or those of Europeans. Europeans assumed that the cultural inheritance to be received by Aborigines would be their own. It seems that Aborigines were, indeed, meant to become black versions of "poor whites".

This approach reflects the failure of Europeans to come to terms with the Aboriginal world. Lévi-Strauss's words are pertinent in this context. He observed that:

Cultures ... seem to us all the more active when they go in the same direction as ours, and stationary when their direction diverges ... Each time we tend to classify a human culture as inert or static, we must ask ourselves if this apparent lack of mobility does not result from our ignorance of its true interests, conscious or unconscious; and if, possessing criteria different from our own, this culture is not - as far as we are concerned - victim of the same illusion (1973:341).

This study argues that the Wiradjuri world has been far from "inert or static", that values and modes of social organization which have been retained do not demonstrate inertia, and that any decay or disintegration has been limited to certain activities and has not overtaken that world as a whole. Although European legislators and policy makers aimed at changes which would encourage Aboriginal people to adopt European ways, distinctive characteristics of Aboriginal social life have not disappeared. Because Aboriginal activity does not match the views European have of what constitutes a proper society, it has been interpreted as failure or apathy rather than as something positive or, perhaps more to the point, necessary.
1.3: Conceptual clarification and thesis outline

1.3.1: Components of a theory of colonization

The major weakness in the literature surveyed is the lack of a theory within which to analyze the relations set up in the colonization process. Such a theory would need to have general applicability, that is, it would have to apply over and above particular historical and political forces but able to take these into account in the analysis. Before discussing what I mean by a process of colonization, I want to briefly clarify some of the main concepts I am using: in particular, how I see the relationship between a domain and a way of being, as the central analytical tools used in the thesis, and other concepts which will assist in the development of a theory of colonization.

Environment:

Environment is a term which is used both in an unlimited and a limited sense. The reference is usually clear from the context in which it is used. In its most general sense it refers to all those components which comprise a spatial, material, social or ideational universe, or the sum of all of these as the "world" or "universe" more generally. It is more commonly used in a restricted sense to refer to surroundings or situations whose limits or boundaries are specified by a particular context - an environment of ideas, or people, or an ecological environment. In the case of this or that specified usage, the wider environment is often implied as being influential in some way. I am using the term in the present study to refer to the totality of material, social and ideational components which make up the environment in which particular social aggregates live. The Wiradjuri environment indicates the spatial, material and social arena within which Wiradjuri people act or which shapes their
activities.

The concept of environment should be read as loosely bounded to the extent that one environment may be analytically distinguished from another. I assume that the environment exists irrespective of whether all its components are brought into the consciousness of individuals or not. Potentially all components are available to be brought into consciousness. Some components may be brought into one person's experience but not into that of another person. People may also perceive components of an environment in different ways, both those who are part of an environment and between any of these people and an analyst. The definition of any given environment is also subject to an emic and etic viewpoint.

Components of an environment/resource base:

People interact with components of the environment: with other people and ideas; the land and its subsurface, material objects, animals, vegetation, weather, and so on. Some components of the environment are brought into the pool of resources utilized in social life. Which components are or are not utilized and how, and which are given positive or negative value, will shape particular patterns of social life. Any change in one or more components will change the way in which an environment is constituted. Components may constitute part of a meaning system without becoming resources. Not all components are utilized and some may be given negative value by people who are part of environment. Knowledge of a component alone does not constitute it as a resource. The designation of a component as a resource distinguishes it from non-resource components.

A resource base does not usually include a total environment - unless the term is specifically used to denote "an environment
of resources" of some kind. However, I wish to distinguish between the environment as a potential source of resources and a resource base as those components of the environment which are actually utilized.

**Base/new/previous environment:**

To the extent that environments may be distinguished from each other we can specify patterns of human movement between environments - from one environment of ideas to another, from one ecological area to another, from one land mass to another. I shall refer to the starting point for tracing a person's movements as their 'base environment' in order to distinguish this from the 'new environment' into which they move. Such movements need not necessarily be defined in spatial terms. The term 'base environment' in the context of this discussion implies that people still use resources derived from the base environment after they have moved into a new environment. When this is not the case, I shall refer to the environment from which a person has moved as the 'previous environment'.

**Domain:**

A domain differs from an environment and a resource base in that it refers only to those components of the environment over which an individual or aggregate perceive themselves as having the power to define or control. "My" domain thus becomes those spatial, social and ideational components of the environment which I use to define self in the world and by which I differentiate self from "other". I perceive myself as being able to control the conditions of my domain, whether or not I "own" it in any legal sense.

Wiradjuri people are engaged in relations with other persons in Australian society but also have an existence apart. They
engage in activities and structure their spatial and social relations in ways which distinguish them from non-Wiradjuri Aboriginal people and from Europeans. I became increasingly aware during field work that I was operating within two different domains and had to make a choice between them in the way I spent my time. I either became part of the Koori world or part of the European world in Cowra.

The notion of domain implies a relationship with other domains. A domain is not a closed system although it may be closed in terms of social recruitment (see Weber 1964:139ff). The term domain has been specifically developed in the work of von Sturmer (1980) to conceptualize the two worlds of Aboriginal and European experience. As a result of his field experiences, he maintained that:

In parts of remote Australia it is possible to talk of Aboriginal domains, areas in which the dominant social life and culture are Aboriginal, where the major language or languages are Aboriginal, where the system of knowledge is Aboriginal; in short, where the resident Aboriginal population constitutes the public.

The notion of domain is as applicable in the Wiradjuri context today as in remote parts of Australia. Wiradjuri people also live within a domain which may be distinguished from that of the European domain. When I spent time with Kooris in Cowra I found myself expected, as an outsider, to:

... accommodate and adhere to the rules of behaving, the proper social forms, the correct social etiquette, the dominant values set and observed by this public (von Sturmer 1980).

My task is to discover whether the notion of domain is able to explicate the variability of colonization processes and enable a study of adjustment, conflicts and interrelationships.
Transformation:

By transformation, I am referring to a particular mode of
adjustment in a way of being. Kapferer's model of transformational processes, developed for his analysis of ritual, identifies transformation as "an aspect of context and of the elements (objects, actions, symbols, and identities) which comprise a context". A context is "a set of related elements, a matrix of elements and their relations, which together and in the interrelation constitute a particular framework of meaning" (Kapferer 1979:3-4). This "framework of meaning" would need to be demonstrated on both an emic and etic level.

Transformation may occur in the context - which always implies a re-arrangement in the constituent elements --; or in the elements themselves without a necessary transformation of context. One might, for instance, observe change in the rituals associated with wedding ceremonies but no change in the meanings given to marriage itself. On the other hand, the changes in rituals may be the result of more profound transformations in the significance of marriage as a social institution. My approach assumes that any change which has taken place is accommodated in terms of a people's own way of being and thus assumes the persistence of a distinct but modified domain.

Conflict and crisis:

In the study of the Wiradjuri domain it will also be possible to examine the extent to which colonization processes introduce contradictions which lead to conflict or to what has been referred to as crisis or "cultural trauma" (Sullivan 1986). There is a currently popular thesis that colonization has produced levels of stress in Aboriginal communities which make it very difficult for them to operate effectively or positively as social entities. This suggests that Aboriginal people are unable to activate their preferred way of being or that there is no
system or connectedness between components of their way of being.

The process of colonization

Colonization occurs when people who have constituted themselves as social actors in one environment take up residence in another environment and, by virtue of their access to the resources of their base environment, are able to use or alter the new environment in terms of their own way of being.

The introduction of technologies, people and ideas into an environment by colonizers will result in changes to that environment. It may be altered to the extent that it ceases to exist in its former state. This may be because it has been destroyed in the colonizing process or because it has been transformed into part of the resource base of the colonizing members such that it ceases to have its former identity. As components of an environment are utilized rather than the environment as a whole, changes in a component will affect the environment to the extent that those components changed interact with others.

The communications established in a colonization process are not between societies but between persons or groupings of persons. The distinction is important. Colonization need not mean a uniform or all pervasive process. A society is not an entity in itself which acts as a whole. The term refers to people who are in sets of relationships which are variously constructed and conditioned by features of the environment. A designation of sets of relationships as a society distinct from neighbouring ones would rest on an assumption that there is a binding force which unites people over and above their differences. I am arguing that it is only feasible to make generalizations about an aggregation's way of being at the level of domain - at that level
where it can be ascertained that there is demonstrable correspondence between emic and etic levels of analysis.

Colonization differs from migration: it is the extension of an existing resource base rather than a shift to an alternative. It is the ability of the colonizers to draw on the resources of their base society which makes it possible for small groups and individuals to colonize another environment. It is not necessary that large numbers of people be involved. Nor is it necessary that the colonizers be a united force. They may enter the new environment at various times and in various ways. All that is required is that they have access to the resources of their base environment. The links established between the colonizers and the base environment may be numerous and varied. The colonizers may, over time, establish different relations with the base, becoming socially and politically independent of resources they had once relied upon.

The colonizers bring to bear on the new environment their general and particular conceptions of what it means to be in the world. The colonizers' way of being will include the meanings given to materials, people and ideas as resources, and their notions about what constitutes proper social behaviour.

If the new environment does not contain people (and thus ideas) it can be assumed that the only constraints that will operate on the extension of the preferred way of being of the colonizers will be those presented by the material features at hand and the capacity of the colonizers to utilize these to their own advantage. What difference does it make if the environment also contains people? The model does not change. People and ideas are part of the environment to be utilized: they constitute a potential resource in the same way as physical features. The
extent to which components of the environment are exploited by the colonizers will depend upon: (a) the way in which the colonizers conceive of a resource base; (b) their capacity to effectively exploit that environment in order to extend their resource base; (c) the extent to which they are dependent from time to time upon the new environment; and (d) the extent to which they need to accommodate constraints imposed by the new environment.

Some components of the new environment may take on immediate significance as part of the colonizers' resource base, others may be ignored. Some will take on value for a limited period only, perhaps in a transitional phase whilst awaiting supplies from the base. Others will be drawn into a relationship which might have first been concealed or ignored but which is later found to have value. A study of the colonizing process thus involves an examination of the ways in which the colonizers selectively attempt to exploit components of the environment in terms of their own way of being and the consequences of this exploitation for adjustments in that way of being.

Some components of the environment may not be amenable to exploitation. It is then necessary to discover what is exploited and why, and with what consequences for the environment and for the colonizers. The relationship is not one-sided. The environment has its own way of being, whether conceived in material or social terms, which may impede or frustrate attempts to exploit it. The colonizers may chose to ignore the country, persons or ideas they are unable to exploit, or they may be required to accommodate constraints on their preferred way of being. The colonizers will be involved in a process of adaptation.
The study of the impact of colonization on a physical environment alone belongs to other disciplines. However, this impact is important for my purposes to the extent that material changes alter an environment which includes people, whether or not they are directly involved in relations with colonizers.

The aspect of the colonization process with which I am concerned can now be described as occurring when members of one environment penetrate a new environment in which exist other people with different ways of being. Other colonizers may have entered the environment prior to new arrivals which will influence a new phase.

However, the colonizers do not have to use components of the environment as resources in the way in which they have been defined as resources by the prior occupants. In fact, it is a feature of colonization that they will not do so. Colonizers are engaged in extending another resource base: they are already operating out of a framework developed in their base environment. They will place value on the new environment selectively to the extent that the process enables an extension of the resources they already possess.

The impact of colonization on the environment will thus depend upon a complex of factors. Its consequences may be evaluated as positive or negative by either the colonizers or those whose environment is being colonized. If the same components are perceived as resources by both parties, a situation of competition will arise as to who is going to define and control access to these components. The disturbances set up by such competition may be minimal or may lead to situations of crisis. Some means of deciding the extent of accommodation or whose interests are going to prevail will be necessary.
Negotiation or compromise may give rise to a situation in which one party redefines a part of its resource base without major adjustments being required of its own way of being.

Colonization need not disturb an existing resource base. It is possible, at least analytically, to conceive of two parties occupying the same life space and operating on it in different and separate ways. This may be restricted to cases in which small numbers are involved, where the environment provides ample scope for the expression of different ways of being. It will not be possible if the features variously interpreted are in insufficient supply, or where the use of materials, people or ideas by one party as a resource affects parts of the environment which are not being utilized but which are part of the other party's resource base. The effects of colonization may thus be conceived as being direct or indirect.

The conflicts which potentially arise may be dealt with in various ways. Those components of the environment which impede the utilization of other components as resources may be eliminated in some way or defined as non-essential. Renewed efforts may be made: modifications in the environment, or in the technology brought to bear upon it, may render it exploitable. Alternatively, the colonizers may be required to further adjust their own way of being in accommodating constraints.

The extent to which such options are available depends on a variety of factors: the colonizers' own way of being, conflicts of interests among the colonizers, their skills and technological expertise, and the nature of the relations maintained with the base environment (including the interests of those people who are part of the base environment). All of these may be brought to bear on the new environment but they also set potential limits on
what may be exploited and how.

It is now that we can return to the earlier point that it is not a society which colonizes another as if there were two homogeneous units involved. It is important to recognize that the responses of the colonizers or of prior occupants of the new environment may vary significantly. Neither the ease of exploitation nor levels of conflict or disturbance which may ensue can be expected to be uniform across an environment. There are many variables which need to be taken into account. Nor does colonization take place simultaneously throughout an environment, although the experiences of either colonizers or those colonized in one area may influence people in other areas to the extent that they are interconnected. The actual communications set up between people in sets of interactions and the material environment in any place and time will differ from those set up elsewhere but may influence each other. Conflicts which arise in one area may not occur in another. The process is not uniform; the experience of people in one part of an environment cannot be used to demonstrate the nature of the whole. It is a dynamic and complex process which changes over time in terms of form and content.

In fact, it is not possible to speak of people as having completely colonized others unless it can be demonstrated that the people colonized have completely ceased to act out their own way of being and have been totally absorbed into the way of being of the colonizers. Only then is the process of colonization complete and its study relegated to history. Colonization cannot be said to have taken place to the extent that there are materials, people or ideas in the environment which have not been used, transformed or obliterated in the interests of the
colonizers. This does not imply that modification and transformation have not taken place but only that prior occupants maintain their own, but altered, way of being as force apart from that of the colonizers but subject to new constraints introduced by the colonizers.

There is another process involved which has a bearing on this discussion: that of recolonization. The process of colonization may be made more complex to the extent that prior occupants maintain separate and different ways of being. The colonizers, in redefining the existing resource base, thereby introduce a new set of resources which become potentially available for prior occupants to colonize in turn. The prior occupants may extend their own resource base in incorporating these new resources into their own way of being. This will involve them in redefining components of the environment now part of the colonizers' resource base in terms of their own way of being. Recolonization can be going on at the same time as colonization. The processes are likely to be interpreted differently by either party.

My approach has some similarities with that of cultural ecologists who use systems analysis to focus on the nature of interactions between a social group and its environment (see Orlove 1980). The environment in this study is more than a complex ecosystem (cf. Rappoport 1967): it involves an ecosystem within which live different aggregations with complex social, political and economic systems. Nevertheless, I am interested in the relations between the Wiradjuri and these other systems which make up the total environment (see also, Easton 1979 on systems analysis of political systems). Changes in this environment impinge on the Wiradjuri domain and the study of the persistence
of this domain does not assume that it maintains equilibrium (see further, Vayda and MacKay 1975, 1977), nor that adaptive strategies on the part of the Wiradjuri are necessarily conscious, deliberate, or associated with identifiable goals. The mechanism for change that I focus on is the continual process of colonization and recolonization.

I have used the notion of domain in order to analytically separate Koori perceptions of themselves in the environment from that environment, thus using an emic level of analysis as a basis without suggesting that this represents an actuality in real terms. Having distinguished the Koori domain, however, it is then possible to study changes and tensions within it, especially as these relate to interaction with the environment (as with the ecologists' notion of change brought about by environmental stress, see Vayda and MacKay 1975, 1977).

At this point I will summarize this discussion before proceeding to the particular aims and outline of this thesis:

a) Colonization is taking place whenever and wherever people move from their base environment into a new environment occupied by other people. Thus, two or more persons with different ways of being occupy the same environment. One of these ways of being has been constituted in a different environment. The two parties are potentially in competition over the power to define, exploit and control access to components of the shared environment as part of their respective resource bases.

b) The extension of a resource base assumes the power or capacity to exploit components of a new environment to one's advantage.

c) The extent to which an environment may be colonized depends
upon constraints operating both within that environment and within the base environment of the colonizers. Components of the environment may be amenable to exploitation, unable to be exploited or only partially exploited. The environment is selectively and variously colonized and selectively and variously responds to the process of colonization.

d) Potential exists for prior owners to recolonize components of the environment.

e) Colonization is a process, not a completed act.

What I have set out above are the rudiments of a theory of colonization. The following study of the Wiradjuri domain provides data with which to explore further dimensions of this theory with a view to developing a methodology for the analysis of the colonization process in general and in particular instances.

In this present study I discuss the way of being within a Wiradjuri domain, as part of an environment which has been colonized by Europeans. For the general project to proceed, it would next require a study of the colonizers of the Wiradjuri environment. This thesis thus represents Stage 1 of a study of two perspectives, both of which will eventually need to be seen in their interrelationship.

My first step has been to conceptualize the Wiradjuri people in Cowra’s experience of ownership or control over part of their overall environment as a domain which can be analytically distinguished from other domains. I then describe the major characteristics of the Wiradjuri way of being as it is expressed within their domain. This enables me to identify the nature of the exchanges, direct and indirect, which take place within the Wiradjuri domain and between this domain and others. I have
glossed non-Wiradjuri domains as being one European domain for the purposes of this initial study as the analysis of these domains has yet to be conducted. At a later stage, it will be necessary to identify salient sub-domains more rigorously and to use other analyses of the interacting domains as a means of refining and testing this analysis of the Wiradjuri domain.

1.3.2: The thesis outline

Part II: The persistence of the Wiradjuri domain

The relationship between the Wiradjuri and European domains involves a complex of relationships developed between different people. Wiradjuri people have been in contact with a great number of Europeans in a variety of ways over a long period. The study in Part II, of this thesis (Chapters 2 to 4), shows that their experience has not been uniform. Different people responded to the European presence in various ways, as did Europeans to Aborigines. There have been various forces, within the Wiradjuri, within Australia and from overseas, which have shaped the particular characteristics of the Wiradjuri experience over time. These have influenced the patterns of relationships Wiradjuri people entered into with Europeans which, in turn, have led to what are different sectors of the European domain — which both Europeans and Wiradjuri experience differentially. For Wiradjuri people there have been government officials, local white sponsors, hostile individuals and groups, missionaries and the like. Different experiences on the part of Wiradjuri people with Europeans mean that there are differentiations made between people within the Wiradjuri domain, which give rise to different Wiradjuri sectors.

Chapter 2 traces the relationships built up between
Wiradjuri people and Europeans in the nineteenth century when European approaches towards Aboriginal people were diverse and unco-ordinated. I have examined the options available to Wiradjuri people. They did not all respond in the same ways, nor were their experiences of Europeans uniform throughout this vast area. The strategies included attempts to incorporate Europeans into their own social networks, armed resistance, and withdrawal. Europeans also made concerted efforts, both to incorporate and eliminate Wiradjuri people.

The constraints imposed on the Wiradjuri domain by Europeans become more evident in looking at the twentieth century "mission era", the period from 1890 to the mid-1960s. Chapter 3 goes on to examine the intensification of European attempts to restrict and curtail Aboriginal activity whilst also preparing Aborigines for entry into the European way of being. An important agent in this was the Aboriginal Protection Board which operated under the Aborigines Protection Act 1909. This Act ensured the inferior legal status of Aborigines. Official policies directly controlled more and more of Wiradjuri social life and movements. However, this also encouraged the persistence of the Wiradjuri domain and Wiradjuri people have maintained a degree of autonomy in the defining of their social existence.

Chapter 4 examines the present Wiradjuri domain as observed in the town of Cowra and demonstrates the continuing presence of a spatial and social Wiradjuri domain which is distinguished by both Wiradjuri people and Europeans as being different from the European domain in several ways. To Europeans this has often seemed to reflect the failure of government policies of assimilation or incorporation. That is, they acknowledge that Wiradjuri people live differently but do not accord this
lifestyle legitimacy. The continuing presence of the two domains is not solely a consequence of policies which segregated Kooris rather than incorporated them, nor of European racist attitudes, although they play a part in its shaping. It is also due to the continuing and conscious distinction the Wiradjuri make between their world and that of Europeans. Wiradjuri people regard the country in which they live differently, and choose and evaluate their activities differently.

Part III: Ways of being in the Wiradjuri domain

In Part III, I turn to an analysis of the internal dynamics of the Wiradjuri domain in Cowra today. Almost two centuries of colonization have changed Wiradjuri lifestyles considerably - but how and, more pertinently, in what directions? What is it that is distinctive about Wiradjuri experience after decades of European influence? Nevertheless, constraints imposed by Europeans changed the conditions for the reproduction of Wiradjuri social relations according to past principles of structuration. The Wiradjuri were compelled to alter or transform many of the defining characteristics of their social life.

Identifying and describing features of the Wiradjuri domain has not been an easy task: of all Aboriginal people in Australia those in New South Wales probably resemble least the prevailing Australian stereotypes about what a "real" Aborigine is and does. To many Europeans, the material world at hand appears to be the same as theirs. Many of the activities in which Aboriginal people engage are, superficially at least, similar to those of Europeans. This has frequently led to the assumption on the part of Europeans that the values embodied in that world will also be the same. In what sense could activities and values be described as distinctly Wiradjuri? My task was to establish the extent to
which Wiradjuri people regard their world through different eyes.

In Chapter 5 I look at day-to-day activities within the Koori domain. Although Europeans themselves often state that these do not seem very different from their own ways of spending time, they nevertheless often depict much Koori activity as enervate or as anomic. What significance does the analysis of difference in terms of domains have for understanding these attitudes? Von Sturmer (1984b:220), for instance, has described Aboriginal drinking and fighting as two phenomena which are commonly subject to misinterpretation by Europeans and he suggests that this is due to the difference between the Aboriginal and European domains in terms of the categorization of public and private behaviour, and public and private spaces. I have focussed on fighting activity in this chapter as an apt example of differences in Koori and European ways of being and in the ways they each perceive their domains.

Kinship is a central feature of the composition of groupings who gather to spend time together for various reasons. The Wiradjuri kinship system is not merely the *ad hoc* vestige of a traditional system glossed as an "extended family": it is a system in its own right. Chapter 6 looks at this system in depth because it is fundamental to understanding the organization of the Wiradjuri domain, relations of people over time, residence and mobility patterns, and forms of exchange. It is possible to discern the transformation of past principles of kinship in the different environment moulded by European-introduced constraints. There are conflicts between kin and tensions are especially apparent in marital relations. Are these tensions the result of stress imposed on the Wiradjuri way of being in the colonization process, and are they generated within the Wiradjuri domain or
externally?

As important as kin relations are those which make up what is known as "the community". These are discussed in Chapter 7. The concept of community cuts across the organization of people on kinship lines. Localized groups of Kooris have always defined themselves in distinction to other local groups, just as there are several Wiradjuri communities today of which Cowra is one. The differences are often a direct result of European policies and actions over time which have influenced the composition of groups and the extent to which Kooris could articulate as individuals or groups with the European domain. Kooris also employ a system of differentiation which sets up Koori sub-domains within the local community.

The composition of the community today complicates and sometimes impedes the exercise of authority within the Wiradjuri domain. Chapter 8 looks at the way Wiradjuri people conceptualize and legitimize authority relations. It identifies some of the pressures which arise as a result of the difference between Wiradjuri and European perceptions of authority and control. There is a distinctive style of leadership which tends to encourage competitiveness. The structuring of aspects of this system has been both impeded and encouraged by Europeans.

This chapter also looks at the ways in which changes have been brought about by recent history and government policy. Certain styles of relating between Kooris, as well as between Kooris and Europeans, are a direct result of the relationships generated by modes of resource allocation. New contradictions emerge as changing demands necessitate new structures and new styles of relating. Decision-making processes require new responses and conflicts may be made, temporarily at least, harder
to manage. The way in which community groups have been composed over time means that this system can produce a high degree of factionalism within the Koori domain where there are competing Koori allocators or aspirants. However, in the case of Cowra, I shall argue that the composition of the local community is not such that this has become a major problem.

The distinctive "Koori way" of being is predicated on styles of interaction which I discuss in Chapter 9. These are frequently pointed to by Wiradjuri people when they wish to distinguish their ways from those of Europeans. These modes of interaction help to make sense of the particular way in which social relations are structured. The activities in which people involve themselves, and the reasons for them, have to do with historical events which shape interaction in particular ways and also with values and perspectives held by Kooris.

Part IV - Modes of adjustment

Chapter 10 takes a more detailed look at economic perspectives, particularly as these relate to Wiradjuri attitudes towards work and money. Forces and relations of production are an essential component of social life: there must be material resources and sets of relationships involved in the utilization of these resources. Colonization may imply that the Wiradjuri domain will necessarily become part of the forces and relations of production of the Australian economic system generally. However, I argue that it is possible to interpret the Wiradjuri resource base as being perceived differently by Kooris from attitudes normally associated with economic involvement in a capitalist economy. This discussion also enables me to examine the concept of transformation as a mode of adjustment to change.

In Chapter 11 the focus shifts to Koori fighting activity.
Fighting has been used as an index of social disintegration in Aboriginal society, as an inability to cope with the stresses of colonization. I argue that, despite some fights getting out of control, fighting represents a mode of adjustment rather than a breakdown of the social order.

Part V: Towards a Theory of Colonization

In Chapter 12 I outline the concept of domain and review its utility for the study of relationships established as a result of colonization. I then expand on the components of a theory of colonization, highlighting useful and problematic concepts will require attention in the development of a general theory of colonization.
PART II

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE WIRADJURI DOMAIN
CHAPTER 2: RESHAPING THE WIRADJURI WORLD

2.1: The invasion of Wiradjuri country

2.1.1: Introduction

This chapter looks at the entry of Europeans into the Wiradjuri domain and the various relationships, including mutual hostility and mutual co-operation between colonizer and colonized which ensued. Over the past 170 years, Europeans have redefined most of Wiradjuri country and thus the lifestyle of its people. In doing so, they have assumed their own superiority and the inevitability of Aboriginal absorption into their resource base. However, in this overview of nineteenth and twentieth century relations, I argue that the Wiradjuri perspective has been quite different. They have continued to interpret their spatial and social domains as being distinct from those of Europeans and have gone to great lengths at times to preserve them from further encroachment. This is not to argue that Wiradjuri people have not, in several ways, tried to build up relations with the European domain but that, in doing so, they did not relinquish their perception of an existence apart. The questions, then, are: How? Why? And with what implications for their relationships with Europeans and among each other?

It has not been my intention here to write a comprehensive history. The nineteenth century account of the Wiradjuri experience is covered in more depth than that of the twentieth century as it has not previously been collated but further work is required on early literature sources to compile a comprehensive history. A detailed history of the Wiradjuri people from the 1890s to the 1960s has been written by Peter Read (1983), along with oral histories of Cowra Kooris (Read 1984). My aim has been to
identify, through historical accounts, how Wiradjuri and Europeans have responded to each other over time and the ways in which their relationships with each other have been structured.

2.1.2: The redefining of Wiradjuri country

Wiradjuri country, its population and the Wiradjuri way of life were all to change dramatically with the advent of Europeans. The British colony of New South Wales expanded after 1788 both north and south of Sydney. The western Blue Mountains, part of the Great Dividing Range which extends the length of eastern Australia leaving a narrow coastal strip, were only 80 kilometres away to the west but it was not until 1813 that European explorers discovered a path across them. However, as early as 1815 the road to Bathurst (225 kilometres west of Sydney) had been completed, opening up the pastorally rich central region of New South Wales.

In May 1815 the explorer, Evans, reached the hills overlooking the plains upon which the town of Cowra would later be developed. He recorded seeing the smoke from several campfires in the distance. Although he and his party only saw a few Aborigines, they estimated them to be numerous from the number of fireplaces and the piles of emu feathers around them (Evans 1815:615). In 1817 Oxley's expedition reported that:

Considerable numbers of natives were found encamped on the banks of the river, and the lagoons and pools were full of fish [perch and Murray cod] and covered with wild fowl (Bennett 1865:458).

From this point encroachment onto the land which until then had been exclusively the preserve of Wiradjuri people was rapid. By 1819 there were 24 flocks of sheep and 1400 head of cattle west of the mountains. Numbers increased rapidly (Blainey 1975:77; see also Bennett 1865:524). Blainey (1975:81) argued that:
The invasion of inland pastures was swift. It encompassed big areas of land because most land seekers were not just content to find sufficient grassland on which to pasture their existing flocks. As a flock of sheep doubled every few years, its owner wanted a kingdom large enough to hold the number of sheep he thought he would own in five or ten or fifteen years' time. Men who needed only 5000 acres of land claimed 100,000 or more acres, their claims consisting not of buying the land but of erecting shepherds' huts and sheepyards at scattered parts of their sheep runs ... This was not an orderly, neat invasion of new country. It was more like a gold rush.

The landscape upon which the Wiradjuri depended for their hunting and gathering changed dramatically. Ironically, the Aboriginal practice of firing grasslands to provide an attractive habitat for animals and to facilitate plant gathering also provided an ideal pastureland for the introduced animals. Sheep and cattle destroyed the native flora and fauna with "extraordinary speed" (Butlin 1983:95).

Whether or not Wiradjuri people knew of the presence of Europeans on the coast prior to the crossing of the mountains is unknown (see further, Reynolds 1981:11ff). Reactions when whites were first sighted were described as reflecting fear (Evans 1815:616), suggesting that even if they had heard of Europeans they either did not expect to see them or were not prepared for what they saw. Some Wiradjuri people already bore signs of the European presence in the form of smallpox scars and were to suffer again from a second outbreak in 1830 (Bennett 1834:148ff; Butlin 1983:13,24). It seems the Wiradjuri themselves did not initially attribute this devastating disease to Europeans but to malignant spirits sent from south-western tribes living downstream (Reynolds 1981:47). Robinson (in Mackaness 1941:348) noticed in 1844 that Wiradjuri numbers in the eastern part of Wiradjuri country had been greatly reduced compared with his earlier visit:
Their diminution is attributable to several Causes. In their petty feuds and intestine strifes several have been sacrificed but hundred have fallen victims to the dire effects of European disease. Variola or Small Pox often of a confluent description, Influenza, Feveris and Syphilis have extended their baneful influences to the remotest parts of the Interior ... Ophthalmia in some parts is Indemic (punctuation and spelling as in original).

Beveridge (1883:35) reported the devastating effects on a people who had so many dead they could not even bury them all but who blamed other Aborigines rather than Europeans:

All the men in these tribes show distinct small-pox traces. In speaking of this scourge they say that it came with the waters, that is to say, it followed down the rivers in the early flood seasons, laying its death clutch on every tribe in its progress, until the whole country became perfectly decimated ... The aborigines attributed this pestilence to the malign machinations of tribes away on the upper rivers, with whom they were not on terms of amity; that however is only a matter of course, since they ascribe all the ills with which nature smites them to the same source.

It is not possible from the early literature to typify the Wiradjuri reactions to Europeans. They were described by some of the first Europeans they encountered as cautious but non-violent — "timid, inoffensive and friendly" (Salisbury and Gressor 1971:9). They displayed at different times terror, anger, curiosity and mirth. No doubt these reactions also changed over time for individuals and groups.

After a careful watching of the movements of the newcomers there were attempts to form some kind of relationship with them. There were many whites incorporated into kinship networks — the traditional means by which strangers could be accepted. As happened in other parts of Australia (Reynolds 1981:25), the Wiradjuri may also have assumed the newcomers to be spirits returned from the dead. (Ferry 1979:32; see also Salisbury and Gressor 1971:12) If this was the case, they were evidently regarded as known spirits reborn in humans. Aborigines claimed
they "recognized" some Europeans from previous human-spirit form. That Aborigines were initially alarmed is to be expected. That they should have continued to be in awe and fear of whites was probably the latter's assumption.

Oxley's first expedition reported that the Aborigines around the Lachlan "behaved throughout in a very peaceable and friendly manner" (Bennett 1865:458) but this did not last long: the first clash with the Wiradjuri people in the Cowra area came less than two years after the explorer's first visit. Troops had to be sent to the Lachlan River depot which had been set up near Warwick Plains in 1816 to keep stores for Oxley's 1817 expedition (Steel 1932:1; Craze 1977:16). Amongst the items stolen by the blacks were firearms, which they evidently knew how to use as a young soldier was shot in the attempt to recover them (Craze 1977:16).

At first, of course, the explorers were only passing through (see Reynolds 1981:53) and the Wiradjuri may have expected to share with these strange visitors according to Aboriginal convention when others camped in one's country. Several explorers and early settlers met with goodwill and were provided with food in exchange for European goods (see also, Hardy 1976:51). Several Aborigines were willing to act as guides for them. Aborigines seem to have encouraged co-operative relations as long as Europeans extended gifts and did not intrude on Aboriginal lifestyles. The realization that Europeans were here to stay may have dawned slowly. Hardy (1976:117) has suggested that their willingness to act as guides and hand over the travellers to neighbouring groups may have been the most effective way of ridding themselves of undesirable guests but there is little evidence for this view. Where Aboriginal people were not willing to tolerate a European presence they showed no reluctance in using violence.
2.1.3: The development of Wiradjuri country

Europeans did not know how to accommodate themselves to the devastating effects of floods and droughts as did the Wiradjuri. Musgrave (1926:34–37) described the great flood of 1844, when the Murrumbidgee valley was turned into "an inland sea" and destroyed the townships of Wagga and Gundagai. Wagga was later rebuilt above the flood plain and renamed Wagga Wagga but Gundagai was not until it was again devastated in 1852. As she points out, however:

The blacks ... knew what to expect when they heard the roaring of the flood in the distance; when they heard the logs and fallen timber being smashed against the trees; even without waiting to see the river swell. But the white people were not so well acquainted with the habits of floods and did not realise their danger till they were beyond hope of saving themselves.

Likewise during the droughts the Aborigines were able to tap trees, catch frogs and knew the locations of deep wells that sustained them (Webster 1950:15; Musgrave 1926:45–47). In the 1839–1841 drought, only two waterholes were found by Europeans in the 30 miles from Cowra to Nanima (Mackaness 1941:339) and many white people died before they could even get out of the area.

Nevertheless, despite their difficulties with the environment, Europeans persevered. Large tracts of land were painstakingly cleared and great efforts were made to control kangaroos which competed with sheep for grass. Later they introduced agriculture, first wheat and then fruit and vegetables. The development of the railway to Bathurst in 1879 (Blainey 1975:147) and the flourishing of Albury, Wagga Wagga and Gundagai as river ports, all with major roads to Melbourne and Sydney, increased the impact of the wool industry on the Wiradjuri area. This and subsequent agricultural pursuits were to have irreversible effects on the Wiradjuri people. Steel (1932:2) said of the pastoral settlement of the west that:
A new and better political and social era was commencing. Then individual freedom, a new type of Australian men, and the nursery of our bold horsemen, was born.

 Needless to say, Steel does not mention the Wiradjuri in his history of the Cowra district.

 Cowra was a predictable place for a European town to spring up, for the same reason that it was attractive to the numerous Aborigines camped in the area: it lies in a flat, fertile plain, has a mild climate and is the site of a natural river crossing. The main road from Sydney through Bathurst and down to the Victorian ports crossed the Lachlan River at the Cowra ford, the site of the present bridge. It may be this crossing which gave its name to the Wiradjuri campsite. Cowra is translated as Wiradjuri for "rocks". Солоуа was recorded in the same area as meaning "rocky river", and the Wiradjuri name for the Lachlan is Kalar (now written as Calare). This suggests that the Wiradjuri reference was to the river crossing and not to the boulders on the surrounding hills, as is often assumed today.

 The first European to settle and develop land on the Cowra Plains was the Rev Henry Fulton. He and his son were granted 1,920 acres each, and the combined property became, in 1849, part of the 19,200 acre "Cowra Rocks" which included the site of the present town (Cowra Historical Society 1974:2). However, as late as 1845 there was still only one hut on the bank of the river, owned by the poundkeeper.

 The introduction of sheep and cattle has considerably altered the Cowra plains. In the 1840s the Lachlan river bed was ten feet deeper compared with the 1920s and had muddy, reed-lined banks without the sandbars that are seen today (Bennett 1865:458). The creeks around Temora are now silted up (Webster 1950:10). The
thick hoar frost was unknown and the winters were less severe prior to the clearing of ground in the Cowra plains for cultivation of wheat and tobacco (Martin 1922:5–6).

The town itself could be said to have started in 1846 with the first hotel, or in 1849 with the first storekeeper (Martin 1922:4–6). It was not until 1852 that it appeared in the Electoral Roll as having 34 inhabitants. The first police constable was appointed in the early 1850s and one of his tasks was to serve out the government's annual ration of blankets and tomahawks to the local Aborigines:

If the wagons were late getting in, it fell to his lot to find adequate reasons to explain why "the big pfeller wheelbarra breakem down" (Martin 1922:9).

Martin (1922:9) records that the Aborigines were very numerous around Cowra in these years. They were:

Strong, healthy, lithe men, with all the qualities of their forefathers. There are still in our midst who can remember corroborees on Taragala and Mulyan Plain that even lasted a week.

By 1861 Cowra was described as prosperous, having 120 inhabitants (Martin 1922:10), but it grew even more rapidly when, in this same year, gold was discovered at Lambing Flat. Make-shift boats, rafts and punts proved inadequate means of crossing the river with the increase in traffic and in 1868 work was started on a bridge. However, progress was brought to a halt when the work — and most of the fledgling town — was destroyed by the record 1870 flood. Bridge-building began again and the town was rebuilt on higher ground. This time Cowra was well on its way to being an important junction town, especially after the rail link reached Cowra from Blayney in 1886. By 1880 the Cowra district had become a major wheat and wool area, ranking second in wheat production for the whole colony (Martin 1922:20). By 1900 its population had
grown to 2,000. However, after 1861 there are few mentions of Aborigines in the historical record.

2.2: Early relations between the Wiradjuri and Europeans

2.2.1: Increasing conflict

However friendly or co-operative the Wiradjuri were in the early stages of contact, this situation did not last long and many areas were not peaceably settled. The level of conflict increased with the taking over of sacred grounds and the disturbing of hunting territory. Bennett (1865:413) observed that:

The farther the settlers advanced from the coast the wider became the debatable land, and the more frequent the conflict with the natives. To chronicle a tithe of these murderous feuds would occupy volumes.

Struilkby (in Graham 1863:81) depicts the northern Wiradjuri on the Macquarie River as fierce, proud and articulate. Old Eagle Hawk Nimagauley, head of one group, was an esteemed warrior-patriarch "and a terrible enemy to the early colonists, and had taken many lives". On being asked to provide possum and kangaroo specimens for a young scientist, "he looked a little fierce, as if old hostilities were awakened" (1863:82):

Ay, ay, you come yallock yarraman over mine toolas - you yan along mine sit-down, pater mine weeli - white man tink tuck me, shoot me, if I pater white fellow jumbuck or gin-bullock. Whitefellows full, full, come along caleen, want more, more. Ah! ha! all fair, I b'lieve. Mine Dick piala you for weeli.

[translated by Struilkby as:
Yes, yes, you white men gallop horses over my fathers' graves - you white men come on my hunting grounds, and eat my opossums; but if I eat the white man's sheep or heifer, he'll hang me or shoot me. You're full, full, but come over the sea, and want more, more. But, ha! ha! it's all right, I suppose. My Dick will talk to you about opossums] (Graham 1863:82-83).

There are several records of the way in which Aborigines in New South Wales expected whites to share or distribute as an obligation (Reynolds 1981:56; Hardy 1976) - and there would have
been no precedence in Aboriginal experience for this to have necessitated a show of deference, subservience or demeaning thanks. It does seem that Aboriginal people clearly distinguished between their own versus Europeans' property, such as water and emus as opposed to wheat and cattle (Hardy 1976:40). Reynolds (1981:56) believes the Aboriginal attitude to "European possessiveness" - by which he presumably means the unwillingness of Europeans to give to Aborigines on Aboriginal terms - was that it was "morally obnoxious". However, Wiradjuri motives for taking sheep and cattle were first to make up for the loss of available kangaroo and later a mode of retaliation (see Salisbury and Gressor 1971). To Europeans this was misappropriation.

Wiradjuri and European hostility increased because of the contradictions posed by very different modes of possession and exchange. Whilst individual Europeans did attempt to come to an understanding of Wiradjuri perspectives, it seems to have been in the interest of others not to do so: soldiers in the Bathurst area were reported by a writer in the 1820s as having seen black women as "objects upon whom to gratify their insensate lust" and black men as "a sort of dangerous wild animal whose speedy extermination was the best possible thing that could happen" (Salisbury and Gressor 1971:13).

Whilst Aborigines did not accept passively the white presence, and there were genuine efforts made by some on both sides to accommodate each other, their differing world views were destined to lead to confrontation. Aborigines punished Europeans for transgressions of Aboriginal law as well as the reverse. They took their toll of European lives, often killing an innocent white person as a member of what they may have seen as a common "tribe" with a joint responsibility. However, the punishment of Aborigines
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in return became vindictive on a large scale.

War was not declared by the British on the Aboriginal people in the 18th century: the term war usually refers only to armed conflict between relative equals. In addition, the defining of Aborigines as British subjects effectively denied them both their status as indigenous inhabitants and their prior ownership of the land. Lord Glenelg, in his despatch to Governor Bourke in 1837, maintained that:

... all the natives inhabiting those Territories must be considered as Subjects of the Queen, and as within Her Majesty's allegiance. To regard them as aliens with whom a war can exist, and against whom Her Majesty's troops may exercise belligerent right, is to deny that protection to which they derive the highest possible claim from the Sovereignty which has been assumed over the whole of their ancient possessions (Aboriginal Land Rights Commission 1974:148).

However, more recently Butlin (1983:100) pointed out the irony of such "protection" because:

... black security was severely undermined when the British accorded blacks some of the qualities of British subjects. While this entitled them to British protection (a qualified advantage), it also removed concepts of black title to land.

Aborigines were simply not considered equal either socially or physically. Lord Russell (1840 to Governor Gipps, in Aboriginal Land Rights Commission 1974:151) described them as "suspicious, ignorant savages". As the encroachment started to threaten them, the Wiradjuri adopted various strategies to enable them to stay as close to their traditional lands as possible, including organized guerilla-style warfare. However, they proved no match for European armed strength. Raids on Aboriginal groups, massacres, and poisoned flour bags and water holes are all part of Wiradjuri history.

The Wiradjuri showed a great deal of resistance, but to what is not always clear. It sometimes seems to have been associated
with the presence of Europeans in particular localities, suggesting a concern for the violation of sacred areas, but also became a more generalized fight over the right to occupy the country and to share in its produce (including the products introduced by Europeans). Trouble started in the Bathurst area in 1822 when Aborigines drove away stockmen, let cattle out of the yard and killed sheep on the Cudgegong River station. Local people acknowledged that Aboriginal action had been provoked by whites.

The *Sydney Gazette* reported on the 8th January 1824:

> Numbers of cattle have been killed. In justification of their conduct, the natives urge that the white men have driven away all the kangaroos and opossums, and the black man must now have beef!

Wiradjuri people not only made their demands known but they also showed an appreciation of probable European reactions, taking some resourceful measures. The *Gazette* article continues:

> To avoid the imputation, too, of guilt upon these occasions, they manage to perforate a hole in the front of the skull with a spear, about the size of a musket ball, and when the carcase is found, they say, that the beast has been killed by white men, and point to the spot where the ball has entered!

Wiradjuri hostility increased as the town of Bathurst developed, bringing greater numbers of Europeans into the area. Bathurst was also an area of early extensive agriculture as well as pastoralism (Meredith 1844). Rowley (1970:29) has argued that the emphasis on sheep raising in this area led to a dependence on convict labour for shepherding which also increased concern about Wiradjuri violence:

> The killing of a shepherd could be serious economically; and this may have influenced the Sydney Stockholders in the station properties and flocks when they pressed the government in 1824 for punitive measures.

Attracting further labour into the area would have been difficult once shepherds realized they had to contend with Aboriginal
attacks. The measures refer to the declaration of martial law in Bathurst and was the closest the British came to admitting that a state of war existed in the colony. They were faced with a well thought-out, consistent and successful series of attacks on settlers led by Windradyne of the Wiradjuri, with a six hundred strong "army" of supporters he had gathered from many surrounding groups (Salisbury and Gressor 1971: Coe 1986). By the end of the year the Wiradjuri in this area had been defeated and ceased to be an effective threat.

The frontier continued to spread to the west although, in the Narrandera area in late 1838, Wiradjuri attacks are claimed to have prevented its expansion for nearly a year (Gammage 1983). Reece (1974:3) described the decade from 1837 as unusually violent in terms of Aboriginal/European relations but, as Gammage (1983:3-4) points out, this year coincided with the creation of the Commissioners of Crown Lands. This opened up new opportunities for land acquisition. In addition, 1837 and 1838 were particularly severe drought years for the southern Wiradjuri and the pressure on available resources would have intensified competition between them and the settlers.

Accounts of Wiradjuri responses in general terms suggest, however, that violence was only one of several options. Some Wiradjuri people did enter into long-term peaceful relations with whites. One explanation for the differences between Aborigines in this respect may have had to do with the status of individuals within the Wiradjuri world. The more violent encounters possibly reflect the growing realization on the part of Wiradjuri leadership that their power was being undermined. Berndt (1947b) describes how clever men attributed the misfortunes of the white settlers to the effectiveness of their sorcery. He interprets this
as a clear attempt on the part of clever men to reassert their authority over their own people and to regain control of their world (see also, Reynolds 1981:31). However, neither sorcery nor confrontation were to prove effective against the Europeans for long. Any Wiradjuri defence of their country would have been made increasingly difficult because of the reduction in their numbers brought about not only by massacres (Baylis 1927:256) and other attacks by whites, but also by introduced disease and deliberate poisoning (Callachor 1980:27; see also Craze 1977:14; Butlin 1983).

2.2.2: Non-violent options: incorporating Europeans

Colonization brought unforeseen changes. Hunting and gathering activities had to give way to other means of obtaining foodstuffs just so that people could survive. This would have required flexibility and the capacity to adapt. Butlin (1983:99) maintains that although Aborigines would have had various options open to them in determining their response to Europeans, the only ones which allowed them real prospects of continued or improved survival were to:

a) assist white occupation

b) seek compensation for resource loss, and/or

c) seek regular wage contracts with whites

He notes that other options were attempted, such as moving to the land of other groups, fighting each other and whites for resources, and killing whites. However, Butlin's approach assumes the capitulation of Aboriginal people and their acceptance of domination. He does not, for instance, given any credit to Aboriginal attempts to incorporate Europeans into their way of life, nor to the ability of Aborigines to negotiate co-operative
relations in terms of land use.

Hardy (1976) and von Sturmer (1984a) have both used a model of host/guest relations to describe intra-Aboriginal reciprocity. Hosts are those people who own the land and who are responsible for its care. When others use the land as guests the hosts are obligated to look after them and to provide from their fund of resources. To camp on another's land entitled one to the use of its resources within specified limits. Hosts always retained their rights, also expecting their guests to share with them any resources garnered from the host's land. This was a system of stratified mutuality rather than of exploitation. These norms were extended to Europeans, even though they obviously produced conflict when the latter did not share or observe the rules of country.

There is evidence that Wiradjuri people not only extended their own rules of reciprocity to meet the new situation involving Europeans but were also prepared to modify and exploit it to their own advantage. They certainly considered that the land was theirs and that they had a right to expect some return from those who used it. Struulby and his companion, Ash, had good relations with the blacks around the Macquarie River, presumably because they recognized this relationship (in Graham 1863:89). They treated the head man, Eagle-Hawk, as their "landlord and squire" and deemed that tobacco, damper and trinkets were but "a low rent" to pay for their continued presence. When the Wiradjuri helped to set up stations and then camped on them they did so on the understanding that it was their home (Mackaness 1941:345). Carraburrama Jimmy set up his camp at Morangarell and for years exacted a "toll" from surrounding stations which provided for himself and his wives (Webster 1950:12, Musgrave 1926:41). When White, the first
squat ter in the Young area, set up camp he incurred the wrath of Cobborn Jackie, the local "chief" (cakohn or coborn mean "big", "great", "good", "true" in Wiradjuri, see Bennett 1865:250), who allowed White to stay after receiving many gifts. Cobborn Jackie developed a long standing relationship with White and other settlers which lasted until his death in a tribal fight. He received a brass plaque, his emblem as "king of the tribe", and assisted in the setting up of new stations and protecting them from other blacks in return for receiving provisions (Musgrave 1926:6-7). From their point of view, the Wiradjuri were not establishing a dependency relationship but perhaps merely observing their rights as hosts. Dependency, however, was the reality set up by Europeans.

The expectation that Europeans should provide is frequently noted. Reynolds (1981:96) noted that Aborigines saw Europeans as under a moral obligation to share in their abundance "both because sharing was so central to Aboriginal values, and to provide compensation for the loss of land, water and game". One thousand Wiradjuri people are recorded as pitching camp on a station near Young and "behaved themselves reasonably well, except that they would not hunt for food, but made the station provide it" (Musgrave 1926:19,22; see also, Gunson 1974:66; and Hiatt 1965:11 for Arnhem Land). Whether there was a conscious sense of compensation involved on the part of the Wiradjuri in such cases is not stated. It may simply have been that the Wiradjuri were able to exploit the fact that Europeans, afraid of violent reprisals, were sufficiently accommodating of Wiradjuri demands for provisions so as to render hunting and gathering unnecessary.
2.2.3: Attempts by Europeans to incorporate Aborigines

There was a three-fold attempt on the part of various Europeans in the nineteenth century to incorporate Aborigines into white society. Some wanted to train Aborigines for wage labour; government officials set aside land in the hope that, as small landholders, Aborigines would develop farming skills; and Christian missionaries worked to establish missions designed to introduce Aborigines to the benefits of white civilization. Only the first had any measure of success but even this was evaluated differently by both parties.

a) Equipping Aborigines for work

Wiradjuri people who survived the early decades became increasingly involved in the work force. Camped on stations, often with settlers who had made an attempt to learn the Wiradjuri language (Webster 1950:11), they received food and other goods in exchange for what Europeans of the time called "peaceful relations". These included getting work done around the station (Musgrave 1926:19; Webster 1950:11) and providing European men with access to Aboriginal women. It was still possible for Aborigines to supplement their diet with bush foods. Nevertheless, the predominant picture is one of Aborigines, whilst semi-independent, attaching themselves to Europeans sponsors (Reece 1974; see also Howard 1978; Anderson 1983; von Sturmer 1984c). Smyth (1878a:180) described Aboriginal people as "astute in dealing with whites", which he supposed stemmed from reasonable forethought and care exercised in bargaining relationships between Aboriginal neighbours.

Aborigines became more drawn to white resources, such as iron tomahawks, to supplement or replace their own goods. Flour represented a less onerous means of making damper than the
traditional method of collecting and grinding cereals, and people formed strong likings for such items as tea and sugar, alcohol and tobacco: "European artifacts eventually affected almost every aspect of Aboriginal life" (Reynolds 1981:43). Reynolds (1981:43-44) argues that the Aboriginal desire for European goods was misunderstood by Europeans:

Because the Aborigines sought European possessions the settlers assumed they were full of admiration for the skill of white craftsmen and the ingenuity of their manufactures. Such beliefs were central to the European assumption that Aborigines were overawed in the face of settler power and material abundance. But it may not have been like that at all. Manufactured goods were not intrinsically more complex or impressive than those occurring naturally.

This is born out in Struulby's account (in Graham 1863) of the time he spent with the Wiradjuri of the Wellington area, during which the Aborigines had many laughs at the expense of Struulby and his companion because of their ineptitude: spears, for instance, were agreed to be more effective in bringing down birds at a distance than guns, and the latter certainly did not help much in catching other game.

That Aborigines may not have been as impressed or avaricious as they were supposed to be may explain in part their unwillingness to become permanently incorporated into the workforce. Early relations with Europeans were based on what, from the Aboriginal point of view, was probably reciprocal exchange but which, from the European point of view, was conceived as wage labour (see Reynolds 1983). Many attempts to recruit them failed because they did not adopt the required value system which necessitated a possessive individualism, did not recognize the unequal status between master and servant, and did not accede to European notions about the disciplined use of time and attitudes to work.
Although until the end of the nineteenth century (later in the western parts) there was opportunity to procure bush foods, the Wiradjuri became more and more dependent upon European sources of supply - in stations and later in towns - which necessitated an involvement in wage labour. In the early days Aborigines were evidently pleased to be employed from time to time (Gunson 1974:69). They were also valued and suitably remunerated by standards of the day for their contributions. However, Beckham, the Land Commissioner, noted in 1853 that the Wiradjuri had "little inclination for normal labour". Instead they were of great service in occasional labour tasks. They were excellent trackers (Ross 1899:77; Musgrave 1926:75) and participated in harvesting and in sheep washing, at which they were "excellent hands" (Graham 1863:131). "They could also handle the shears well in fleecing; and, being recompensed for what they did, were glad to be occasionally employed" (Graham 1863:131-2; Mackaness 1941:345). They were also enterprising: stripping bark which was needed for roofing so as to sell it for cash or rum (Hutchinson 1934:5). Clark (1977:16) records the trading arrangement set up by Henry Evans in Boorowa in the 1840s by which Evans exchanged steel axes, which the Aborigines found more efficient than their stone ones, for the much needed bark. Struilby (in Graham 1863:130) noted that chiefs would hire men out only after a stiff bargain, suggesting that the Wiradjuri were able to exercise some controls over the labour situation and work it to their benefit.

As more Europeans arrived, employment opportunities increased and a division of labour along European lines was introduced. Aborigines obtained work as station hands, the men doing farm work and the women domestic duties. Their contribution became particularly valuable after the 1851 gold rush depleted the area.
of white station hands (see Craze 1977:20). Beckham also noted that they were good horsemen who enjoyed riding, were quick in distinguishing stock and thus well adapted as stockmen. But he maintained that they did not like shepherding (Beckham 1853). The latter may have been too quiet and lonely a life. From the early 1900s more Wiradjuri were to become drovers. Ross (1899:77) reported that both men and women were "good, faithful shepherds". As the towns grew they would come in when they felt like it and perform odd jobs for Europeans including merely fetching and carrying. In return they would be given small amounts of food and alcohol.

Threlkeld (in Gunson 1974:57) went so far as to claim of Aborigines on the coast in the mid-nineteenth century that:

Much has been said of our dispossessing the blacks of their land, but this did not inflame their minds against Europeans, generally speaking they were glad of Settlers residing amongst them, for the sake of obtaining bread, tea, sugar, rum, tobacco, and clothing, which were procurable, in exchange for game, going on messages, for postage departments in the bush, and various other employments for which they were admirably adapted.

This situation did not last because Europeans misinterpreted Aboriginal motives for exchange as being a desire to become dependent (as in Threlkeld's comment above), because they consistently refused to acknowledge equality with Aborigines (see Reynolds 1983:127) and because, in later years when competition for jobs increased and Europeans knew their way around, Aborigines were no longer required. Reynolds also raises an issue regarding Aboriginal employment in terms of the options Aborigines themselves were exercising. Government officials placed a high value on making Aborigines fit for work but, as Reynolds argues:

Aborigines had not been assimilated. They had compromised when necessary and the role of casual, itinerant labour allowed a degree of independence from the European economy especially when supported by
vestigial hunting and gathering. ... They resisted the demands of wage labour, the submissive role of the servant and the restraints which were 'imposed on ordinary labourers'. They quickly realised that what the whites were offering was for them to become, as George Grey put it, 'ever a servant - ever an inferior being'. That realisation continued to shape Aboriginal behaviour throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond (1983:128,132).

Whilst Reynolds' prediction may have had some truth, there is no evidence to suggest that Aborigines would have known what the meaning of servant or servitude was to Europeans in the mid-nineteenth century. The reasons for "resistance" are not clear. Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century Aborigines probably had a stronger and more incorporative relationship with the Australian economy than at any time since. As workers, for wages or goods, they were in demand. Wiradjuri co-operation and labour had helped the pastoral industry to find its feet. However, job opportunities decreased as the Australian population grew. Fluctuations in the demands for European labour meant that Aborigines were valued only in times of shortage, as during gold rushes and wars. During economic crises, such as the Depressions of the 1880s and 1930s, Aborigines were dismissed.

Beckett (1983:11) has maintained that Europeans have too easily used Aboriginal economic perspectives and their lifestyle generally as an excuse for Aboriginal non-involvement in the mainstream economy as government policy and attitudes effectively prevented this from happening. However, it is evident that the desire of Wiradjuri people to become involved was selective: for some, employment increased their perceptions of their opportunities. It cannot be assumed that this necessarily correlated with a desire to adopt other facets of European life styles. Nor, of course, can it be assumed that Europeans did actually want Aborigines in the workforce, except in times of
shortage: competition for jobs was as fierce as competition for land.

b) Establishing Aborigines as landholders

As early as July 1815 small plots of land were being set aside in the Sydney region for Aborigines to "locate and settle themselves", usually without success as they preferred their *gunyahs* to homes "of taste" (Gunson 1974:12,13). Land grants for the specific use of Aborigines increased after 1853 but Europeans still encountered great problems in encouraging Aborigines to settle in these small and restricted areas.

George Thornton was appointed Protector of the Aborigines in 1881 and a year later stated that it would be:

... wise and beneficial that reserves of suitable land ... should be set aside for the use of the Aborigines, for purposes of forming homes, cultivation and production of grain, vegetables, fruit, etc., for their own consumption, this would provide means of domesticating, civilizing and making them comfortable (cited in New South Wales Legislative Assembly 1882:1526).

Farming land was developed by Wiradjuri individuals and small family groups (see Read 1982:10) and many established semi-permanent camps on these sites. Goodall (1982:4; 1933), in fact, claims that by 1927, prior to the Depression, such ventures had become so successful that up to 75 per cent of the enumerated Aborigines in New South Wales were self-sufficient (see also, Barwick 1972). They were encouraged to work the land and a few Cowra Kooris recall areas farmed by earlier generations of kin. Europeans presumably sought to make Aborigines self-sufficient in European terms and thus encourage their contribution to the economy generally. However, it also clear that such generosity only extended to areas not sought after by Europeans themselves and Aboriginal land grants were gradually revoked to meet
increasing white demands (see further Read 1982:14-15).

Available land became scarce by the end of the nineteenth century - or its acquisition more competitive. A major impact came with the 1884 Land Act which forced sub-divisioning of the large inland properties. Hardy (1976:151) describes this as a bid by "land hungry whites of the colony to impose closer settlement on the big pastoral settlements". This was a threat not only to the station owners but also to Aborigines. Owners could no longer afford to employ as much labour or support Aboriginal camps. Stanner (1968:34) maintained that a high correlation existed between the continuing expansion of the pastoral industry and the consequent dispossession and dispersion of Aborigines throughout the country: the end of the nineteenth century was "the time of greatest talk about the law of progress and the survival of the fittest". The justification for what was being done to Aborigines "was more violent and moralistic than before or since".

Although a few Wiradjuri groups did remain attached to stations for many years the majority camped independently on what became known as fringe camps or were under pressure to move onto stations where they were catered for by the Aboriginal Protection Board. The Protector had been appointed in 1881 and the Board was set up in 1883, although it did not get special legislation until the Aborigines Protection Act was passed in 1909. The Act provided for the "protection and care" of Aborigines and the curtailment of their rights. Rowley (1972:227) describes the justification of the Act:

This detailed legislation expressed the determination to save from abuse people who, as experience was showing, could not protect themselves. The Aboriginal had proved himself a failure in society, and could now be removed from it... The main concern was with the Dark People of part-Aboriginal descent which placed them within the extended categories of the Aboriginal legislation.
The aim was to provide a means whereby Aboriginal people could be encouraged to settle down and learn white ways although it was also a means of keeping Aborigines out of sight (Long 1970).

c) Christian missions

Christian missionary activity in the Wiradjuri area failed as did other missions in New South Wales (Ferry 1979). The Church Missionary Society agreed to take on the administration of the Wellington Mission at Apsley which had been established by John Harper in 1825. A grant of land was approved in 1827 and CMS sent out missionaries from 1831. The mission population was between 60 and 80 in 1838 (Gressor nd:16), Aboriginal people were employed as shepherds, threshers, gardeners, ploughmen and draymen (Rowley 1970:95; Gressor nd).

Gressor has described the failure of this mission to the attraction of the rich soil of the Wellington Valley which brought in numbers of settlers with convict servants:

It soon became anything but a quiet retreat for the Christians elect. Drunkenness was introduced by the sly-grog sellers, the females were seduced away by the Europeans, and were ashamed to return, the black scholars were encouraged to deride their teachers and the things taught. Many learned merely by rote, but all enjoyed the good feeding; the words Missionary and Commissary were [synonymous] with them (nd:16).

However, it was not just the influences of European lifestyles which impeded the missionaries. The increasing demands for land proved to be too much of a pressure under which to operate a mission. The land grant was given only on the understanding that the land revert to the Crown if the mission did not succeed. This meant working in an atmosphere of insecurity in which the achievement of goals was defined in terms of government requirements rather than missionary enterprise (Rowley 1970:93–95). All it took were discouraging reports from Wellington and a
thirteen fold reduction in Crown Land revenues in 1842 to prompt the withdrawal of government subsidies (Ferry 1979:27). The missionaries themselves became discouraged at the lack of support and left by 1849 (see also, Gressor nd).

Gribble, who started the Warangesda mission at Darlington Point, also found himself under the same kind of pressure to produce tangible results. However, Warangesda started much later, in 1880, and Gribble was able to demonstrate its success at least in farming ventures. This mission closed in 1920 (Rowley 1972:174; Gribble 1884).

Ferry attributes much of the failure from the missionary point of view to three factors: the contradiction between the Christian message and the lifestyle of nineteenth century Europeans; the great differences between sedentary agricultural pursuits and a hunting and gathering economy; and the fact that Christianity offered no tangible non-spiritual benefits to Aborigines:

The few benefits the Aborigines could obtain from contact with the Europeans were more readily obtainable in the settlements and farms than on the mission stations (1979:31).

In addition, the view that Europeans were Aborigines returned from the dead continued to be expressed as a belief or a ploy:

An Aboriginal in [Wellington] held that there was no point to becoming like a European in this life since he would return as a European in the next (1979:32).

However, perhaps the reasons lie as much in the fact that the land the missionaries required for their work impeded the interests of other colonizers and that, like the Wiradjuri people, they had to move.

Relations between the Wiradjuri and the colonizers of their environment in the nineteenth century were varied. Wiradjuri
people were attracted to European introduced goods and demonstrated a preparedness to modify their ways of being in order to gain access to these goods. They also tried to prevent Europeans from gaining control over parts of their physical and social environment. Attitudes towards the European presence, and towards the changes in the Wiradjuri way of life this implied, were probably positive when Wiradjuri people perceived themselves as being able to gain from these encounters, and became negative if they perceived themselves as losers.

How were gain and loss perceived by Wiradjuri people? It can be inferred that European artifacts and foodstuffs, for instance, were perceived as gains. Interest in these was expressed throughout Wiradjuri country from first encounters with Europeans, and relations were developed with Europeans which would facilitate Wiradjuri access to them. These relationships were conceived in Wiradjuri terms, not according to European relations of production or styles of exchange. This in itself would have produced the potential for conflict: the Wiradjuri perception of relations with Europeans as channels for resources would have needed to be consistent with European expectations of these relations. However, neither party could be expected to have available to them an understanding of the social relations which governed the ways in which the other expected to come by possessions. The act of giving by Europeans and of receiving by the Wiradjuri would have been interpreted according to the different ways of being in which both the people and the resources were constituted. There was possibly an expectation on both sides that, in the long-term, the other would enter into the appropriate relations.

A perception of loss may be gauged from Wiradjuri initiated conflicts. These seem to have stemmed from two factors. First, the
CHAPTER 3: ENCAPSULATION AND CONTROL

3.1: The mission era

3.1.1: Erambie

The 1850s marked another stage in the displacement of Wiradjuri people from their land and the start of their institutionalization in government-run stations. It also meant increasing dependence upon Europeans: resources would now be channelled through the managers of these stations and opportunities for independence would be curtailed. I refer to this stage in relationships as the "mission era", mission being the term used by New South Wales Kooris today to describe the stations (see Long 1970). The focus in this chapter is on the mission era in Cowra and the way in which Cowra Kooris today look back on these years.

Prior to 1890 there were several groups of Wiradjuri people camped around the Cowra area, three in Cowra itself and at least another seven recorded in the neighbourhood. The population in the area at this time is not known but has been described as "numerous" (Martin 1922:9). Erambie was officially notified as a Reserve for the Use of Aborigines on 7 June 1890. One impetus for setting aside the reserve land at Erambie in 1890 may have been the desire of townspeople to establish what is now the West Cowra Recreation Ground. This was the site of one of the Aboriginal camps at the time (Craze 1977) but it was dedicated as a park on 22 January 1886 and in 1887 tenders were called for fencing the ground, arranging the oval and laying down a concrete wicket (Martin 1922:23). Presumably, this would have entailed making other arrangements for the Aborigines. Three years later the 32 acres named Erambie ("the place of the yabbies/crayfish") was
declared and Aborigines were living there from 1891.

There is no evidence that Erambie was set up as a result of an influx of Aborigines into Cowra in the 1880s (see Read 1980:98-99). In fact, the initial 1891 population figure of 43 for Erambie reserve suggests that only one or two camping groups established themselves on the reserve. Other Aborigines in the vicinity may have chosen not to accept reserve life. In fact, small independent camping groups remained elsewhere in the area until the 1960s. The Erambie population steadily rose as survival outside the reserve became more difficult and jobs scarcer, reaching a peak of 219 in 1939 at the end of the Depression. It declined to 114 in 1945 but rose to 133 in 1965 (Long 1970) and to 109 in 1981 and 99 in 1985 (based on my household surveys). The figures fluctuate between 90 and 120 at present depending upon people's movements to and from the cities and other communities.

The people on Erambie reserve were probably at an advantage in that, although close to the town, the latter was initially developed only on the eastern bank of the river. Erambie had a more stable history than many other reserves in the sense that people were not relocated after its establishment as in other areas such as Yass (see Read 1982). There was talk amongst Cowra residents in 1894 and again in 1917 of relocating the Aborigines at Farleighs, a few kilometres down the river and away from the town. This did not eventuate although the idea was resurrected from time to time. In many places the reserves did not represent greater security. As towns grew, the reserves and fringe camps were regarded as unsightly blots on the expanding European landscape.

Cowra Kooris had long maintained that Erambie was one of those areas specifically designated for the use of Kooris, as
individuals, families or groups, during the reign of Queen Victoria and that there were deeds which would substantiate this (see also, Reay 1949:98-99). Although for many years this belief was treated as a "myth" without substance by whites, it has now been officially recognized by the New South Wales Government that these lands were set aside by Her Majesty's Government through legal processes. The bulk of them were illegally revoked over the years until 1983 when the State government passed the Land Revocation Act and retrospectively legalized the progressive takeovers. Aborigines throughout the State were eventually deprived of all but 2,600 of about 20,000 hectares of reserve land (see Read 1982).

As with other government reserves, Erambie was set up under the auspices of the Aborigines Protection Board. In 1924 it became a supervised Aboriginal station under the Aborigines Protection Act 1909. This legislation was ostensibly designed to enable Aborigines to be removed from the more evil influences of white society, such as alcohol and abuse of Aboriginal women. In fact it often became a means of coercion and control. Aborigines had to account for their every movement - spending, eating habits, the cleanliness of their houses and even their social relationships.

Nevertheless, the mission days are remembered by Kooris today as times of community solidarity, discipline and happiness as well as times of pain, deprivation and adversity (see Cowra oral histories in Read 1984). The apparent contradiction reflects the two worlds in which people lived: on the one hand, their close Koori relationships and, on the other, their status in Australian society. One woman, recalling these days as the good time, told me:

In those days, see, everybody helped each other and the old people would get them together and organize dances. Oh! they were fun too, with no grog like today, and
games for all the kids. People were close, see. An' we had church and singing every week.

During the mission era, many more people could find employment amongst Europeans than is the case today in Cowra. Both men and women were employed on the mission working for the manager and men found seasonal work such as fruit picking and shearing, and jobs on the council and droving. Reay (1949:100) maintained that Kooris in north-western New South Wales lamented the passing of the old mission days. It had been a time of productivity in terms of food grown and buildings constructed for and by Aborigines. It was a "common boast" that the mission was "self-supporting". Cowra Koori memories are often similar: they focus on the productive skills people acquired during these years when the men still had jobs in which they could take pride (see further, Read 1983, 1984) and the women could boast of their cooking, needlework and other domestic skills.

3.1.2: The conditions and the managers

The mission era was a time when Kooris were subject to constant control. The station managers could, and often did, intrude on even the very private spheres of family life:

The manager was always allowed to come into your house. It didn't matter if you was sitting in the nude, if he wanted to go in there he'd go in. Some of them were decent, they'd wait til you got dressed and come out, others would go straight in (Josie Ingram in Read 1984:28).

There were many complaints about the managers' approach:

Conditions was bad. They'd complain about us being dirty but wouldn't give us any soap in the rations - that was a luxury they said! We did what we could, I reckon our houses were clean but they'd still make you feel dirty. You couldn't do nothing if you tried. The young ones today, they don't understand what we went through. Them prisoners in the camp up there had it better than we did (Read 1984 [Soap was included in rations but in insufficient quantity, see Read 1983:243]).
The reference is to the prisoner of war camp set up to house Italian and Japanese prisoners during World War II. A Cowra woman told me that the Italian prisoners, many of whom worked in the fields around Cowra, would smuggle biscuits and cigarettes out of the camp for the Aborigines whom they saw as being worse off than themselves. Certainly, Clarke's (1978:90-91) description of conditions in the camp, where prisoners "led lives of security, ease and even luxury", suggests it was palatial compared to life on Erambah mission. The huts had electric lighting and fires and each camp had stores, kitchen, mess, showers, latrines, canteen, theatre, recreation huts, barber, tailor and medical and dental services. Clark goes on to cite the description of Major Timms, Commander of C company of the Garrison Battalion:

Each and every prisoner received weekly a free issue of 35 cigarettes, and could purchase more at their own camp canteens if they were in credit. Their quarters were clean, spacious and comfortable; every prisoner had a bed of sorts with ample blankets for the cold nights of the Cowra uplands. Their food at all times was ample, even lavish, and the plentitude of rice, fresh fruit, fresh fish in addition to ordinary meat and vegetables was something the garrison troops themselves did not receive ... Italian and Japanese officers could have, within limits, their beer or wine.

This was a far cry from the ration days which Read (1983:243ff) has documented in detail. Scabies and malnutrition were common and the mortality rate was very high. Residents at Erambah in the early 1940s had no running water, sinks, baths, stoves or washing lines. Tin covers substituted for windows and jam tins for saucepans. Rations per household included oatmeal, jam or syrup, 2 cakes of soap per week, 2 loaves of bread every two days and some powered milk. Only the oatmeal and milk could be supplemented during the week. There was no electric light and the purchase of kerosene for lamps, or meat, depended upon whether people had employment for cash wages. Work on the mission was
often paid in rations rather than cash:

If you got the rations, there was no money involved. All you'd get for that was a grocery list. So with that grocery list you'd have to go down to the shop in town and get the equivalent of that list in groceries. You weren't allowed any luxuries like jam or cigarettes. If you wanted any cash in your hand, you had to go and do that seasonal work. You'd get a food order, it was for thirty bob at that time, three dollars. You had to cut that three dollars out in groceries, and you had to cut it out with what was there, you know, the basics, flour, sugar, tea, butter. And then besides that you'd need to go to the butchers to get that, and the bread used to be delivered to the manager's house, and you'd go over and pick that up, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (Millie Butt, in Read 1984:30).

The awareness of themselves as different to Europeans was constantly reinforced by discriminatory policies, often seeming to be aimed at shaming them to the extent that they would prefer to be white. Reed (1982) argues that, in Yass, repairs were not done to houses and new houses were not provided during the mission era in the hope that Aboriginal groups would be forced to break up. Some things, such as housing conditions, did produce a degree of shame still evident amongst a few older women today, but only in so far as relations with Europeans are concerned. Among themselves they retained, assisted by their spatial separation from Europeans, much pride in qualities of life they often believed to be superior.

Men's work often took them away from the mission for long periods, leaving the women as the backbone of community life in their absence. The degradation, fear, anger and resentment in accounts of these times are clearly evident in the recollections of older Wiradjuri women who were constantly subjected to the caprices of the managers' interference. Wiradjuri country now belonged to Europeans and Kooris lost control even of their spatial movements. One woman recalled the days when she was growing up as the time when:
We were aliens in our own country, hated in our own country. You had to have permission to leave and enter the mission. If you left, to get work in Sydney, you couldn't come back even for a Christmas visit. You weren't allowed back if you were drunk even if the manager was drunk inside. They got locked up and fined. People were full of anger, resentment and frustration. You were fined 50 pounds for being drunk on the mission. The manager's wife would ring the police, because in most cases the manager was too drunk (see also, Val Simpson in Read 1984:67).

Kooris remember the various managers as "a mixed bunch". Some are recalled with respect but most were regarded as unduly harsh and paternalistic. The managers' drinking habits were a sore point. Kooris were forbidden to drink and suffered harsh penalties if they were caught doing so:

Sometimes he (the manager) was the biggest drunk on the mission. That's fair dinkum! They'd drink just as much grog as the black fella would (a Cowra Koori woman, cited in Foster and Mellick 1981c:4).

If the Aborigines spoke out against the system they risked expulsion, losing their rations, or worse, losing their children. The managers had the power under the Act to expel people from the mission or to refuse entry (see further, discussion on Aboriginal Welfare Board policies in Read 1983:167ff). This meant that young people who had been sent away for apprenticeships as domestics or farmhands, or men working elsewhere whose families were on the mission, could be, and often were, refused permission to return home - or were charged with trespassing (Foster and Mellick 1981c:12). The effects on familial relations are still being felt and people spend many years in attempting to trace kin.

The manager could allocate tasks around the mission as he pleased, and thus deprive people of more valued forms of work. Efforts made to disgrace Aborigines in front of their fellows met with limited success, depending upon the perceptions of the community in relation to the event and the person involved. It
could engender more resentment against the manager if respected people with legitimate grievances were concerned. The managers sometimes exploited the misdemeanours of children to shame parents but Kooris maintain they gave little credit to Aboriginal efforts to improve their lot. The stereotype of the passive, thankless and irresponsible Aborigine was allowed to prevail and was unwittingly reinforced by Aboriginal styles of relating. Europeans easily interpreted Aboriginal unresponsiveness as ingratitude. However, Aboriginal protest was, and often still is, expressed in simply not carrying out tasks they did not wish to do.

Erambie remained under a manager until 1965 when it became a reserve under police protection and supervision (Long 1970). Notwithstanding changes in managers and policies, Kooris have maintained a strong sense of identity with the mission. Most residents today can trace consanguineal or affinal links back to residents of the late nineteenth century. Erambie has not been the only Koori spatial domain in Cowra but it has been the least disrupted. Control by managers has not prevented Kooris from depicting themselves as having had an independence of spirit and purpose throughout the mission era (see further, Read 1983:Ch.5).

3.1.3: Alternatives to the mission – fringe camps

The setting up of Erambie reserve was not the end of alternative camping groups – the fringe camps. Until the 1970s there were still small groups camped in the Cowra area, on the river bank near the railway bridge, by the old quarry, and further out at Goolagong.

The conditions in the fringe camps were harder than those on the mission. Living away from a reserve brought no entitlement such as rations: Aborigines were denied the dole and rations given
to whites by the country police (Bell 1959:350). Kooris in the camps were dependent upon finding work, often seasonal, and conditions are described by Kooris today as having been very bad. The camps were often described as an eyesore to non-Aboriginal residents of nearby towns. However, the camps also represented an attractive alternative to manager-dominated life as Cowra Kooris themselves acknowledged:

> You didn’t have to stay [on the mission] if you didn’t want to. You could camp anywhere. You could make a little home anywhere in those days. You could camp along the river bank. There was a lot of camping over there 'cause they wouldn't come and live under the managers (Cowra woman to Foster and Mellick 1981a:4).

In hard times the population on the mission did increase (as in the Depression) but eased off again as people felt able to move back to the camps. Despite the disadvantages of living away from reserves, many Kooris retained their independence in fringe camps. These camps are the structural equivalent of the outstation, or homeland, movements in other parts of Australia which Clark (1982:17) has described as the only way in which Aborigines can take initiatives as groups. The alternatives were the European-controlled mission situation or the less acceptable avenue of trying to establishing themselves in white domains in the few cases where this was possible. The independence they gained was evidently worth the deprivation.

3.2: Political and legal battles

3.2.1: Asserting equality and difference

Read (1980) maintained, following a study of the lives and attitudes of five older Cowra Koori men, that in the first half of the twentieth century these men did not attempt to maintain a distinctive Aboriginality, that they much more consciously tried to become like whites although were prevented by the latter from
doing so. Yet he also acknowledges that the five men he interviewed "readily acknowledged their Aboriginal identity" (1980:112). However, in a later work, Read (1982:10) described Cowra Kooris as having "had the reputation of aggression and defiance towards the Aborigines Protection Board". There is an apparent contradiction here: did a Koori desire to hold their own among whites and be accepted and respected equate with trying to become like whites? These men may have been making distinctions between whites they encountered off the mission in a relatively more egalitarian working environment, and the managers who exercised controls and restrictions. Certainly Kooris who grew up under the managers at Erambie do not present themselves today as, in Read's words, "institutionalized Aborigines" who "accepted the rules (and a good part of the beliefs, folklore and prejudice) of European supervisors and workmates" (1980:106). The men Read spoke to are described by Kooris today as the "old people"—those who inspired and taught younger Kooris who were to spearhead Aboriginal political activity in the 1960s and 1970s.

Indeed, a recurring theme in the accounts of older Kooris is the claim that Kooris refused to submit to pressure. The older people of the past are still lovingly and appreciatively remembered for the stands they took against harsh managers or general injustices. An Erambie woman claimed at a meeting in 1983 that "our fathers and forefathers battled for our rights and we mustn't give in". Read (1983, 1984) recorded a great deal of resilience on the part of Cowra Kooris in response to the rule of the various managers. Despite authoritarianism and paternalism, Kooris perceive themselves as having maintained some autonomy (see Read 1983:Ch.5). Oral histories indicate that Erambie was characterized by strong and politically aware leadership, and
Kooris are unanimous in asserting that they themselves exerted controls over the Koori domain:

The officials and the white people were under the impression that the managers ran the mission. The managers didn't at all. It was the tribal elders (quoted in Foster and Mellick 1981c:6; see also, Agnes Coe in Read 1984:67).

This did not necessarily imply that older Kooris were co-opted by the managers. Ernie "Buffalo" Whittey, for example, is one of the elders who is particularly remembered for the struggle he put up for his people. He would write letters to parliamentarians behind the manager's back and the manager was said to "have it out for him". Many of the women were also prepared to stand up to the managers so as to help others. However, the costs were often high: The managers would find reasons to take people's children and place them in homes if they found too much resistance. One woman took a manager - "a real mean bastard" - to court over his treatment of her daughter and won her case. Later her children were taken, interpreted by Kooris as an act of retaliation (see also Read 1983:248). One woman related her mother's story:

Then you get other people who stand up for their rights. My mother stood up for her rights on the mission once. They pinched her. They put her in jail. She went to court the next day. Just for standing up for her rights (cited in Foster and Mellick 1981b:16).

One couple came to Cowra from Brungle when they learnt that their children were to be taken from them and many others throughout the State fled for the same reason. If there was any trouble, or women were threatened with having their children sent away, they would put up a fight, especially Gertie McGuinness. After she died (in the early 1950s) the opposition was said to have weakened and more children were taken (see Read 1982, also 1983:Ch.8).

There is, however, no information other than oral histories
available with which to analyse relations between Aboriginal leaders, managers and other white officials. There are Koori accounts of good managers with whom people could converse and negotiate but on the whole the story of the mission days is depicted by Kooris as one of great efforts and initiatives on the part of older people to improve the lot of residents and to provide for their entertainment which were continually suppressed by a manager. If allowed to continue, activities would be attributed to the efforts of the manager himself or his wife. An example was a fete planned and run by Kooris which brought about a rare visit of whites from the town. The manager and his wife are said to have taken all the credit for its success. It also seems that there is some suppression of stories of good managers in the current political environment. In Read's (1984) collection of oral histories there is only one mention by Kooris interviewed of the most popular manager of Erambie who was also one of the longest serving (see Read 1983:248ff; also Jimmy Barker's accounts in Mathews 1977).

3.2.2: Political involvement

There were factors external to the mission situation which encouraged the development of political consciousness and strategies. The mobility and relative independence of Koori men who were expected to get work off the mission led to an effective communication system amongst Aboriginal people in different parts of the State. Several Cowra men were involved with Bill Ferguson's campaign to try and bring about more public awareness of the ill-treatment Kooris suffered under the Aborigines Protection Board. Ferguson came from Warangesda, Darlington Point. It was a report into the affairs of the Board, largely spearheaded by Ferguson's
Aborigines' Progressive Association founded in 1937, which led the New South Wales government of the day to promote its policy of assimilation rather than segregation (see Miller 1985:150-151; also Read 1983:206). The Erambie manager, I was told, attempted to put a stop to the involvement of Cowra Kooris by threatening to withdraw rations from their families and to institutionalize their children if they continued their associations with this and other so-called communist movements. These were not idle threats. Every family I spoke to in Cowra had relatives of some kind "taken". Records of the Protection Board show that the reason for taking children could simply be listed as "being an Aboriginal" (see further, Read nd). The fear of losing children haunted Kooris for decades and they are still struggling, through the work of the Aboriginal Children's Service and Link Up (which traces separated family members), for control over the welfare and future of their children. As long ago as the 1850s, Struylby (in Graham 1863:94) records how the threat of being sent to a museum was used as a joke by the Wiradjuri when their children were naughty — they were amused at the desire of Europeans to catch animals for scientific examination and preservation.

The Depression years were a time of particular political ferment. Aborigines in Cowra came into greater contact with whites who were suffering and living in camps themselves. "Bag town", so called because the tents were made from sugar bags, adjoined Erambie on the site of the present golf course and club house. It may be that the influence of politically aware whites during these years helped Aborigines to make concerted and organized efforts to bring their plight to the attention of the wider Australian population. Cowra Kooris were amongst those who travelled to Sydney in 1938 during the 150th birthday celebrations to declare a
National Day of Mourning for Aboriginal people. They helped the Aborigines' Progressive Association organize a very modern-style political rally demanding recognition, justice and a restoration of their rights (Miller 1985:151-156).

However, Koori political involvement and protest in these years was largely suppressed or ignored by Europeans at the time (see Read 1983:Ch.5), much to the bitterness of older people today. In the 1930s, communists or Nazis were blamed for unrest amongst Aborigines and many Australians still claim that Aboriginal protest is whipped up by activists who are, for the most part, young, white, middle-class, liberal and "have obviously never lived in a country town". I have also been frequently told by Europeans in Cowra and Sydney that my work as an anthropologist amongst Aborigines is "a waste of time", or that it "will only stir them up even more". But, as Stanner (1974:9-10) once remarked:

It seems to me most regrettable that so many men of position and authority should now seem to want to attribute Aboriginal unrest to malcontents and stirrers amongst us. No one could honestly say or believe that, who had lived face-to-face with an Aboriginal community for a week. Diane Barwick tells us that when some desperate Aborigines at Corronderrk stood up for themselves in the 1860s, officials of that day said then that "outside influence" was at work. That kind of thing will always be said of reformism, whether from within or without.

The World War II employment boom meant that Aborigines could also find more work. There were consistent opportunities in 1943-4 but these had already deteriorated by 1950 (see Read 1983:219-22). The possibility of employment steadily decreased although there was still an expectation that the men should find work. Involvement in work was not the outcome of an Aboriginal adoption of the European work ethic - although this was the government's stated aim. It was frequently engaged in under threat: no work
meant no rations. It did provide two bonuses which were politically advantageous: it gave men the opportunity to move around the country, maintaining communication with other Kooris and finding wives; and it also allowed them greater awareness of and access to the white domain. A few men got jobs with the local council - garbage disposal and road work. These men were greatly advantaged if they had work locally as it gave them the opportunity to build up relations with local whites as sponsors: they were not dependent upon the managers as their mediators with the outside world.

However, after the war years, Kooris became increasingly less involved in production processes. Aborigines generally have been the most expendable source of labour in any times of tightening up. This was first evident during the 1930s Depression when Kooris were encouraged to remain on the reserves or in fringe camps. One Cowra woman, Ethel Wedge, who travelled like the "baggies", recalled that there were few Aborigines on the road: "It was all white" (Read 1984:49). This was hardly surprising when food relief available to white baggies was denied to Aborigines. The latter were catered for only on reserves in order to reduce, in a small way, the pressure on available jobs (Read 1983:Ch5; also Bell 1964). The decline in employment during the 1950s was accelerated in the 1960s by the introduction of equal wages. Prior to this Kooris, as with Aborigines elsewhere had some guarantee of employment because their labour was cheap. Whilst restoring an injustice on one hand, the new legislation made them less attractive employees: whatever the motives of unions and government in promoting equal wages the net effect was to push Kooris out of the mainstream economy to an even greater extent and led to their increased dependence on welfare money.

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The 1960s was the decade of civil rights movements in various parts of the world, particularly in the United States of America, and this provided a major impetus to Aboriginal attempts to ameliorate their lot. Europeans throughout Australia were being challenged to look at their treatment of Aborigines and a growing number lent their support. A highlight came in the mid-1960s with the "freedom rides" led by Charles Perkins (see Broome 1982:176). Throughout New South Wales, young Aboriginal and European activists travelled together to lay bare the discriminatory practices and the living conditions which Aborigines experienced constantly.

A change in public attitudes, probably prompted as much by pressure from overseas as from changes of heart within Australia, led, in 1967, to the Constitutional Referendum and, in 1972, to increased financial aid programmes. Since then Aborigines have had some say in the way in which their lives are controlled, although welfare money and grants continue to ensure their dependent status. They have increasingly worked towards attaining more power. A considerable number of Aboriginal organizations, serving many different interests and needs, have been started up under self-management programmes all over Australia.

Formal political and administrative organization is only recently emerging among the Wiradjuri as a whole, prompted by State government policy and legislation. In August 1982 there was a pooling of ideas shared by several older Wiradjuri people who had been discussing possible action for some time. They decided to make contact with other communities throughout the area and organized meetings in different centres. This sowed the seeds for what was to become the Wiradjuri Land Council in November of that year (now known as the Wiradjuri Regional Aboriginal Land Council
under the (NSW) Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983). The Wiradjuri Land Council defined itself as a resource and consultative body with no powers over local groups but with a concern to ensure that the people of the Wiradjuri area speak with a strong and united voice. Part of the initial impetus was the promise of land rights from the Government of New South Wales. It was assumed at first that this would require Kooris to research and determine their need for land, both for economic and spiritual/historical reasons. However, when the Labor Government published the Aboriginal Land Rights Bill as a Green Paper in December 1982, Kooris felt it fell far short of the demands which had been made by Aborigines during its preparation. The Aboriginal response was ambivalent. At meetings hurriedly held throughout the State, Aboriginal people recognized that the land and money offered in the Bill were needed in New South Wales but saw the proposed Act as deficient in several ways (see, for instance, New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council 1983a, 1983b; Morse 1983; Wilkie 1985).

The Wiradjuri Land Council convened meetings to discuss the Green Paper and sent a letter of protest to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Frank Walker, with copies distributed to other Ministers and government departments. It was likely that most of the people who received this letter had not known of the existence of the Council. This was the first time they had acted as a united body in communicating with the European domain. However, the Wiradjuri area represented a significant proportion of the Aboriginal people of New South Wales (in excess of 20 per cent) and the letter brought an immediate response. Frank Walker and members of his staff attended the next meeting of the Council held in Narrandera so that he could argue for the potential of the proposed Act. Many Wiradjuri people remained sceptical and joined
in the rally held outside Parliament House to protest the passing of the Bill. The push for amendments resulted in only minor changes and the Act became law the day of the rally in May 1983.

The Wiradjuri Aboriginal Land Council meetings were then preoccupied with assisting communities to set up local Aboriginal Land Councils as required by the Act and members discussed ways in which they could positively respond to and maximize the provisions of the Act without losing sight of their ultimate goal of greater self-determination. The Council is also now turning its attention to administrative and research concerns, such as creating employment opportunities, and collecting and making available information about Wiradjuri contact history and traditional culture.

A political base for the Wiradjuri as a whole, taking into account its individual communities, is now emerging which finance provided in the Act will help to consolidate. The Council itself arose out of a conviction that most of the social problems with which communities are beset, especially high unemployment and alcohol abuse, are products of the social and political environment. As one of its founding members commented: "There is little point in taking their grog off them when there is nothing to put in its place". The present emphasis is on providing employment and services for Kooris within Aboriginal-run structures.

3.2.3: Assessing relations developed prior to 1967

The 1890s marked the end of any hopes that may have persisted that the traditional Wiradjuri lifestyle could be retained. But the mission years and "the time of the managers" was not the success in welfare or assimilation terms which European policy
makers hoped it would be. The wheels set in motion to civilize and assimilate the Wiradjuri did not revolve according to plan. Reserve or camp life did not provide adequate models or scope for development along European lines but, more significantly, they provided a relatively protected and secluded environment in which Aborigines could begin the process of reconstructing their social environment in terms of their own views of the world.

There is a dual irony about the mission era. First, the deliberate attempts to destroy traditional Wiradjuri lifeways actually engendered new forms which, although, not traditional were distinctly Aboriginal and, despite appearances, not European. Second, the missions and camps themselves reveal a paradox in Wiradjuri memories of this stage in their history: they both deplored the semi-imprisonment, oppression and restrictions they experienced, yet, at the same time, found much they valued. Both missions and camping sites were property they could "lay claim to" and the concentration of people and activity in these small areas fostered rather than destroyed Wiradjuri identity. They enabled the persistence of a Wiradjuri domain.

Assimilationist policies failed not because the Aboriginal people did not desire an improvement in living standards but because Europeans equated this, as many still do, with acceptance of and conformity to European lifeways as well. Kooris either refused or were unable to accept the terms upon which improvements were offered. These meant, of course, the relinquishing of their domain.

If Wiradjuri/European relations were to have developed it would have required some kind of responsiveness on the part of Europeans. In the early days when they required Wiradjuri labour and advice, this was perhaps often the case. Stanner (1964:56)
argues that Aborigines did try to develop mutual relations on the basis of their traditional models. He maintained that such efforts must have been made "untold thousands of times" from the time of Governor Phillip when Aborigines voluntarily moved as groups, family parties and individuals into white settlements. He describes two men's attempt to "give up the bush life and come more than half-way to strike a bargain with us" (1964:55) - a theme which is evident in early Wiradjuri literature. Wiradjuri people have only spasmodically been defined as part of the colonizers' resource base and thus only selectively valued. Europeans could afford to ignore them except in times of labour shortages. Protests about their treatment coincided with changes in their circumstances often brought about by economic stringencies within the European domain. Thus, they made their demands at times when Europeans were also under pressure, as in the breh in the European domain. Thus, they made their moves at times when Europeans were also under pressure, as in the breaking up of the pastoral stations in the nineteenth century and the Depression of the 1930s.

Stanner (1968:27-28) also describes one of our possible contemporary "astigmatisms" as:

A certain inability to grasp that on the evidence the (A)borigines have always been looking for two things: a decent union of their lives with ours but on terms that let them preserve their own identity, not their inclusion willy-nilly in our scheme of things and a fake identity, but development within a new way of life that has the imprint of their own ideas.

The Aboriginal struggle has been characterized by "their continued will to survive" and "their continued effort to come to terms with us" (1968:55). The so-called "fringe dwellers" are a good example. These people camped in groups on the outskirts of towns rejected the institutionalized environment of the government reserves with
their white controls. They were the worst "Aboriginal problem", the greatest offense to European sensibilities because they were living so visibly in appalling conditions. For them, however, the white domain was their fringe, their service sector, while they continued as far as was possible to relate on their own terms. They have more often been depicted as failing to come to terms with the European domain but, as Stanner recognized (1968:46-7), they had not been relegated to the fringe by Europeans:

Not many people realize that those whom we least respected - the fringe dwellers - were precisely those who deserved respect most because they were trying to break out of the circle [of homelessness, powerlessness, poverty and confusion] by refusing to go into institutions.

The fringe dwellers tried to preserve the possibility of adapting to white presence in their own way rather than accept the isolation of mission life. Reynolds (1981:126-127) highlights the cost of the choices they made:

They chose to maintain the maximum degree of independence possible in the circumstances at the cost of their standard of living, even of their well being. They opted for Aboriginal values, settlement patterns, family life, rhythms of work even when that choice meant a miserable level of material comfort. Although Europeans increasingly imposed restraints ... the blacks continued to exercise choice and thereby shape their own history.

There was an ambivalent situation in which whites had to be appeased so as to ensure the flow of food and jobs, but at the same time a rejection of whites to the extent that Aboriginal identity could be maintained.

It can be argued, as Stanner did, that adaptation to the dominant European system was not with the intent to become like whites - that assimilation was never a conscious or unconscious Aboriginal platform. They were prepared to make concessions which enabled them to use European resources:
I would interpret each such movement as two things in one—an offer, and an appeal; an implicit offer of some sort of union of lives with us, and an implicit appeal for a new identity within the union. To go near is always a sort of offer: the [A]borigines, from Phillip's time on, came voluntarily as near to us as they could. Usually they ended up in a fringe-camp or an institution, but just being there was a continued appeal. The trouble was no one saw or heard very clearly (Stanner 1968:56).

The attempts on the part of the fringe dwellers to maintain their autonomy within the white domain failed in reconciling the two worlds. The present stage in European-Aboriginal relations, to be explored in the following chapter, has more overtly stressed separateness as well as distinctiveness. It has also brought about a hostile reaction from Europeans who do not concede either the existence or the legitimacy of a Wiradjuri domain in their midst.

Accounts of nineteenth century Wiradjuri activity and of Wiradjuri-European interaction are based for the most part on eyewitness accounts of Europeans. This introduces a bias into the literature which is reversed in the case of accounts of the mission era. However, whilst accounts of the mission era include a high Koori imput, they are for the most part oral histories, influenced by contemporary perspectives on the past. There are similarities in the Koori desire to now stress their independence of whites in the first half of the twentieth century with the emphasis being placed on Aboriginal resistance in the nineteenth century (for instance, Reynolds 1981). Just as it is difficult to ascertain the nature of resistance in the past, it is not clear what Kooris wanted to be independent of during the mission years. Throughout the twentieth century Kooris have continued to increase their resources through the acquisition of European-produced material resources, employment opportunities, and maintain strategic relations with Europeans which will facilitate this.
When complaining about conditions, Kooris use European living standards and goods as the point of comparison. The major issues in Koori-European articulation during the mission era seem to be two-fold: one is the resentment Kooris express at their deprivation - their inability to gain access to certain European resources; the other is their resentment of control and interference, symbolized in the harsh regime of the managers.
Plate 4.1 The Town of Cowra
Taken from Bellevue (Billy Goat) Hill, looking west.
Erambie is in the centre background.

Plate 4.2 The "Office" at Erambie
The office houses employees of the Aboriginal Legal Service, Koorie Housing Company, and other Aboriginal organizations
CHAPTER 4: WIRADJURI KOORIS IN COWRA TODAY

4.1: Different life spaces

4.1.1: Wiradjuri country and population distribution

Most Europeans would not think of the geography of New South Wales in terms of Aboriginal tribal areas, nor realize that these are identifiable and socially significant to Kooris today. This chapter looks at the way Wiradjuri Kooris perceive their physical and social environment. First it looks at Wiradjuri country today and the distribution of the Koori population. Towns take on their significance for reasons which differ from those of Europeans. There are also areas within towns, as will described for Cowra, in which there are exclusively Koori or European spatial domains as well as neutral territory where Kooris and Europeans come into greater contact with each other. I then look at the involvement of Kooris in the town or in European-defined affairs more broadly, as in social and political activities and in employment, and at attitudes expressed by both Kooris and Europeans about each others' domain.

To Kooris, Wiradjuri country is still associated with the traditional area bounded by the Blue Mountains in the east, just south of the Barwon River to the north, just east of the Lachlan/Murrumbidgee Rivers' junction in the west and south of the Murrumbidgee extending down to the Murray River at Albury. In other words, it encompasses essential primary producing areas which form the central part of the most highly developed State in Australia. To Kooris it is still known as "the country of the three rivers".

The country would be hard to recognize compared with two centuries ago. Much of the land is denuded of trees, divided by
fencing and the landscape is cut with roads, telegraph lines and all the other signs of continuing pastoral, agricultural and industrial pursuits. Six major dams on Wiradjuri rivers now make the availability of water less dependent on the vagaries of the weather but the effects of droughts, often lasting for years at a time, still have a major impact on the life of towns.

Wiradjuri country spans those parts of the State commonly known to Europeans as the Central and Western Slopes and Plains, and part of the Riverina (Map 4.1). The large cities of Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst, Wagga Wagga and Albury are those which originally developed as part of major trade routes and expanded through pastoral and agricultural development. Bathurst is still the first major centre encountered west of the mountains. Dubbo, the fastest growing city in the State, serves the west and north west. Orange, a fruit-growing area, serves the mid-west and is the home of the Mid-West television station. Wagga Wagga is the largest city serving the Riverina area to the south and south west and is a centre for wheat, dairying and farming. Albury (with the Victorian town of Wodonga) is the border city between New South Wales and Victoria, on the main route to Melbourne and has major secondary industries developing as well as farming and dairying. Albury, Bathurst, Orange and Dubbo have all been specific targets for government development projects. These cities are amongst the most important in inland New South Wales.

Map 4.1 about here

As these cities have increased in size, the relative importance of smaller country towns in the area has dwindled although some have retained economic importance. Covra remains significant in terms of its position and its bridge as part of
trade routes to the west and south west. It is also within prime market garden country and its milder climate has enabled it to develop alternatives to the wool and wheat industries. Young is now famous for its cherry orchards. Griffith and Narrandera are within the Riverina irrigation area and thus less susceptible to the droughts which plague other towns. Each of these centres has expanding secondary and tertiary industry.

Table 4.1 lists cities and towns with Koori residents. In most cases, the figures in this Table can be presumed to be underenumerated. For instance, the official census figures for Cowra are: Total 7900; Aborigines 199 (compared with 8400:334). Those towns in Part A have had Koori residents for as long as anyone can remember although Hay, West Wyalong and Young have not had long-term stable Koori populations. These three, with Leeton and Narrandera did not have Aboriginal stations but Leeton and Narrandera both had stable "fringe camps". There are also a few Wiradjuri people living in other towns within this area, such as Forbes and Parkes.

Table 4.1 about here

The cities of Albury and Dubbo in Part C have large Aboriginal populations which now include many non-Wiradjuri. Aboriginal people in these cities and in Wellington chose to align themselves with communities to the north (in the case of Dubbo and Wellington) and to the southwest (Albury) when the boundaries of the Wiradjuri Regional Aboriginal Land Council were being negotiated in 1982 (Map 4.2).

There is no evidence that Kooris attached themselves to towns as the latter developed, or that Koori populations increased with those of the towns. It seems, rather, that the towns were located
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<th>City/Town</th>
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<th>+Aboriginal population</th>
<th>Aboriginal population as percentage of total</th>
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+ 1981 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1983; Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1984) unless otherwise indicated
** Figures obtained locally
in areas favoured by Kooris themselves and grew up in association with Koori camps. The only reserve which is described in early reports as having drawn in Aboriginal people from a wide area is Warangesda Mission at Darlington Point (Gribble 1884). Many Kooris from Warangesda have since resettled in other Wiradjuri centres, such as Hay.

The cities of Bathurst, Orange and Wagga Wagga (Part B) have had small Koori populations for many years but the size of these has increased considerably as a result of the scheme organized by the Aboriginal Family Resettlement Corporation (which also includes Albury). This scheme started as a pilot programme in 1972 with the aim of assisting Aboriginal people in north west New South Wales who wished to seek out a different lifestyle for themselves and their children (Eckermann et al. 1984:1). At the time, the task of improving standards of living in often remote Aboriginal reserves evidently seemed unworkable or unrealistic (Mitchell 1978) and the resettlement scheme started as the next best option. Several Kooris have described the resettlement programme to me as a move towards assimilation and as a means of avoiding the provision of adequate servicing, such as housing, in towns of lesser significance to Europeans (see McLeod and Reid 1982:58). In 1985 the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council decided it would not give the scheme its support. In fact, Kooris maintained that as much as a decade before they had criticized the scheme on the grounds that it was a confidence trick to get people off the reserves in order to avoid granting land rights. The scheme did not produce mass walkouts from the reserves. As one Cowra Koori stated, many expressly stayed on the reserves to "battle on till we do get our rights".

The Wiradjuri population today is probably about 12,000,
taking into account the large Wiradjuri populations now residing in Sydney and Canberra as well as local Wiradjuri communities (estimate based on my household surveys and Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1981a). Marriage beyond the area means that Wiradjuri also live in towns throughout New South Wales and Victoria and this extends the social and geographical range with which people identify. The cities of Sydney and Canberra have large numbers of Wiradjuri people and these have become "linking" cities. They are important as resource centres, as government contact and meeting places and as potential sources of employment. Through them the Wiradjuri are able to maximize opportunities and identify as part of the wider Aboriginal and Australian society.

4.1.2: Wiradjuri Kooris in Cowra

Of the total Cowra population of 8,400, approximately 334 (4 per cent) are Kooris. The Koori population in Cowra has not altered in number over the past four years but its composition is fluid. Visiting and relocation mean that in terms of actual personnel it is always in flux, but with a substantial and stable core population of approximately 60 to 70 per cent. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs figures, based on the national Census, reported the 1976 figure as 176 and that of 1981 as 199 (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1981a). However, their own Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1981 Community Profile (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1981b) for Cowra gives a total of 335 persons (160 males and 175 females) which is much closer to those gathered by the Cowra Local Aboriginal Land Council in 1984.

The figures in Table 4.2 below should be read as a general guide rather than a static model. The breakdown figures exclude those who do not generally identify as Kooris except in specific
instances. There are problems in making accurate assessments because of a number who live more as whites (those fair enough to "pass" if they wish to) in the town but define themselves in specific contexts as Kooris – for instance, when they claim Aboriginal education grants. Other Kooris may not even realise that they do so. A 1984 survey conducted by a member of the Cowra Local Aboriginal Land Council in connection with Land Council membership roll listed 115 people on Erambah and 219 in the town – the latter figure coming as a surprise to the person doing the survey. The figures include those who both identify as Kooris and maintain regular social contact with other Kooris. I refer to this as the "social population" which may be distinguished from a statistical population (reasons for this are discussed in later chapters, see especially Chapter 7). The social population averages 250 according to my own household surveys conducted each year between 1981 and 1985. These surveys were based on households identified at the time by several socially involved Kooris.

Table 4.2 about here

Of the total of 264 Kooris for whom information was available in March 1985, 134 were male and 130 female. A total of 99 lived on Erambah and the remaining 165 in the town. The proportion of males to females is even overall (134:130). Forty per cent of the total are under the age of sixteen. As the figures indicate, males comprise only 41.5 per cent of the population over the age of 31 years of age, as compared with 55.5 per cent of the population under 31 years of age. This partly reflects the fact that men find work or pursue interests outside Cowra, but it also indicates the higher mortality rate for men (see Rowley 1982:10): of the women over 50 years who have ever married only two are not widows.
### Table 4.2: Cowra Koori Population by Residence, Age and Sex - March 1985

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<th>Cowra town females</th>
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<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>83</td>
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</table>

### 4.1.3: Spatial domains in the town of Cowra

Cowra (Map 4.3) has become well-known in recent years for its ten acre Japanese Garden and Culture Centre. This was established in 1978 with co-operation from the Japanese government and serves as a memorial for the Japanese prisoners of war who died in the celebrated breakout from the Cowra Prisoner of War Camp in 1944. On the outskirts of Cowra are the Japanese and Australian war cemeteries. These sites have increased Cowra's tourist industry considerably and it is one of the few country towns which attracts Japanese tourists. Cowra offers other incentives to tourism, such
as Wyangala Dam which caters for various water sports and camping in a bush setting. The Lachlan River also attracts canoeists.

Map 4.3 about here

However, despite tourism, Cowra's economic base still lies predominantly in the pastoral and agricultural industries - in wool, wheat and market gardening. The abattoir, wool processing plant and cannery are major employers and there is seasonal work available in shearing and fruit and vegetable picking. There are few job vacancies in the tertiary sectors (such as offices and shops) for either skilled or unskilled labour.

Since the end of the State-wide drought and recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Cowra has continued to develop. New shopping centres have been built in the town centre. West Cowra (on the west bank) now has a small row of shops. The bridge over the Lachlan is being replaced as part of a Commonwealth Bicentennial project. Cowra has two high schools, three primary schools, two pre-schools and a Technical College.

Social outlets in Cowra include hotels, a cinema, roller skating rink, swimming pool and a new indoor gymnasium/indoor sports centre. Motels and camping/caravan parks cater for seasonal influxes of tourists and there are several recreational parks, playing fields, tennis courts, a bowling green and a golf course. The golf course and tennis courts are on the west bank, as are the main oval and the showground. Despite a significant increase in housing development on the west bank, there are no major shopping centres or hotels and only two garages. The hospital, medical services, Council Chambers and library are on the east side, as are all the schools with the exception of the Aboriginal pre-school on Erambie reserve.
Map 4.3: THE TOWN OF COWRA
Adapted from U.B.D. Map of Cowra
Cowra Kooris make use of the shops, cafes, and the post office as consumers, and the hospital, doctors, banks and taxis as clients. There have occasionally been courses at the Technical College which Kooris have attended, such as a special cooking class for women. Use of the Youth and Community Services office in town has decreased since 1984 when the Service allocated relief money to Koori administrators at Erambie for direct distribution to Kooris in need. For Kooris in town the Housing Commission office is another venue visited when rents are due. Some of the women attend the Housie game in town on Monday nights. Adult Kooris use few of the other facilities in the town with the exception of the hotels and playing fields. Even in these cases there have tended to be particular hotels favoured by Kooris (and often avoided by Europeans) and, unless Kooris and Europeans are both playing, for instance, football or netball, the competitors and spectators at the playing fields are likely to be either Kooris or Europeans.

However, young Kooris spent more time in the town. They use the cinema, swimming pool and skating rink and attend primary and secondary schools. The "blue light" discos, organized by members of the police force for young teenagers, have proved very popular and have provided a much appreciated opportunity for this age group. There are also discos for adults in some of the hotels or, during the football season, at the Golf Club.

Few Kooris have visited the Japanese Gardens or even Wyangala Dam. A lack of transport may account for the latter but places visited by Kooris tend to be those they associated with their own history in the area, such as the former camping area at Goolagong or the Aboriginal rock painting at Bigga. Kooris will more often visit places of interest as detours when travelling to another
town and rarely make visits to such places as a planned outing. They do have some favoured spots around the town. There are swimming holes on the river just down from Erambie reserve which generations of Cowra Kooris have used until the river frontage was recently fenced off. The new bridge construction has also prevented swimming and gathering down by the old lower level bridge adjacent to the main bridge. Farleighs, the old Koori camping ground, has a small river beach but is becoming increasingly favoured by tourists and locals. Kooris visit it only occasionally now. When a car is available they may go further along the river to quieter spots they know so as to enjoy themselves. The river has always been central in Koori experiences and they tell many tales of enjoyable exploits as well as tragedies which have happened along its banks.

There are several areas which are significant to Kooris throughout Wiradjuri country because of their personal, historical or sacred significance. Because of the heavy agricultural use of land over the past 170 years of white occupation, Aboriginal people are acutely aware of how much of their own history and tradition has gone under the plough. There are sites which are valued for their historical and/or spiritual significance, such as the Bigga rock painting (see Flood 1980), a few remaining carved burial trees (a distinctive feature of traditional Wiradjuri culture, Bell 1980), former camping grounds, and known burial grounds. From time to time other sites are discovered, including burial grounds and camp sites. Rock paintings, carved burial trees and traditional sites of Wiradjuri technology such as ochre quarries and tool-sharpening grooves on rock platforms may have lost their traditional import when the means of transmitting culture inter-generationally was disturbed but they are very
important as present symbols of identification with a past heritage which is increasing in value. Frequently when travelling along country roads which divide up fenced paddocks, Kooris will speculate on what Wiradjuri country would have looked like prior to the advent of Europeans.

Erambie reserve, known by Kooris as "the mission" or "32 acres", is the focus of the exclusively Koori domain. It is situated about two kilometres from the centre of town and was once the only residential area on the west bank of the river. In recent years the town has expanded but the golf course acts as a buffer on one side against housing development directly adjacent to the mission, as do paddocks around the mission buildings which belong to Erambie.

There have been significant changes to Erambie over the past five years. When I first visited it there were many run down houses and few facilities. Now, as one drives onto the reserve there is an attractive park dedicated to Mrs Louisa Ingram, a Cowra Koori who has made an outstanding contribution to Aboriginal affairs. Across the park is one house, set in a well-cared for garden, and "the office" — a complex which houses the Cowra Aboriginal Legal Service, the Cowra Local Aboriginal Land Council, the Koori Housing Company, a field officer of the Aboriginal Children's Service, an Aboriginal Health Worker and the resource person for the Wiradjuri Cultural Resource Centre.

At the end of the park is Erambie pre-school and, behind that, the old wooden church which is awaiting restoration. The first road to the left, between the pre-school and the beginning of the houses, leads past the church to a basketball court which doubles as a car park. Tarred roads and street lighting were added in 1980 and recently speed humps were added for safety and a bus
Plate 4.3 and 4.4 The Koorie Market Garden
The packing shed, Erambie, Cowra, November 1984
shelter built where the children wait for the school buses. Almost all of the old fibro houses have now been replaced by new brick homes. Many have solar heating systems. Until recently the building work was contracted out but the last two houses have been built by Kooris themselves under trade and apprenticeship training schemes. The houses are of a fairly conventional design. There are some small self-contained units but most are three or four bedroom homes with a living/dining room, kitchen, bathroom and laundry. The Koori Housing Company hopes to increase the number of units for single people. There are also plans to develop one of the paddocks as a playing field and to build a Community Centre. Funding approval has been received for the building of a new preschool centre.

Below the mission, there is a large paddock which in 1983 was developed as a market garden, funded through the Aboriginal Development Commission. This is the first business venture which Cowra Kooris have entered into and they express a great deal of pride in the work that has gone into it. It has done well in its early seasons, sending fruit and vegetables to the markets and the local canneries. It was expanded in 1985 through the purchase of 35 acres by the Cowra Local Aboriginal Land Council. This new site has a river frontage and much of the pleasure associated with its purchase was regaining ownership of part of the river by Kooris for the first time since Europeans came into the area.

4.2: Exchanges between the domains

4.2.1: Economic involvement

In a Department of Aboriginal Affairs report of 1978 a European Cowra public servant commented: "It can be said that Erambie is physically part of Cowra, but it is not of it in almost
any other way" (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1978). This comment is misleading and inaccurate. Whilst Kooris and Gabbas mix little in social terms, Kooris do contribute in economic terms and are a presence within the town - whether or not Europeans see it as a welcome one.

The economic contribution Kooris make to the town of Cowra is significant in that their incomes are largely generated outside the town, from State and Commonwealth government sources, but spent within it on consumer goods and services. Development projects such as housing and the market garden have been funded through the Aboriginal Development Commission set up under the Commonwealth Government.

A majority of Kooris receive social service payments in the form of unemployment and supporting parent's benefits, and old age, widow's and invalid pensions. Those with children also receive child endowment. Apart from occasional work in the abattoirs and fruit picking, Kooris hold few jobs in the local area. In 1983 only one received a wage in Cowra from private enterprise and three from government public service institutions in town. There have also been Aboriginal teacher assistants at the Cowra High School, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education as part of its special allocation for Aboriginal Education.

A combination of lack of education and training, and employer prejudice are the most common reasons given by Kooris for lack of work (see comments in Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1978). In fact, employment potential has decreased for Aboriginal people throughout Australia. The average unemployment rate for Aborigines in Australia rose from 9 per cent in 1971 to 24.6 in 1981 (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1984:40). This was a time of
pressure on the job market for all Australians, although the general unemployment rate is higher for Aborigines.

Finding work used to be the most frequent reason given for leaving Cowra: "It is really bad to have to leave your own town 'cos you can't get a decent job". Many would prefer to go without the job rather than leave, particularly if they have no relatives in the major work centres such as Sydney. Ironically, those who went to Sydney in the 1950s and 1960s, either in search of work or, as was common, to get away from a harsh reserve manager, were often those who became involved in the establishment of Aboriginal organizations in the city which, in turn, stimulated job opportunities locally. Some organizations set up branches in country areas (such as the Cowra Aboriginal Legal Service), or provided models for locally-based organizations (such as the Koori Housing Company).

The job market has thus opened up for Kooris as jobs become available in local Aboriginal organizations. Several people are employed full-time or part-time in administrative and clerical work by the Aboriginal Legal Service (started in Cowra in 1973) and the Koori Housing Company (started 1975). The Redfern-based Aboriginal Children's Service (started in Sydney in 1976) funded a local field officer for one year (1985-86). The National Employment Strategy for Aborigines (NESA), initiated in 1977, has enabled various training employment programmes. Several men and women are involved in work associated with the building of new housing and other improvements and Erambie now has its own Koori Trades School which trains Kooris from neighbouring areas as well as those in Cowra. One woman has been employed under NESA in order to set up the Wiradjuri Cultural Resource Centre, collecting and collating historical material on Wiradjuri life.
The Erambie pre-school has been operating under funds and an administrator provided by the Save the Children Fund, with additional financial assistance from government agencies which enabled the employment of Koori teacher aides. The lack of Koori control over the pre-school was a matter of concern to local Kooris for some time. Lengthy consultations with funding bodies led, in mid-1985, to the handing over of the administration of the pre-school to a Koori committee and to the training of a Koori administrator.

In the present stage of economic relations the scene is predominately one of dependence upon government. On the one hand, Kooris appear more independent as the community has more money. On the other hand, they are as much if not more dependent on both the State and Commonwealth governments as allocators of resources. Almost all money, whether to individuals or the community as a whole, comes directly from the government in the form of social security payments, sponsorship of Aboriginal organizations, or grants for various development projects. Local Europeans are becoming less significant as suppliers or allocators and this further inhibits the opportunity for relationships to be established between Kooris and Gabbas. It may also account for some of the negative attitudes held by Europeans in Cowra, criticizing what they see as a "hand-out mentality".

On the other hand, Kooris also complain about the way in which government grants are allocated. They would like to see provisions which will enable them to become independent of government-controlled allocations. The way in which grants are made ensures that Kooris are continually accountable to external agencies and have little opportunity to make their own decisions, or even to learn from their own mistakes. The money is always
regarded as "public money" and is never enough to allow for self-sufficiency or to develop a self-supporting economy. One Koori woman maintained that the funding and accountability system under which she had to work in one of the Aboriginal organizations was a continuation of the ration system of the mission days: designed to keep Kooris physically alive but not politically or socially active. She described it as a series of token gestures through which a government could justify that it was doing something for Aborigines.

Aboriginal people have long been conceptualized by Europeans as "a problem". Kooris evaluate current approaches as being in the same vein. Few say they want something done for them: they want to be able to do things for themselves. They explicitly state that the government, or Australian society in general, owes them compensation for the theft of lands and for their past treatment and see positive discrimination in this light. The government, as they see it, should take the responsibility to help them get on their feet and enable them to manage their own affairs. The market garden is the first income-producing venture. Some Kooris have expressed their concern that business relations are difficult to nurture within the Koori domain because they involve values and styles of relating which cut across Koori values, such as the obligation to share with and support kin. It may be that successful businesses will be limited to those ventures which Kooris are able to develop with the European domain, as is true of the market garden which does not aim to make its money out of selling to Kooris.

My experience of the Cowra Koori situation does not confirm the optimism expressed a decade ago by Berndt. He maintained that:
Aborigines in the cities and country towns, particularly in the south, have approached the 'strengthening winds' head on, by attempting to achieve, and to some extent achieving, political and economic independence (1977:ix).

Likewise, Gale and Wundersitz (1982) maintained that the economic position of Aborigines in Adelaide had improved, albeit slightly, in comparison with other social groups because of positive discrimination in economic policies. Whilst the standard of living of Kooris has improved, this should not be confused with economic relations — which have not improved in the sense that Aborigines have any greater control or independence. In fact, Altman and Nieuwenhuysen (1979:138) found to their surprise that "per capita incomes of Aborigines in settled Australia appear to be of a similar magnitude to those of Aborigines in remote Australia" despite their proximity to and greater involvement in the market economy. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs reported the median family income for Aboriginal people in New South Wales as being 54.4 per cent of that for all Australians in this state (1984:48). This figure is of limited value: it does not explain what model of "family" is being used to make the comparison (see Chapter 6).

4.2.2: Political involvement

There is a lack of interest in certain non-Aboriginal affairs on the part of Kooris. This does not imply that they do not bother with the European domain at all. That would not be possible as they are affected by it in too many ways. Their interest is selective. They have identified those sectors of the European domain which have relevance for them and make it their business to acquire a great deal of information when necessary. For instance, they have a good knowledge of the workings of the political system and political processes, including personalities, and they are

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becoming more conversant with the legal system and their rights within it. However, there is little understanding about the national economy and how it affects decision making processes (although this is increasing since the passing of the Land Rights Act).

Recent media publicity often leaves the impression that political awareness and the struggle for rights are relatively recent phenomena amongst Kooris. In fact, Kooris in Cowra have been politically involved over a long period: Read (1983, 1984) describes movements among Cowra Kooris from the 1930s which were to bear fruit in the Aboriginal intellectual, social and political development of the 1970s. Some of the earliest Aboriginal organizations in New South Wales had their roots in Cowra: McInerney (1985:26) described Erambie as "a sort of powerhouse ... in the recent history of Australian blacks". The Aboriginal Legal Service had long been a dream of Paul Coe snr of Cowra, and his son Leslie, and it was the latter's son Paul who became its first Chairman. It is not surprising that the legal system was an early target for Aboriginal concern: the intervention of police in intra-Koori affairs has been seen to directly threaten their independence and freedom more than anything else done by whites. Those involved in the Legal Service helped in turn to set up the Aboriginal Medical Service in 1971. Cowra women were also involved in the setting up of the Murawina Pre-School in Redfern, Sydney, the first Aboriginal-run organization to be funded in New South Wales. Moves are now being made, as in Erambie itself, to establish Aboriginal pre-schools in rural centres.

The reasons for the emergence of much leadership from amongst Cowra Kooris should be sought in a social environment which was conducive to making Kooris aware of discrepancies between their
material standard of living and those of Europeans, and which encouraged their involvement. The town of Cowra is advantageously located, not only in the past as has been pointed out, but now, being only 300 kilometres from the State capital of Sydney and federal capital of Canberra. Cowra Kooris were closer to news sources of consequence and could commute to or even move to these cities without losing touch with their home base.

However, links recently established with Europeans in capital cities are not reflected in Cowra. Although many Kooris know State and Federal government officials and political leaders, only the few involved in the town as employees or as mediators between the white and black domains can identify significant or influential people in the town. There has until recently been minimal cooperation in Cowra in either direction. The Council refused a request from Kooris to fly the Aboriginal flag in the town on National Aborigines Day in 1982 and 1983. However, since 1983 there has been enthusiastic co-operation from all the Cowra schools in promoting National Aborigines Week through special activities and competitions and some of the schools also display the flag.

4.2.3: Social involvement

Many Kooris see Cowra as a "snobby" town in which blacks and whites mix little. It is true that Kooris and Gabbas rarely socialize except in the hotels. Despite the greater interaction of Koori and European children, friendships are seldom maintained into adulthood except in casual ways, such as greetings when people encounter each other in the street or hotels. There are few Kooris who visit Gabbas' homes and vice-versa. Even for those Kooris who live in town social involvement is almost exclusively
confined to the Koori domain, with the exception of the occasional friendly next door neighbour.

This separation is not, however, solely a result of European prejudices, as Kooris may infer. The history of Koori-European articulation has been characterized by spatial segregation - desired by Kooris as well as Europeans, albeit perhaps for different reasons. The policy of assimilation was ostensibly an attempt of the part of Europeans to remove the Koori domain and incorporate Kooris into European domains. However, Europeans continued to discriminate against Kooris in such a way that the supposed option was not real. Nevertheless, what Europeans did not recognize, and still find difficult to accept today, is that Kooris valued their Koori domain with its sense of Koori space and lifeways. This has been reinforced by European attitudes and policies over the years which, in turn, reinforced the significance of an exclusive Koori domain for Kooris. Any attractiveness of the European domain decreased as opportunities (such as housing and work) became greater for Kooris in the Koori domain.

It is in the world of sport that Kooris have made the most of their strength, agility and speed and in which they have had most recognition from whites. In earlier decades, Koori men have played in both Cowra and all-black teams and in 1972 the women started their own basketball teams and, more recently, netball. However, in describing the long involvement of Kooris in sports, their achievements and their acceptance, one young woman commented: "They [whites in town] used the blacks for sport - it was the only time they'd recognize us. The stupid Cabbas won't give them a chance to prove themselves". She maintained that whites recognized and were prepared to exploit the ability of Kooris in this regard but did not extend this to other areas of potential achievement.

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Although there are several hotels, none unreservedly welcome Aboriginal clientele. One publican did serve Kooris and made them feel welcome: his pub became considered as the "black pub". However, when he died and the pub was sold, Kooris tended to buy alcohol in town and consume it at home in preference to frequenting other hotels. This has led to a greater privatization and has limited the potential range of social interaction among Kooris themselves as well as between them and whites in the pub. Certain of the town precincts, such as the main street and particular hotels, are regarded as public or neutral territory as far as Kooris and Europeans are concerned. For Kooris, these areas provide opportunities for socializing with those Kooris who would not, because they are not closely related, usually visit each other.

The lack of interest in those aspects of the European domain which do not, or do not seem to, directly affect them is both a product of Koori perceptions of what constitutes their meaningful social universe and a result of limited opportunities to be exposed to the European domain over the past century. Until the late 1960s, Kooris all had experiences of having been excluded or denied access to hotels, certain shops, and social events in town. Even in the cinema they had to sit in specially-designated areas.

A desire to use facilities within the town does not equate with a desire to mix with Europeans. Kooris do not interpret their demands for equality of treatment, opportunity and living standards as "assimilationist" aspirations. They do not regard having a nice home in preference to a shack as making them less Aboriginal.

The negative view held by whites is not helped by the fact that the major contact arenas are the pubs. It is thus drinkers
and fighters who come to the forefront of white people's experience of Kooris. There is resentment that stereotyping puts them all into this category, as when they are refused admission to hotels and clubs where they are unknown except as "blacks". Europeans, especially women, who marry or socialize with Kooris may experience similar censure from whites. They can be seen as "no good" if they "hang around with blacks" and may be effectively ostracized.

Whilst Kooris relate socially to few white people in town, they do maintain positive relations of a more formal kind with quite a number of middle class business people and professionals such as doctors and teachers. Although the relationships are usually prescribed by the formal role in which such people are encountered considerable affective bonds may be built up within those roles. Several non-Cowra Europeans have shared experiences with Kooris which cement such bonds — Frank Walker, who later became State Attorney General and then the first Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, joined the 1960s "freedom rides" throughout New South Wales to politicize the conditions and treatment of Aboriginal people as part of the lead up to the 1967 Referendum. Likewise, Paul Landa, later also Attorney General, helped in the early days of the establishment of the Aboriginal Legal Service in Redfern. Cowra Kooris were amongst those who mourned his early death in 1984.

A consequence of the lack of social interaction between Kooris and Caucasians is that few non-Aboriginal people ever see, get involved in or appreciate the positive aspects of Koori life. Their experience of Kooris is gained from their own school days or from the media. Kooris have often commented on the stereotype whites have of them and feel the media discriminate too strongly
against them in the sense that the only stories considered newsworthy are those that put them at a disadvantage. A television channel failed to turn up as promised to a magnificent Aboriginal Ball which I was able to attend. One Cowra woman afterwards told them, "I bet you wouldn't have been too busy if there'd been a big fight at the end of it". However, there was much appreciation expressed at the favourable coverage given by the *Cowra Guardian* in July 1986 (9.7.1986, p.6), the first for some years.

4.3: Different ways of perceiving

4.3.1: Different lifestyles

Kooris are critical of many aspects of European life-style. They deplore the lack of caring for old people and for relatives generally; and the emphasis placed on material possessions to the detriment of social relations (see also, Lickiss 1971:220). Kooris place a high value on their lack of consumer-orientation and simple lifestyle compared with what they see as the conspicuous consumption of whites. Such comparisons do not always recognize that Europeans are part of a different political and status system — one in which Kooris are largely unable or unwilling to compete. In fact, when Kooris have sufficient money on hand they do purchase material items, in particular televisions, videos, motor vehicles, furniture and furnishings. They will also spend a great deal of money on birthday and Christmas presents for children. Spending on household items has been encouraged by the new housing. This spending is not very different from that engaged in by Europeans but Europeans do see some Koori spending patterns as illegitimate. They describe Kooris as "wasting their money on things they can't afford" but with little comment on what they think Kooris "ought" to spend their money on. In particular, Europeans criticize Koori
spending on alcohol, the fact that they do not save money, and that they frequently run out of supplies, necessitating borrowing to get through the fortnight. Given that Kooris seldom receive credit or loans from financial institutions or stores as Europeans do, their money management principles may not be as different in real terms. Vast increases in government spending in the area of Aboriginal welfare has increased the resentment of many Europeans in Cowra. They complain that Kooris get payments which whites are not entitled to, such as education grants, and that they get their houses "for free".

I had several experiences during my field work which illustrated the unattractive attitudes held by Europeans towards Kooris. There was a great deal of hypocrisy - extending cordiality to Kooris I was with but running them down to me when I was on my own. I woke one morning in Cowra to hear the next door neighbour, a white woman, yelling at her young daughter: "You filthy, dirty creature! Go up to the mission and live with the blacks". This attitude toward Kooris still prevails but not, Kooris say, to the extent that it did in the past. Symbolic reference to the mission by whites no longer revolves so much around dirt, hopelessness and laziness but has become a source of resentment, possibly envy, because of the improvements being made there. Now it is more common to hear "how the blacks get too much", especially money, which "they don't know what to do with except drink". A shopkeeper in Cowra expressed his disgust to me at "all that's been done for them and look what they're doing - nothing!" He advised me not to write anything good about Aborigines for fear they would get more money. "They get too much already", he said.

Kooris agree that relations between them and the whites in town have improved in recent years. Kooris themselves have taken
several initiatives since the beginning of my field work in 1981 in getting themselves more involved in the town affairs which concern them — the Cowra Hospital and Housing Commission committees, for example. There is no involvement in local government. There have been several Koori and European initiated meetings which have brought people together to air grievances and suggest changes. However, it is still rare to see a white person on the mission except in an official capacity and few had been present at gatherings I attended, with the exception of a book launching in late 1984 and a funeral for a Koori who had worked at the hospital for 15 years.

I have already mentioned that Kooris do not stereotype all whites but will take each on their merits. This is evident in their assessment of police, with whom they have experienced probably the most negative of all contact with whites. It is also evident in the ways they distinguish between whites. The term "Gabbas" is a general reference and used as often or more so than "whites". Gabbas who have been prepared to enter into Koori styles of relating on Koori terms are described by the complimentary term "Gabba'riginal". This means they "mix in like a blackfella" and are "one of us". When a Gabba is introduced to another Koori with such an adjective, the message is that they are "OK", they "understand" — terms that carry a wealth of meaning concerning the extent to which these people can be trusted with information and counted on. I have heard several Gabbas (women, "wadjins", are also referred to as Gabba'riginals as wadjin does not lend itself as readily to the adaptation) referred to by Cowra Kooris in this way. It is rarely applied to whites living in Cowra itself.

As with kin terms (see Chapter 6), Gabba and Gabba'riginal often signify the expectations of a relationship. A white person
described as a Gabba'original has obligations within the community as do its Koori members: they may be incorporated by Kooris into a network through designation as a member of a particular kin category, or more loosely associated with the Koori way of being. Reference to someone as a Gabba or wadjin suggests that the person referred to has not been incorporated.

There are, however, a few whites in town who are noted for having "done a lot for us", even though they are not seen as incorporated in the full Gabba'original sense. One who is in particular highly regarded is the headmaster of the Cowra Primary School who is one of the few Cowra whites who has been on the mission for other than official business. In 1983 financial assistance was provided by several business people in town when one young Koori girl was picked for a southeastern Australian Koori netball team to tour New Zealand. She had earlier that year been selected as Cowra's "Sportsman (sic) of the Month" for her local involvement in both netball and basketball.

There do not appear to be significant differences in the ways Europeans of different social strata in Cowra perceive Kooris, nor do Kooris identify attitudinal differences according to such strata. Kooris are, however, conscious of their low status. The irony of the *Sydney Morning Herald* (2.2.85:37) feature on Australia's wealthiest landowners was not lost on one Cowra Koori. The article was entitled: "Who owns Australia?" and prompted the response:

Big notin' 'emselves cos they've got money. Let 'em go. Talkin' up big about what they own and all their property - people'll just go 'n smash it up for them if they carry on like that.

What she evidently objected to was the "big notin'", the flaunting of wealth and power rather than its actual possession - as well as
the suggestion that anyone white could "own" Australia. Wealthy Gabbas have also been described as "real kind people", especially when they are not "flash" (think themselves too good for others and show off). Whether or not whites have money or power is not as significant as what kind of people they are and how they treat others: there are good and bad Gabbas throughout the system. It is certainly not the case that low-income or low-status Europeans identify more strongly with Kooris and their causes. On the contrary, this is perhaps the more hostile group. Kooris receive special benefits such as education grant supplements and Aboriginal-run services which have created an inevitable backlash. Burnam Burnam, an Aboriginal man standing for a Senate seat in the December 1984 federal election, recognized this in his pre-election policy statement and vowed to extend "equality of government handouts for all low income earners" (Penrith 1984).

4.3.2: Different standards

The apparent contradictions and paradoxes inherent in many European rules and values have led Kooris to dismiss them as meaningless, even hypocritical. Kooris see themselves as being condemned by whites for things which were, at least at one time, acceptable in white society. They are denounced for spitting in public although this was acceptable in British custom until outbreaks of tuberculosis in the late nineteenth century which made it necessary to outlaw it. Likewise, pugilism was a favorite sport in Australia and early Australians of all social classes resisted the change to outlaw it by conducting illicit fights. One man, complaining that if he stops the car on a country road to urinate behind a tree he can be picked up by the police for indecent exposure, stated that urinating in public was "OK in wog
countries, so what's the big deal with it here?". He also noted that, if Kooris swear in ways whites find offensive (often a complaint by white neighbours in a country town like Cowra), they can be locked up but, as he put it, "They'll lock me up if I say a word they don't like but they've never shown any respect for my language".

Thus, Kooris live in a world which is predicated upon two contradictory sets of values. Kooris explicitly value many of the distinctive features of their way of life, even when these do produce conflicts in interaction with the European domain. However, they are well aware that very few whites are willing to learn their ways and their codes of etiquette. These codes are complex at times and require an understanding of which actions should be considered private and which public; to whom one should show deference and respect and with whom one may engage in joking or familiar relationships; the type and extent of assistance which should be preferred; and the treatment of children versus adults and men versus women. Children as well as adults are conscious of differences in values and often express disdain that whites will condemn what is to them comparatively meaningless behaviour whilst at the same time treating others, including kin, in disrespectful, disloyal and careless ways. They complain that whites will not deal with them in terms of their own meaning system.

Kooris are also critical of the way in which authority and power are structured by Europeans. They cite centralization and the use of third parties in dispute settlement as avenues they do not employ themselves. Possibly much of the criticism is based on the frustrations Kooris have experienced in trying to manipulate these systems to their own advantage. Their main complaint is the unwillingness of Europeans to allow Aboriginal people time to
reach consensus decisions. In fact, there are frequently differences of opinion between Aboriginal individuals and communities throughout the State which they show no desire to suppress. The real issue seems to lie in a history of policies and legislation which treat Aborigines as being all the same and do not allow for sufficient options.

The legal system, in applying arbitrary standards, is regarded by Kooris as being disrespectful of individuals and individual circumstances. The New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board report (1982:vi-vii) pointed out the existence of dual standards in discussing the role of the police in constructing and maintaining the political and social order:

It is not merely a matter of enforcing community standards as if some consensus existed with respect to these standards. Aborigines are often regarded as a "problem" insofar as they are actively unaccepting of "their place" in this order. ... The Board believes that some of the tension between the two groups (police and Aborigines) is created and reinforced by the lack of knowledge of police officers of the culture of the Aborigines and their failure to appreciate that it is a valid minority culture. The constant labelling of Aborigines by police and others as drunks, lazy, bludgers, thieves and so on indicates a failure to appreciate and understand the pressures and realities of the day to day existence of Aborigines who have been dispossessed of land, had their traditional lifestyle destroyed and have had no replacements offered to them in any meaningful terms.

What the Board implicitly recognizes in this statement is the existence of two separate domains, based on different sets of values and behaviours. However, the rest of the statement is naive. It does not acknowledge at the same time that there is no consensus that this is the case, that the Koori domain is not, in fact, seen as a "valid minority culture" by a great many Australians. There is still a contest going on between Aboriginal communities and Europeans throughout Australia to establish whose standards will prevail and when. The police are operating within a
legal system which insists that Europeans standards will apply, whether or not they wish to give credit to differences within the Koori domain. In this sense, the labels are consistent with behavioural expectations within the European domain. That individual police may take advantage of this in singling out Aborigines for harsh treatment is a separate issue. Europeans do not recognize a separate and legitimate legal order within the Koori domain (see also, Rowley 1972:229-230), nor do they concede a Koori right to act out the Koori way of being in "public" domains.

The police (known as ‘gunyans’), are one group of Europeans who require special mention, having always featured prominently on the Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal interaction list, from the early days of colonization to the supervision of reserves. They took over responsibility for stations and reserves when the managers left (Bell 1965:359; see also Eggleston 1976; Rowley 1972). Erambie came under police "protection" in 1965 and since then police have been amongst the most frequent European officials to visit the mission and Koori houses in town.

Kooris are generally fair when commenting on individual police (see also, Lyons 1983:50-54). Lawful arrest by a respected policeman is bad luck rather than resented. One in particular is regarded as just and sensitive and when a visit to the police station is required people may check first to see when he is on duty. One of the white solicitors working with the Cowra Aboriginal Legal Service also commended this man's attitude, adding that "the rest make it as hard as possible".

The police are not so much singled out from other whites for condemnation by Kooris as felt to be reflecting attitudes held by whites generally: "Doing society a favour by keeping Aborigines
under heel", as one of the Aboriginal Legal Service solicitors put it. This solicitor (a European) regarded Cowra as more racist than other Wiradjuri towns he had worked in. Kooris themselves have said that they feel the police are often only doing what they are told — any blame for police attitudes is located in the total structure of discrimination rather than in individuals. Nevertheless, there are also certain police who are described as "a bad lot", who use their powers indiscriminantly and violently.

I have been present twice when a policeman apparently deliberately attempted to provoke young Koori men into violent responses (in both cases they had been drinking) so as to have occasion to take them in. Kooris resent this kind of police harassment: they describe it as a deliberate attempt to occasion an arrest — the exercise of power for its own sake. They believe their high rate of arrest is associated with the need for police to get a certain number of arrests to qualify for promotion (see Dunn 1985:9). Kooris also believe the police image is such that they have to be seen to be maintaining order: picking up Aborigines is a way of demonstrating that they are doing their job of "cleaning up society".

Koori attitudes towards jail sentences are clearly not as negative as the Australian social and legal system might wish. Aborigines in Australia have one of the highest imprisonment rates in the world, in fact, 12.1 times that of the average for Australia as a whole (Foley 1984:160; Eggleston 1976; see also, various articles in Hanks and Keon-Cohen (eds) 1984 and Nettheim (ed) 1974). Most men and a large percentage of women can expect to do a term in jail at some stage in their lives, even if only for a week to cut out fines (see also, Lyons 1983). One young man, not having been to jail but recognizing the possibility, remarked, "we
are one per cent of the Australian population but 40 per cent of
the jail population". [The 1981 census records Aborigines and
Torres Strait Islanders as 10.67 per cent of the jail population
(Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1984:138).]

Except for serious crimes and long sentencing, jail terms may
have only a minimal disruptive effect on those imprisoned and
their relatives. The effectiveness of the penal system operates in
white society by virtue of the fact that it robs a person of two
valued social assets: freedom and esteem. However, although the
first is important to Kooris and is the main reason why they
dislike or would avoid a jail sentence, the second is largely
irrelevant - in fact, in some cases a jail sentence can augment
prestige as it may demonstrate the extent to which someone has
been prepared to stand up to "the system". The prison system is
rather useless if regarded as a means of sanctioning Koori
behaviour. Its negative aspects are considerably alleviated by the
fact that: (a) they often have friends and relatives in jail with
them and consequently do not suffer quite the isolation many
whites would; and (b) they often do not have any earning power
prior to being jailed so the inability to work for wages may not
affect them or their families. In fact, prison has offered a rare
opportunity for some to work on a regular basis. In a community
where incomes continually fluctuate and where adherence to the
expectations of kin relationships ensures support, the loss of an
individual's income whilst in jail may necessitate only temporary
readjustment rather than long term inconvenience, as is frequently
occasioned by social visiting patterns anyway. The social stigma
supposed to be attached to jail terms can have little force in
such a situation (Bain 1974:51; Gale 1972:225-6).

Apart from the fact that a jail term is common, another
factor which limits its effectiveness as an agent of control is the different Koori assessment of indictable offences as compared with Europeans. A great many offences relate to behaviours which Kooris deem to be socially acceptable. A fight over an insulting remark is regarded as far less harmful than severing a relationship but, under Australian law, the fight may result in a conviction, jail sentence and punitive separation from the community.

The New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board's (1982:v) report on street offences stated that:

The two most common types of offence [resulting in police charges] were using unseemly words (56% in 1978; 61% in 1980) and fighting (34% in 1978; 8.9% in 1980). The words "fuck" and "cunt", used singly or together, accounted for 94% of the charges of using unseemly words in 1980. The target or victim of this verbal abuse was most frequently a member of the police force. ... Liquor was a factor in about two thirds of cases.

The decrease in fighting is attributed to the increase in unseemly word use and associated behaviour. The combination of the two constitutes a further 3.0 per cent of cases in 1978 and 7.8 per cent in 1980. The decrease in fighting charges probably indicates the tendency towards less police intervention in direct Aboriginal conflict rather than a decrease in its actual occurrence (New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board 1982:40,42). Even though several of these charges result only in fines, many Kooris prefer to "cut out" fines by spending a few days in jail. They would rather keep their already meagre incomes and sacrifice a few days liberty, making a symbolic statement at the same time about the injustice of such a system.

4.3.3: The domain boundaries

Differences between the Koori and European domains have recently been brought into sharper focus for two reasons. One is
the improvement in the material living standards of Kooris, the other is the impact of the (NSW) Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983. In the first case, differences in Koori and European lifestyles can be better assessed when living standards, as a dependent variable, do not interfere with the analysis to the extent which they have tended to do in the past. It has been easy to attribute difference solely to material conditions, such as housing standards. The aim of government in welfare-oriented policies has often been to remove the discrepancies in living standards and access to services. Implicitly, this aim seems to have anticipated a reduction in any other differences, including tensions and conflicts between Kooris and Europeans. In practice, this has led to the differences being highlighted to a greater extent.

The second influence has been land rights legislation which has highlighted the tensions which exist in relation to land, involvement in the economy, and in power relations. The ability of Kooris to claim and purchase land has been the first major counter-threat to the European colonization of Aboriginal land since early Wiradjuri reprisals were crushed in the mid-nineteenth century. Spatial domains are once again being fought over, this time in an environment which many local Europeans had thought was relatively secure: the Koori process of recolonization has become conspicuous.

In 1984 the Cowra Local Aboriginal Land Council claimed parcels of Crown Land under the Land Rights Act. When these claims were presented to the Cowra Shire Council for discussion in 1985 an angry debate ensued. This was, of course, the first time that Kooris had had an opportunity to expand their spatial domain locally for nearly two centuries. The Shire Council announced its own objections to many of the claims and called for Cowra
residents to submit other objections which might prevent the claims proceeding (Cowra Guardian 26.7.1985, p.1). The member for Lachlan, the electoral area which includes Cowra, Mr Ian Armstrong, wrote to the Cowra Guardian (17.7.1985) maintaining that land rights was creating apartheid. He stated that land rights would not help people within society who needed special help, equating Aborigines with, amongst others, the physically and socially handicapped, children from unsettled backgrounds, drug addicts and alcoholics. He continued:

There are many people including myself who respect people of aboriginal background.
That respect is rapidly being eroded by aboriginal people allowing themselves to be manipulated into some sort of belief that land rights will give them a better way of life. This is absolute rot.
What will help aboriginal descendants is: help with alcoholism, help with particular medical problems, non-destructible housing and helping aboriginal people to behave and conduct themselves in the community in a like manner as the remainder of society does, irrespective of their racial background.
Race doesn't give anyone the right to be either a slob, a hooligan or a landholder.
The community will invariably treat the individual in a corresponding manner to the individual's own example.
Work and an attitude of respectability will help the aboriginal (emphasis in original).

Armstrong did not explain how he reconciles the disparate groupings he mentions in relation to his assertions. On the same day, the Guardian's (17.7.1985) editorial upheld a similar view although couched in less inflammatory language:

It would be naive to suggest that these [social] problems could be solved instantly by the granting of parcels of land.
It would appear the best interest of Aboriginal people would be served if matters such as health, education, etc., are given top priority by governments and aboriginal organizations.
Mr Murray [a Cowra Koori] says the spirit of the land rights legislation is to grant some form of compensation. This is an honourable intention and there are some sites which should be preserved not only for those of aboriginal blood but for all future generations. Traditional areas, such as Erabbie, should become tribal property.
There is a danger that claims for land could be misconstrued as a "grab" for no other purpose than that it is able to be claimed. That would be detrimental to the aboriginal cause and erode any progress made so far.

... Australia is now multi-cultural. People from many lands have made their homes here. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that they may have little interest in an issue which began almost 200 years ago.

The references in the above articles perhaps reflect the wheel having turned a full cycle since 1788. Domains defined and established by Europeans are now being challenged by Kooris. Kooris also maintain that race did not, and does not, entitle the taking over of another people's land. Cowra Koori, Paul Coe, brought a High Court action against the Australian and British governments in 1977 claiming that the dispossession of Aborigines was unlawful (see further, Maddock 1983:14-16).

The land claimed by the Cowra Local Aboriginal Land Council includes the river frontage down from Erambie which has long been regarded by them as part of the Koori domain. It also includes part of the Farleighs reserve area. As the Land Rights Act only allows for the granting of claims to Crown land which is unalienated (not being leased or used for some lawful purpose) and is not likely to be used for an "essential public purpose" (this is not defined in the Act), the opposition to the claims has led the Lands Department to commission a report into the use and potential use of Crown lands in the Municipality of Cowra. Cowra Kooris have interpreted this as a means whereby the Shire Council might be able to come up with some reasons as to why the claims should not be granted.

Aboriginal people have long been seen by Europeans as "an eyesore" if they lived too close to the town; as "a problem" because of inequalities in living, income and health standards; and as "a nuisance" because of different behavioural standards.
The alternatives presented by Europeans almost always meant some form of invitation or coercion that seemed to Kooris to curtail their autonomy and desire to live out their preferred ways of being. Kooris now actively seek to maintain their domain but, at the same time, they make continual requests for resources which will enable them raise their material standard of living to that of middle-class Europeans. Land claims and purchases by Kooris would seem, from the comments in the Guardian cited above, to constitute Kooris as "a threat" to certain Europeans as well. The attempt by some Europeans to maintain the definition of Kooris as a "problem" is clear and is evidently calculated to divert European support from land issues and block Koori moves to expand their domain. It is unlikely, however, that conflicts over land ownership and development, which Europeans themselves introduced two centuries ago, will disappear just because Europeans want them to.

The reference to Australia as a "multi-cultural" society in the Guardian articles above is reminiscent of earlier years when Aborigines were considered to be British subjects and thus not entitled to special consideration. To Kooris this is a denial of their rights. They state that, unlike migrants, they did not choose to live under Australian law or accept European-defined lifeways. They want enough room to live out their own lifeways without constant scrutiny and control.

Attempts of the part of the Wiradjuri to find bases for relating to Europeans or to improve the material conditions in which they lives should not be read as a desire to be incorporated into European domains. Whilst this has been an option and has been taken up by a few, there are many who could "pass" and have chosen not to do so. In the past, employment represented a means whereby
Europeans thought Aboriginal people could be incorporated (Reynolds 1983). However, Beckett (1978) has argued:

In the fluid conditions of the frontier, work was the primary mode of identification, and the society [Australian] made few other demands.

Read is critical of Beckett's (1978:27) argument that this did not entail a "drastic change" in the identity of such men. He maintains that one of "the most significant aspects of employment ... was that their work-mates were mostly Europeans" and that the "European ethic of diligent work-as-its-own-reward was one aspect of European values which emerged strongly in conversations" with Cowra men (1980:101).

Two of the men discussed in Read's study expressed the opinion to me that George Dutton had earlier expressed to Beckett: that they considered those days much better ones for Kooris - when they had more acceptance and more opportunities than today. This is not a popular attitude amongst younger Kooris today who live in a different political climate. For them, there are greater rewards to be gained by distinguishing themselves from whites, rather than by identifying with them. They will go so far as to describe such men as having "sold out", of being, in a sense, traitors to the Aboriginal cause by valuing their experiences within the white domain, or being "sucked in" or deluded. However, neither Beckett's nor Read's stories suggest that their informants were assimilationist. George Dutton (in Beckett 1978) was, on the contrary, proud of his Aboriginal heritage - and proud of his ability to meet with whites on equal terms.

The debate here, as in the land issue above, is whether (a) involvement of Wiradjuri people in work or other aspects of Australian society, (b) a desire to improve the material conditions of their life and (c) a desire for equity of treatment
with other Australians represent a negation of the Wiradjuri domain. There is no evidence to suggest this is so. One woman in Cowra recalled fragments of songs sung in the 1950s. One went:

Coon, coon, coon, I wish my colour would fade
Coon, coon, coon, I'd like a different shade.

......

I wished I was a white man instead of a big black coon.

She interpreted this as a demand for equal treatment and saw no contradiction between this and another song of the same era entitled "Every nation got a flag but the blacks". She went on to state:

There was a big Japanese prisoner of war camp here, and in 1941 a lot of them got out and killed a few people. By 1963, though, Australia and Japan had become so friendly that the government gave the land at the cemetery to the Japanese. That war is over, but I wonder when the war against us will stop?

In 1971, Lickiss asserted that Aboriginal people in Sydney were alienated. This was indicated by:

Excessive mobility, lack of interest in material aspects of the place of residence, the sparseness of neighbourhood roots ... the reluctance to be involved in certain types of structures, institutions, services ... of the wider community (1971:222).

What the following chapters will demonstrate is that every assertion listed above as an illustration of alienation can be turned on its head and represented through Koori eyes as integral and valued features of the Wiradjuri way of being. Kooris enjoy their mobility, do not consider themselves governed by material possessions, do not necessarily reside where their roots are and do make conscious choices not to be involved in certain structures and institutions of the European domain. They have an alternative way of being within the Wiradjuri domain.
Plate 4.5 Cowra Koori football team
Taken at the Les Coe memorial knockout, March 1981

Plate 4.6 Cowra Koori netball team
Taken at 'Back to Bulgadramine Weekend', Peak Hill, October 1985
PART III

STRUCTURING PRINCIPLES IN THE WIRADJURI DOMAIN
CHAPTER 5: THE SOCIAL REPERTOIRE

5.1: Daily activities and concerns

5.1.1: Koori use of space and time

On entering a different cultural milieu one expects to see people engaged in unfamiliar activities and to have to learn the codes of participation so as to fit in. If the way of life is not expected to be different, participation will only mean adjusting to different personalities within a familiar context. The realization that Kooris did things differently was brought home to me on my second day in Cowra. An older woman I had been talking to stopped our conversation to say: "You've lived with blacks before, haven't you". She said it more like an accusation than a question. When I told her that I had spent time with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland, she gave a knowing smile and added, "I could tell ... we do things different".

What had this woman noticed? What had been different about my behaviour compared with other Europeans she knew? To what extent had I unconsciously been drawing on past experiences with Aboriginal people to adjust to Koori relations in Cowra? And what did this tell me? In this chapter I look at some of the day-to-day activities in which Kooris engage and at their significance. They are shaped to a large extent by the fact that they take place within a Koori spatial domain and within a Koori mode of marking time. In particular, I focus on fighting activity. This activity provides an interesting illustration of contrasts in Koori and European attitudes towards modes of expressing conflict, and of Koori adjustment to colonization. These issues will be discussed in later parts of the thesis.

Koori space, as mentioned in Chapter 4, is largely confined
to Koori homes and Erambie reserve, and to particular spots on the river and elsewhere in the countryside. Reserves such as Erambie provide more freedom of expression and autonomy than is possible for those living in town although the notion of Koori space is also employed by Kooris who live in town. It is often easier to live in a street with other Koori neighbours than to be next door to Europeans. Having Koori space provides more freedom of expression. If there are white neighbours one has to put up with certain constraints - such as noise levels and language use.

Far from being "mission blacks" or "fringe dwellers", terms that virtually became synonymous with "unfit to live in town", those living in more demarcated Koori space appreciate the fact that they can "do their own thing" to a greater extent without having to worry about neighbours complaining or calling in the police. As far as is possible Kooris prefer to maintain a world relatively removed from the day-to-day constraints of the European presence.

The particular historical experiences of Kooris since the beginning of the European colonization of their domains has changed the repertoire by which they communicate who and what they are. Certain activities of the past have been ceased, others continue in a transformed or modified form. Gatherings of Kooris from various places were once for ceremonies, trading and fighting. Later Christian convention rallies during the mission era provided opportunities for get-togethers, as did funerals. In recent years people have met at rallies and meetings concerning the land rights movement. As in the past people will travel great distances to attend functions. This is as much because of the opportunities they provide for Koori sociability as for the stated purpose of the event. Activities increasingly involve Kooris in
travelling to cities and other communities, facilitated by motor and public transport. There are more demands on people's time and allegiances than in the past but this has seemed to increase the value they place on times they are able to gather together.

The social world for Kooris revolves around the people they know, in places which they know. Events take on their significance because of who is involved or because of ties to a locality. There are few people, for instance, who would go to a football game unless they knew a team member. Although people will travel to watch a Cowra team play, this will usually only be if one of their Koori relations is playing.

This orientation leads to distinctive activities and a selective approach to events outside the Koori domain. Local and national newspapers, for instance, are interesting for what they say about Kooris rather than for the general information they contain. Kooris seldom interest themselves in events in the town of Cowra or in other parts of the State unless other Kooris are involved. There may be much more knowledge about happenings amongst Aboriginal people interstate than in those involving Europeans in Cowra. Activities in the town precincts attract little attention, the annual Cowra Show being an exception.

The use of space outside of the mission or home environment has been restricted by the lack of vehicles. Although young people, in particular, buy inexpensive cars these do not prove inexpensive to run and do not last long. There are people who have cars as part of their work, such as the Health Worker, but these are not available for general use.

5.1.2: Spending time

To non-Aboriginal people, the daily round of activities and concerns of Cowra Kooris may seem to represent an enervate
lifestyle. Life seems to be experienced, particularly by those who are not working, as a series of episodic encounters which fill in the hours of boredom — searches for meaning and companionship in activities such as joking and humour, sex, gambling, sport and fighting. It is true that boredom is often a complaint and that, when the money for cards or beer has run out, so too does some of the energy. However, Kooris do not view inactivity pejoratively and may be critical of all the "rushing 'round" that Europeans seem to them to do.

Kooris know how to have fun and they demonstrate obvious enjoyment in the company of each other. There are various activities, shared interests and concerns which help to strengthen their corporate life. Dances on the mission, football games and concerts still feature as important activities. Within the community there are many ways in which people gather informally — in drinking parties, card games, sing-a-longs and to watch fights — as well as more formal meetings of the various organizations.

Cups of tea are a symbol of hospitality and can be a good reason for both men and women to drop in for a short visit. Not to be offered "a cuppa" usually indicates that the visitor is unwelcome. It is also a source of shame not to have tea in the house (because of financial hardship or mismanagement) or not to be able to offer travellers a sandwich. For people who are intensely interested in people there is always something to talk about — babies, fights, new romances, deaths, and news from other communities.

Some activities are considered appropriate to men or to women. These are generally those which have been adopted from the European repertoire, along with European sexual differentiations. These include football and "tinkering" with cars for men, and
netball and "domestic" activities (sewing, laundry, cleaning) for
women. However, these norms are not formalized and in their own
domain Kooris are not concerned to maintain gender distinctions in
activity participation although they often do in joking
relationships. In the Koori domain there are no activities which
are exclusively male or female although both men and women may
spend much time in single sex groups as they fix cars or have a
chat. Even so, there are no constraints on a member of the
opposite sex joining in - although this may change the topic of
collection. Women do gather informally to a greater extent and
often card games have women only groups, usually because no men
have decided to have a game rather than because they were not
welcome.

Likewise, there are some activities appropriate to particular
age groups. Smoking and drinking are adult activities and children
under 16 years are strongly discouraged from engaging in them,
although some will when out of range of adults. There are games
children play but often adults will join in. Likewise children are
often around when adults are drinking or playing cards, even
though not actually participating. Exceptions are made when people
 go into town. Then adults, younger teenagers and children will go
 off with their peers.

There is hardly a house which does not give family photos
prominent display and have albums for people to pore over. This is
a good way of catching up on different relations, remembering the
old people and introducing newcomers to members of the community
and family. There is much swapping, bargaining and occasional
"pinching" of photos. They are probably the item of greatest
single value to individuals and reflect the value placed on
personal relationships and the way in which people define
themselves. This may seem strange to readers familiar with Aboriginal practices elsewhere in Australia where there are prohibitions on naming and displaying photos of deceased kin. However, as discussed in Chapter 6, links with recent and more remote ancestors are taking on new significance in the maintenance of social identity amongst Wiradjuri people today.

Ordinary day-to-day news does not travel fast and visitors are welcome for what they may have to tell of relations and happenings. However, there is a very effective bush telegraph which is mobilized when needed and seen most clearly when there are reports of death, accident or illness. At such times people employ their extensive networks to telephone others or arrange visits to those without phones. Each person contacted will know of others who need to also be informed. A funeral is the primary event whereby people can reaffirm their belonging to place and to people. If people are unable to attend, they make sure to send apologies so that their absence will not be construed as neglect or a desertion (see also, Sansom and Baines 1983:C-3). Often when people gather for a funeral—which some will travel many kilometres to attend—they express regret that they don't come together except for a sad occasion.

Weddings are not frequent: there have been only two in recent times in Cowra. Although baptisms are held they tend to involve only close kin. Birthdays are always a good excuse for a get-together to share a drink and have a good time, and will include people who might not normally drink together.

When it was first introduced, television was one more way in which people gathered to spend time together. As only a couple of houses had a television set, sociality was promoted in much the same way as people coming together for card playing, drinking and
other corporate events. People would visit those who had a set. As more became available (almost all houses now have one), they tended to mitigate against such sharing as the excuse to gather together was removed. Video cassette recorders have had the same effect — increasing and then decreasing sociality.

I have already mentioned that one of the most popular activities is sport. Almost all Kooris enjoy watching sports and play one or more well, at least in their youth. They often speak of Cowra sportsmen of the past — boxers, footballers and cricketers. Young people are encouraged in football, basketball, netball and running. They particularly enjoy team sports, although boxing is an exception. Few play tennis, although they take some pride in the fact that the famous tennis player Evonne (Coolagong) Cawley is of Wiradjuri descent. Some are related to her and have her picture on the wall at home. There is a strong desire to have all-black teams recognized in the sporting world rather than have blacks individually incorporated into predominantly white teams.

A significant event is the Les Coe Memorial Football Knockout organized by Cowra Kooris, usually in March of each year. It is held to raise money for Koori educational scholarships. Koori teams come from various parts of the State to compete. Knockouts are popular because they bring new faces into the community as well as relations who have not been seen for a while.

5.1.3: Marking time

One of the major ways in which time is marked off is through the fortnightly payment of pensions and social security money. Describing activities and moods in the community depends upon whether one is referring to "pension week" (when there is money to spend) or "off-week". Pension week means money for major shopping
trips to town and is in itself a social event as people congregate first at the Post Office for their cheques and later meet with others doing their shopping. It provides a chance to catch up on news from those one does not see at other times and put a few bets on the TAB. It also means an opportunity to catch up with people to settle debts (see Chapter 9).

Back home there will be big "cook-ups" and card and drinking parties. The sounds of laughter, talking, joking and quarrelling can be heard as people sit around in their yards or houses late into the night. There is a relaxed and optimistic change in attitudes, although the increase in socializing and in exchanging (or refusing) money or alcohol, for instance, may lead to a greater level of tension and dispute - and thus to the occasional fight. Although "off-weeks" are quieter, additional payments such as child endowment or secondary school grants can brighten them up. Although more Kooris now receive wages, this has not made an appreciable difference to the marking of time through receipt of social services.

Functions such as dances or concerts organized by Kooris are often planned with pension day in mind. There is always some distress if the September Cowra Show falls in "off-week". Planning the various meetings to be held in the community also means taking into account which week and the time of day. Housie (played in town) or card games are very popular, especially amongst the women. Those who don't play often joke about the impossibility of communicating with those who are - "You won't get any sense out of them!" On one occasion a meeting was held with a task force looking at health problems people faced and the need for medical facilities. Despite the interest expressed in the planning stage, the task force involved turned up on the afternoon of pension day.
and only a handful of people (non-players) attended.

Drinking get-togethers are frequent in pension week and provide an excuse for conviviality and catching up on debts of hospitality. Not all Kooris drink and some drink only on special occasions. Nevertheless, there is still a significant group of men and women who drink fairly consistently. Some have alcohol-related health problems as a result. Kooris respect the right of individuals to determine the use of their own time and money as far as this and other activities are concerned. The only criticism of drinkers is when they cause too much disturbance or neglect children in the household when drinking. This does not mean that Kooris disregard the problems which alcohol has created for them in terms of health problems but that they deal with them in terms of their overall value system (see further, Chapters 9 and 11).

5.1.4: Joking and "yarning on"

Many hours are spent sitting around swapping yarns or telling jokes and "ghost stories". Ghost stories are usually about the visitation of deceased kin or unknown dead who inspire fear. They also include events which contain elements of mystery: those which have no logical explanation. The telling and repeating of stories reinforces a sense of belonging and provides reassurance about the world and what it is about. It is a way of transmitting values, endorsing behaviours and accumulating history (see Chapter 7).

One thing that struck me was how much of Koori humour was generated by or reflected conflicts or irresolvable tensions. This may be true of humour generally (Barnett 1960:13). Jokes about Gabbas and sexual relations are frequent and reflect two constant sources of tension. In their humour Kooris make some very strong statements about incompatibilities which they may in fact value in
the sense that the antagonistic relationships described are expressive of a sense of difference and should be defined in terms of animosity. Joking can also serve to ease as well as express tensions: a funny story, which compels laughter, can defuse a tense moment which looked as if it might be headed for a fight. A great number of Koori jokes are about black/white relations in which the clown is the blackfella or Jacky Jacky. Told by whites they would be insulting but Kooris have a great ability to laugh at themselves and to turn a joke around. In doing so, they can have a forceful dig at the whites who believed they were just ignorant Jacky Jackys who would do all the "boss" man told them. However, a great deal of Koori humour is generated out of the day-to-day events in which people find themselves rather than in telling jokes as such. Kooris are good at acting out amusing events and mimicking people, as were Wiradjuri people in the nineteenth century. Struikby (in Graham 1863) records several instances of their practical jokes when they mimicked Europeans' ignorance of the bush or their personality characteristics, and highlighted the inconsistencies of European behaviours.

Drinking, gambling and fighting also provide contexts in which tensions can be confronted and dealt with. These activities are also, of course, means of economic and social exchange. The alcohol or the winnings serve as an additional attraction rather than a major reason for participating (see also, Bell 1965:405, Watson 1983:5). Each of these activities holds a wealth of symbolic meanings and are enjoyed by those who participate. Kamien, for instance, noticed that in Bourke (western New South Wales):

The first episode of drunkenness was akin to an initiation ceremony. It was certainly an identification with and an emulation of the adult role and was often
reinforced by acceptance into the adult group (1978:151).

Beckett also maintained that the drinking spree was recognized by Kooris west of Wiradjuri as being "something peculiarly characteristic of their group". It was celebrated in songs, provided a sign of adult status, distinguished them from whites and was a valued social activity:

It is often the occasion for discord and disturbance, but equally for sharing, conviviality and seeking esteem (1965:33; see also, Bain 1974:45; Brady 1983:5).

Beckett (1965:33) and Fink (1957:103) also viewed Koori drinking habits as a form of defiant action, providing an avenue of symbolic resistance against the domination and oppressive moral codes of Europeans.

Below I expand on Koori fighting activity. I have conducted a major study of Koori fighting (Macdonald 1985) and here will draw on the main points from this to illustrate how and why Kooris fight. The general significance of Wiradjuri fighting is taken up in more detail in Chapter 11.

5.2: Koori fighting

5.2.1: Koori attitudes to fighting

My interest in fighting stemmed from the first fight I witnessed. It took place between two young men following heated discussions in the pub. No one had taken a great deal of notice of the argument until the voices reached a pitch that suggested a fight was imminent. At that point, the women I was with asked what was going on and started to follow the action. When the publican asked the men to move out the back to fight it out, we became onlookers. I noticed at the time that there was no particular concern evinced about the fact that a fight was taking place — although there was concern that it should be a fair fight. The
discussion and comments going on between those watching indicated that such fights were not only normal events but ones which aroused interest and a degree of enthusiasm. One man appointed himself as a referee and supervised the fight, bringing it to a halt when one of the antagonists said he had had enough. When it was over, we returned to the bar. I subsequently witnessed many more fights of this kind and I learnt that while certain types of fighting are discouraged or deplored by Kooris (those they refer to as dirty fights), this is not true of all fighting.

What initially struck me about fights between Kooris was the ways in which people spoke about them. As I got to know Kooris better I realized that the fights I observed were not random or attributable simply to too much alcohol. It became evident that to understand a fight situation one had to understand the relationship between those involved and their personal histories. Some fights that initially seemed to have no explanation were accepted as being predictable behaviour by others with this information. My interest increased after an informal conversation with a group of children. I had asked them to explain the difference they saw between Kooris and Gabbas. The first response was from a ten year old boy who exclaimed with pride: "Kooris are better fighters". At the time I was surprised that this should be the first quality mentioned but he went on to explain:

... 'cos they're black, strong, muscley and tough. Kooris were the first ones in the world, I mean Australia, so they're tougher and should be the boss. They fight more cos they're the best fighters in the whole world and good at sports too.

Such comments were to be repeated on other occasions. There was general agreement that "Kooris fight a lot".

Kooris make linguistic distinctions between styles of fighting and the speaker's attitude to a fight can often be
detected in the choice amongst various terms which are applied. The Wiradjuri term for a fight is *kunjali*, and is used occasionally by older people. More often one hears about people 'fighting', being 'jobbed', getting 'stuck into' each other, getting a 'flogging' or being 'king-hit'. A fair fight, *kunjali*, or reference to people getting stuck into each other usually refers to a duel type of fight. This is the kind of fighting most often referred to when people speak of it in general terms as a cultural category. Being king-hit, getting a flogging or an individual getting stuck into another (rather than each other) may imply a situation that was seen as too one-sided to be a fair fight. If a wife gets the worst of a fight with her husband, for instance, she might be described as "having got a flogging off him"; someone who is "king-hit" can be presumed to have been assaulted; and a "big blue", or "brawling" may indicate that more than two people were fighting at the time.

The ability to fight well - and fairly - is something that many Kooris take pride in. One woman, commenting on "all the drinking and fighting going on today" had ideas about how to get rid of the drinkers (kick them out like in the old days) but she did not extend this to fighters. A person's behaviour in a fight may be unacceptable, perhaps as a result of drinking beforehand, but there are times when it is important to be able to fight.

A man, I was told early in my fieldwork, can be a "fighter or a lover" - preferably, according to the speaker, he is both. Good clean fighters are respected. It is a mark of sensitivity and virtue to be able to stand up for oneself and one's people by fighting against insult and injury and it is a duty to challenge someone who has wronged one's close kin. Scorn is expressed at any age of cowardly behaviour, which is distinguished from the refusal
to fight of an acknowledged non-fighter. Many Kooris value highly the fighting skills and courage shown by other Kooris and are not reluctant to tell stories about their own accomplishments.

Everyone is expected to be able to fight with relative physical and social equals at some time in their lives. The usual age range of fighters in "proper fights" (see below) is between 16 to 35 years. I was strongly encouraged to learn to fight myself—the assumption being that this was an expectation of community membership, at least to the extent of being able to defend myself. Fighting involvement is not restricted to certain personalities—although there are stirrers who maximize opportunities presented to them at times and also those who consciously avoid fighting. Men, women and children may all fight when occasion demands. There are some who describe themselves as non-fighters but it is rare to find someone who is not prepared to fight if pushed far enough. This is as true of women as of men.

5.2.2: Why do people fight?

Since returning from the field and indicating to non-Aboriginal people my interest in Koori fighting the question I am most frequently asked is "What do they fight about?" It is a difficult question to answer in that it can be approached from various angles: the reasons given by fighters themselves before or after a fight; those given by onlookers; or underlying and unstated causes which can be inferred after longer acquaintance with participants and with the community generally. Sometimes these underlying causes are recognized by community members but they are less frequently aired. However, the question is interesting in itself: it assumes that fights must have explicable causes and implicitly suggests that these causes will then justify
or enable the appropriate evaluation of a fight. Kooris do not share this attitude and statements concerning the precipitators of a fight are rarely given spontaneously. A very frequent response to this irrelevant or nosy question about motives is "I wouldn't know, probably nothing at all". Articulating the perceived cause of a fight involves a commitment: a recognition of involvement, of concern, or of criticism which someone may not be prepared to divulge – in present company or at all.

The most commonly stated reasons for fights between Kooris can be grouped into three main explanations: jealousy; insults, and "standover tactics". The precipitators of fights are often to do with material items – not sharing drinks, money or clothes. However, one woman pointed out to me that Kooris do not fight over things or possessions as they are not important to them. Although property is mentioned from time to time, it is claimed later, if not at the time, that it is individual rights which are at stake rather than material items per se,

Women are frequently given as a reason for fights, by both men and women. As one woman put it: "I've seen a lot of brawls – you know what causes it? – Women's mouths". She was referring specifically to their tendency to provoke fights through insults and gossip – starting fights amongst themselves or aggravating those between men. Fights can start after insults, offensive language, after someone learns others have been gossiping about them or after incidents that arise out of gatherings which are seen as annoying or as interference. It may be legitimate for a woman to laugh at her mother's foibles or criticise her children but she may become angry and aggressive should others take it upon themselves to do the same thing. Insults directed at one's close kin by others can be expected to lead to conflict and often to
fighting. Whether or not criticism is well founded is beside the point. "You've been talking about my people" is a harsher accusation than "You've been taking about me" and is a claim that the bounds of propriety have been broken, no matter what the content or context.

Fights can disrupt a social activity or can turn it into a memorable event. When people are playing cards or having a few drinks together, a casual or intended remark is found to be provocative. The reactions depend upon a variety of factors: how close people are, whether there are old scores to settle. To individual participants fights are about grievances which seemed important at the time, but they are evaluated and interpreted differently by all involved. One hears comments such as "I'm not going to let him get away with that" or "She's not going to think she can stand over me" as means of legitimating action. One should not, however, pick a fight without some tangible reason. Lack of a demonstrable reason may cause others to intervene and may shame the person who tried to start the fight.

5.2.3: Patterns observed in fights

There are no typical fights, each has its own dynamic. However, there are patterns which will help to indicate what fights are all about. From observations and descriptions of fights I have extracted implicit or explicit ground rules which govern different forms of fighting and this enables a categorization of different types. Depending upon the degree to which they adhere to these rules, such encounters can be seen to fall into one of four main types: casual \( (yarmbul) \) fights, duel-type \( ("proper") \) or \( (binjali) \) fights, assaults and marital disputes.

Often fights do seem to start for very little reason. Sansom
(1980:57) uses the term casual to describe similar encounters in Wallaby Cross. As he observed, minor fights and violent but short-lived arguments may arise out of situational immediacies. His observation is as pertinent in Cowra:

Apart from the bottle of their contention or, perhaps, the gambling charge or the insult that sparks the fight, the causes and consequences of the fight are contained provided no serious damage is done.

Such fights are not long remembered, except perhaps by those directly involved. Kooris refer them them as "just muckin' about", or yarrbuldain or yarrbul fights (yarrbul meaning lies in Wiradjuri). In this context this word is best translated by another Koori expression: "nothing fights". They are not seen as significant in terms of either their styles or physical or social consequences. They usually occur when a word is spoken out of turn and someone takes offence: an accusation of cheating at cards, inappropriate language or criticism of others which is distasteful. The event is worth a protest and a demand for an apology but not a full scale fight. Those quarrelling can usually be assumed to be on good terms: if they were not, the insult would provide an ideal and perhaps awaited opportunity for what is called a "proper" fight.

The only really spontaneous fights are such casual ones. The mild insult which occasions little harm amongst those of goodwill provides a different opportunity for someone who bears a grudge: there is a difference between what an outsider may think to be spontaneous or irrational and what those with appropriate knowledge of the community expect. Many fights are the result of long standing antagonisms between the participants or have been anticipated by one or other participant after a conflict of some kind. Only in two cases was there surprise amongst community
members that particular people had fought each other, as there seemed to be no apparent reason for the fight.

A "proper" fight is one in which the fighters most closely conform to certain expected standards of fighting behaviour. I refer to these as the ground rules of fighting. As the ground rules suggest (1-6 below), a fight takes the form of a duel in which a challenge is made, accepted and the fight then takes place in the presence of witnesses with a chosen referee.

My analysis of fighting was based on data gained from direct observations, the explanations and observations of others, and Koori stories about fights that had taken place in the past. I also had many conversations with Kooris about attitudes to fighting in general. I built up a data bank of "proper" fights I observed over an eighteen-month period (1982-83) which included 38 fights (see Table 5.1), 21 of which were between women and 17 between men. Of these, 2 of the women's fights and 4 of the men's fights were described by spectators as being "dirty".

Table 5.1: Fights involving Cowra Kooris 1982-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kin</th>
<th>In-laws</th>
<th>Visiting strangers</th>
<th>Well-known non-kin</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures may not represent a normal proportion of men's fights to women's, nor of "fair" fights to "dirty" fights. Information about women's fights was easier to obtain and I was able to observe more of them. Women also tended to be more
interested in talking about their fights than men and theirs. I could attribute this partly to my own gender and the consequent relations I built up with people. However, I believe it also reflects a greater inhibition on the part of men to discuss what might be interpreted as the strengths and weaknesses of themselves and their fellows. I found that men tended to "mind their own business" to a greater extent — an observation also made to me by Koori men and women.

I also recorded four assault-type situations between Kooris and Gabas and information about marital fights, including nine couples who fought on several occasions. I was able to observe and discuss various other fights both contemporary and of the past with Wiradjuri Kooris from different areas which aided analysis of the structure and content of fights as part of the Cowra Koori social repertoire. Fights I have described as "casual" are occurring all the time, most with no apparent long-term consequences. They are frequent between people who are close but who have serious or jocular conflicts from time to time. Occasionally they signify an intention on the part of one or other of the protagonists to engage in a "proper" fight at some later, perhaps more appropriate, time or place.

Case studies included as far as possible the names of protagonists, the history of their relationships with each other, any kin or affinal links between them, the stated causes of the fight, the interpretations of observers, the composition of the audience and of supporters of the protagonists, and the outcomes of the fight (see examples, Appendix A). The frequency of fights is difficult to gauge. My involvement in the daily life of a family meant I could not always stay around to see what was going on: I would travel with family members when they shopped, visited
kin in other communities, attended funerals, and so on. I recorded features of many fights which are not included in the figures above because they did not occur between Wiradjuri people, occurred outside Cowra or I was unable to obtain sufficient information about them. Nevertheless, all such events contributed to my overall appreciation of attitudes towards fighting. Statistical frequency is not an indicator of the significance of fighting amongst the Wiradjuri: an individual may go for years without a fight and then become involved in one that sets tongues wagging. Others may "look for fights". Some fights are big news whilst others are inconsequential. Some are talked about but an apparent conspiracy of silence surrounds others, particularly "dirty" fights.

Ground rule 1: A fight is between two assenting people

The first rule is that fight only takes place between two people, each of whom has indicated a willingness to fight the other. One evening when we were sitting around in the pub heated voices could suddenly be heard from the other end of the bar and one of the girls predicted a fight. The guys had got into a discussion about land rights which had somehow ended in Tony telling Len that he couldn't be bothered with the whole thing and insulting Len, his wife and his mother-in-law at the same time. Len in turn was calling Tony a "gubba-lova". Although several people tried to calm them it became evident that they were going to fight anyway. The publican told them to get out the back (as a more appropriate place to fight without damage to property or offence to non-Koors). This they did, with one young man assuming the role of organizer-cum-referee. He made it his job to get onlookers out of the way, stop interference, and make sure it was a fair fight. Often when a fight starts, or looks likely to do so,
onlookers who try to intervene will be told to "let 'em go - it's the only way they'll get it out of their system", or to "let 'em have a fair go". Interference is only seen to make matters worse. If one partner obviously does not want to fight, or is unable to, others will intervene to prevent them being forced into a fight.

Occasionally a fight between two people will give rise to fighting between others. What results in such cases is a limited series of partners fighting rather than a mixed brawl. I have not witnessed 'wolf-pack' brawls in which one person is mobbed by several. Nor have there been chain reactions in which people begin to fight each other indiscriminately. A series starts, for instance, when two men start a fight and their respective kin start "rowing" as well. This happened in the above case when Tony's wife and Len's sister-in-law took up the men's argument and started a fight in the bar when the men moved outside. They were stopped by others present on the grounds that the issue was between the men and they should stay out of it. Their acceptance of this argument was probably helped by the fact that the men's fight was about to get underway and they would miss out if they stayed in the bar. There are no occasions which cause either the whole community or a substantial proportion of members to start fighting: six is the largest number I have seen fighting at any one time in Cowra and they were fighting in three pairs. There were, of course, others involved as supporters, spectators or commentators.

Ground rule 2: fighters must be equal

It is explicitly stated by members of the community that fighting is prohibited between partners who are physically unequal or of the opposite sex. Prowess is not a factor: equality is based on a categorization by age, sex, physical handicap and alcoholic
intake. A third party has the right to fight in lieu of one of the potential protagonists only if the latter is not considered to be the equal of the other protagonist. The consent of the disadvantaged person must be obtained to legitimize such intervention. Men and women are not considered equal as far as fighting is concerned (see Chapters 6 and 11 on spouse fights).

Ground rule 3: there are limits on violence

There are specific limits to the degree of violence which may be entered into. Fights are regulated by accepted norms concerning the method of fighting and the extent of physical harm which may be inflicted. The rules or restrictions in hand-to-hand combat approximate those of the Boxing Ring Codes. Many of the older Koori men have been participants in the sport of boxing in the past as are a few young men today. Kicking someone, for instance, was described as "a real crime": you could have four or five people come and bash you in return. Most Kooris also see it as a crime to use a weapon.

Whilst there are limits on severe bodily harm, a fighter may nevertheless use injuries sustained in a fight to his or her advantage. One must ensure that the public are aware that an ordeal has been gone through, perhaps that coming out worse was because of the other's dirty tactics, or that there are appropriate battle scars to prove the fight was significant. The pain one can be seen to have received is positively correlated to the seriousness of one's intent to fight and to stand up for the issues fought over. Complaints about pain are thus part of the strategy employed in the after fight situation: there is social capital to be made out of being victimised or injured (just as there is in being sick). This does not contradict the ground rule that limits the degree of harm which may be inflicted. It is
easier to mobilize attention if there is a cut face, black eye or
bandage to support one's case. For fighters in the midst of a
fight the sign of a bruise, swelling or cut may signal the end of
the fight for one or both - "blood has been drawn" - and the
purpose of the fight can be said to have been achieved. In one
case, however, a man urged me not to mention a nasty gash he had
received. He explained it was his own fault and he shouldn't have
been fighting in the first place.

Ground rule 4: stopping a fight

A fight must stop when someone says they have had enough and
calls for a halt. An end may be precipitated by a referee who
believes the fight has gone long enough and calls for a halt. The
partners have the right to over-rule the referee and continue on
if both are in accord but the referee's intervention is more often
heeded. Al had already been knocked down a couple of times before
the self-appointed referee decided to intervene on the third
knock-down. It was obvious Al was prepared to go on but both he
and Len agreed they had had enough. They had made their point and
both then returned to the bar.

Ground rule 5: no interference

Recourse to a third party or higher authority, including
legal action, is rarely condoned in any context. As a proper fight
is called a "fair fight", by definition it requires the
willingness of both parties. In such cases, others do not have the
right to interfere unless the ground rules are not being observed
in some way. A referee is regarded as part of the fight
activities, not as interfering or intervening. Others should not
interfere with the referee either.

On a day-to-day basis, order is imposed at the level at which
dissension arises. Except where it becomes necessary, as in dirty

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fighting (see below), calling in others to assist with disputes or difficulties is interpreted as a sign of weakness or cowardice. There are people who may, as senior kin or respected community members, intervene in fights. Such people do not always act to stop a fight, as when a woman told two younger women to stop fighting on the ground that they had both had too much to drink: she told them she expected them to fight sober the next morning, as was usual in the past.

People are generally dissuaded from engaging in conflicts which do not concern them directly. Thus many conflicts between individuals are prevented from becoming group conflicts through the value placed on "minding your own business". Not only are spectators to a fight cautioned by other spectators, but fighters themselves have turned on those attempting to interfere with the same warning. A community brawl is not the intention and the serious business of fighting is greatly impeded should this arise and the whole purpose of the fight may be lost.

Interference suggests that one at least of the protagonists is incapable of "holding his or her own", that he or she is an inadequate fighter. It may be interpreted as a devaluation of the relationship between the fighters. It is important to distinguish between intervention in the fight as opposed to intervention in the relationship. The latter may threaten the rights of the individuals concerned. The greatest risk in intervention is that, if it is interpreted as interference, the fighters concerned may resent it to the extent that they will actually unite to fight those interfering. Interference is particularly resented in the case of disputing spouses. It is as if the relationship rather than the fight is being interfered with—and people have the right to define their relationships in whatever manner they
choose: "If they want to fight, it's not your business". There seems to be an implicit inference that withdrawal from the fight is a real option. If it is not taken, the partners must have chosen to fight. Fighting implies a recognition of a relationship rather than its breakdown and onlookers are urged to stay out of the way.

One young man went to great pains to explain to me the troubles he would get into if I told anyone he had rung the police to come up and stop a woman's fight he felt was getting out of control. The police are occasionally called in such circumstances but no-one sees this as a preferred option. The police often arrive too late to be of any constructive assistance and rarely understand the relationships involved to the extent that they can intervene without causing further resentment. People are increasingly taking out assault charges in cases of dirty fighting (see below). However, Kooris resent cases which are referred to the police by doctors treating fight wounds (as they are obligated to do by law). This may result in legal charges under laws which do not necessarily take Koori perceptions of an incident, its precipitators and consequences into account.

Ground rule 6: a right time and place

When a husband and wife started fighting during a dance, during which a guest was accidentally injured, community members were very critical. It was not the husband and wife's right to fight that was an issue but the fact that it was a public event with many visitors (mostly Kooris), held in a public place (a hall in town). There is often concern expressed by Kooris when planning community events in case they are ruined by fights. Sometimes fights will become disruptive and disturb events but, more significantly, they may attract the attention of local whites
who will act to stop the fighting, the noise and the event. It is much easier to exercise controls when Kooris are in their own spatial domain. In fact, young Kooris who would pay attention to older ones on the mission or in their own homes may not do so to the same extent in a public milieu. They are aware that they have crossed the boundary of Koori control and the only legal constraint in the European domain is to make sure they don't get caught. However, occasionally fighting in the European domain may be a strategy employed by a protagonist who distrusts controls operating within the Koori domain.

The adoption of various strategies includes a choice of time and place and assumes a knowledge of the persons involved and the social environment as a whole. Choice of self-presentation, occasion and audience are means of influencing the manner in which a fight proceeds and the attitudes of the community as a whole. The decision to fight in the first place reflects an assessment of the relations involved. No-one is forced to fight against their will although the line between fighting and someone getting "bashed up" (an assault) may be difficult to draw in many cases. It also depends on who is telling the story. People are unlikely to initiate a fight if they have little audience support. The extent of support, often but not exclusively from kin, give an individual a psychological advantage and a measure of security should the fight look like getting out of control. Support will guarantee a fair fight to a greater extent and the presence of supporters are a factor in influencing whether a fight takes place immediately or is deferred. Timing itself is a strategy.

One characteristic which most fights share, except many between husband and wives, is that they have an audience. When one young man joking told another to "get out the back", a woman
present in the house reprimanded him, saying, "No you don't, if you want to fight you fight out the front, not the sneaky way Gabbas do". Sometimes the reasons for wanting the fight to be public are specifically stated and a protagonist seems to choose a certain venue and time when making accusations and calling out an opponent so as to ensure a receptive audience. There are risks of course. The audience may not react as anticipated but nevertheless, the grievances have been aired and the point made even if the fight does not result as a consequence of audience reaction or intervention. The public aspect defuses and controls many potential or actual fights.

It is in the audience that the real significance and drama of the fight is to be found. Without the audience there is no fight - only a brawl, a flogging or mucking around. The audience acts, first, as an agent of control: spectators will act to ensure the fight does not get out of hand. They may restrain other onlookers from getting involved, prevent the fighters from introducing weapons and ensure that the referee does his or her job. Second, the presence of an audience legitimizes the activity: spectators are assenting witnesses although they do not have to be formally watching but be in the vicinity and close enough to know what is going on (see also, Sansom 1980:105). The presence of an audience means that the event is shared, or "owned" by all who are there at the time (see Sansom 1980:106). As witnesses, the members of the audience take on a responsibility for the fight and certain of its consequences, and also acquire knowledge from the fight which will be necessary in subsequent community interaction.

If, for instance, the fight is between two men, one of whom has accused the other of advances towards his wife, the accused may wish to defend his honour by standing up to the challenge to
fight, and the accuser to make a statement about his rights. There may be people in the audience who know of and have condoned the extra-marital relationship. If so, the accuser is letting them know that he is someone to be reckoned with - he is challenging them as well. In future, those who are a party to the lisison will need to be much more careful, or may choose not to go on sanctioning the relationship. Alternatively, they may urge the woman to decide which relationship she wants and stop courting trouble. There will be a subtle re-alignment within the community. People will act differently, if only in exercising more caution or discretion. The fight is thus an exercise in communication. It informs community members of the current state of play regarding certain others and allows them to devise appropriate responses on the basis of what they have witnessed.

5.2.4: Constraints on the operation of ground rules

Whilst proper fights may be seen as having ground rules, this does not imply that individuals are constrained to act according to any pre-determined code. The application or otherwise of the ground rules represents a strategic choice in terms of personal interaction. In general, it can be said that the stronger the adherence to the rules, the more highly respected are the relationships in question. These relationships include not only those of the contestants but also the onlookers who may play a large part in determining an individual's choice of action.

A fight is described as a "dirty fight" when the rules are not adhered to. It becomes dirty, for instance, when a weapon is introduced, such as wooden or iron bars, bottles or knives, or when dirty tactics are employed, such as hitting below the belt or hitting or kicking someone who is down. There is criticism when
one partner refuses to stop when requested by the other or inflicts unjust and gross physical harm. A dirty fight is nevertheless regarded as a fight and not an assault because both partners initially showed a willingness to fight.

Whilst I have mentioned that fighting is a socially sanctioned activity amongst Kooris, this does not apply to dirty fighting. This is fighting over which controls are not able to be applied. There are several reasons for this. One is the composition of the community which makes authority relations ambiguous (see Chapters 7 and 8). Intervention is thus more difficult. However, related to this is a contradiction which has resulted because of European attitudes towards fighting. Europeans do fight with each other. However, a major difference is that fighting is generally regarded as a private affair which takes place in private venues. As the sixth ground rule illustrates, fighting is and should be a public event amongst Kooris. Thus a different conception of time and space is involved. In Chapter 1 I mentioned von Sturmer's point that the differences between the two domains, in this case Wiradjuri and European, may help to explain European misinterpretations of Koori fighting (von Sturmer 1984b:220). Europeans object to the fact that Kooris fight, and drink, in European-defined and controlled domains - in particular, those defined by Europeans as "public". I overheard a man at the Cowra Show, watching a Koori fight, comment: "It's disgusting the way they behave with all these people around". To a European, what seems disgraceful is, to a Koori, constitutive of the activity.

Europeans have consequently devalued a very important part of the Koori control process. On the mission, fights can be conducted according to Koori principles to a greater extent. Off the mission it is more difficult. Much of the dirty fighting takes place when
a meaningful public is not present, as when people are away from home. Fights should take place between people who are close. Between strangers dirty fighting can be expected to a greater extent. Obviously in the contemporary situation, the world now includes far more "strangers" than it did in the past.

Kooris evaluate their activities according to their own way of being. They are aware that Europeans often evaluate them differently, in terms of another way of being. They argue that, when in their own domain, they should be able to exercise the right to define appropriate behaviour. However, their use of non-Koori domains suggests that they are not always willing to concede this definitional right to Europeans, particularly as far as "public" domains are concerned. To be constrained to act in accordance with European conventions means that Kooris do not constitute part of the legitimate "public" – at least, not as far as their definitions of acceptable public behaviour are concerned. Public domains are European domains, in which Kooris are expected to conform to European definitions.

In engaging in their own ways of being within European spatial domains, Kooris are appropriating part of the environment which Europeans have defined in their own terms. It is not so much that Kooris live and act differently which is of concern to Europeans but that Kooris are engaged in recolonizing – in transporting their way of being into a European-defined and controlled part of the environment, and challenging the right of Europeans to define public domains in ways which exclude Koori participation. Even more forcibly, they explicitly claim a right to live out their own way of being within their own domain without interference or judgment.
CHAPTER 6: THE KOORI NETWORK OF KIN

6.1: The system of kinship

6.1.1: Studies of kinship in settled Australia

The world of kin is the knowable arena within which Wiradjuri people develop their social identity and without which they cannot fully belong. It is the world in which social value is derived, as Sansom and Baines (1983:C-6) discerned in Darwin and Western Australian studies: "from accumulations of co-experience which make persons meaningful to one another". Cowra Kooris are no exception to the commonly held view amongst anthropologists that Aboriginal social relations are governed by and large, if not wholly by kinship: "the ego-centric relations of genealogical connectedness" (Sutton 1982:182; see also Berndt 1977; Sansom and Baines 1983). However, kinship is not the whole world as it may once have been. Today Kooris in Cowra include many non-kin among their day-to-day social relations although kinship is still a major means whereby social relations are organized.

The following description of kinship in Cowra looks at the structuring of social relations on the basis of a genealogically defined kinship model, and at the flexibility of interpretation which exists to modify this system. I shall look at the principles of kin recruitment, at the significance of the use of kin terms, and at Koori attitudes towards marriage and relations between kin, spouses and other affinal relations. I also discuss exchange relations between kin, including the significance of residential arrangements.

Complex kin relations and the value system upon which they appear to be based are often used as a means of both explaining (and explaining away) intra-Aboriginal as well as
Aboriginal/European relationship dynamics in south-eastern Australia. It is important to know what is being referred to, both by ethnographers and Kooris, in the use of terms such as kinship, family and relations, and to consider the nature of the environment in which this kinship idiom has endured. Before kinship can be posited as explanation, it must in itself be explained.

It is becoming increasingly common for the term *family* rather than kinship to be used by writers in describing Koori kin relationships in New South Wales. The difference in terminology seems implicitly to suggest that there is no kinship system as such. However, neither conventional folk notions nor current definitions used by social scientists of family are useful in understanding how Kooris define people as relations. The term family is used in so many ways as to be analytically confusing and conceptual clarification is often absent in family literature (see discussion in Fallers and Levy 1964). It may refer to a delimited range of consanguineal and affinal kin, to a residential unit (a "household") or an economic unit (see Eisen 1980:45). None of these applications adequately conveys what Kooris mean when they refer to "my relations". In European models a distinction is usually made between *family* as those kin who normally reside together in a nuclear-style (parent/s and children) household, sometimes with other close kin, and *relations* as kin who reside elsewhere in similar nuclear households and who may or may not have a lesser degree of closeness or commitment (Elkin 1945:44; Martin 1970, 1967). In such models family members are considered more significant than relations in influencing an individual’s lifeways and definition of self.

Among Europeans, the family does not necessarily constitute a
major definitional arena for all its members: the importance of family will differ between a person who works or spends most of their life outside of the home and, for instance, a mother whose life is preoccupied with the care of small children in the home. The more socially significant networks developed by Europeans are often based on a work/leisure paradigm rather than family. Work provides a major definitional arena and the leisure arena, which is often how "family life" is regarded, provides a range of options which include club memberships, sports and gatherings of relations living elsewhere (see, for instance, Wild 1978:85). Women are being increasingly encouraged to define themselves outside of the domestic context rather than their roles as mothers or wives being their major or only definitional arena (see, for instance, Game and Pringle's 1983 critique of ideals of the Australian family). Coombs, Brandl and Snowdon (1983:44) describe this characteristic when comparing it with the Aboriginal system:

    In non-Aboriginal Australia we articulate our social behaviour with people beyond the family on the basis of occupation, income level and, sometimes, religious, political or recreational affiliations. Frequently our first question of strangers is: 'What do you do?'

Kooris themselves have frequently pointed out the contrast between this pattern and their own. As Coombs et al (1983:44) continue:

    In contrast, the question uppermost in Aboriginal minds when faced by a stranger is: 'What do I call you - in kin terms?'

and the designation of people by kin terms means that:

    you behave towards other people and know how to behave to them, to predict their reactions and so on, because you are related to them, not because their job is more or less important than yours or they earn more or less money than you do or because they do or do not go to the same church as you do (1983:44).

In the Wiradjuri system, the network of people defined as relations constitutes their major and sometimes only definitional
arena. It is not simply the grouping to which people belong which mediates between them and the world around them and which helps to socialize them so that they may then take their place in the wider world (Broom and Selznick 1977:309): for Kooris it is that world.

The lack of congruence between contemporary Wiradjuri kinship and, on the one hand, traditional Aboriginal kin structures and, on the other hand, European systems has encouraged the view amongst some writers that the Koori system is in a state of disintegration. Several years ago, Bell (1965:402) described it as "quasi-kinship" but nevertheless issued a challenge to interpretations current at the time:

Much has been written about the social disorganization of peoples similar to part-Aborigines. Divorce, *de facto* unions, illegitimacy, and other similar factors are usually taken as indices of this disorganization. But are they? ... part-Aborigines did adjust themselves during their social isolation in the years of the protection policy ... This is simply imputing to all societies an ideal to which they do not subscribe (1965:404).

It is now generally conceded that Kooris do have a system which is unique - and perhaps logical. However, there is still an assumption that its logic has evolved solely in response to the constraints of European society and that the structuring of Koori kin relations is merely the result of externally-imposed pressures. Gale (1977:326), for instance, has argued that the contemporary Aboriginal "extended" family system is the product of economic stringencies:

Aborigines living in towns and cities retain close ties with their kinsfolk not only because they wish it but also because they are forced to do so by strong economic pressures.

Gale and Wundersitz (1982:181) explain "the continuance of the social significance of the kin patterns originally developed on reserves and missions in rural areas" in terms of the depressed
economic climate of the early 1980s. One is led to assume that, as
the income and living standards of Kooris improve, they will find
no further use for the wide range of kin relations they now
cultivate.

In a similar vein, Eckermann (1980:92; see also, Rowley
1972:164) maintains that pressures on Aborigines such as the
highest growth and death rates, the worst health and housing, the
lowest educational and occupational achievement, and the lowest
economic, social and legal status in Australia have:

led to a breakdown of the Aboriginal family and the
displacement of the Aboriginal male as provider, father
model and protector for the Aboriginal-Australian child.

The term breakdown is used loosely: there is no comparison with
Aboriginal models of the past to support either her view of (a)
what an Aboriginal family which has not broken down is like (see
also, Rowley 1972:138-9; and discussion of breakdown approach in
Kitaoji 1975:Ch.1,pp.6-7), or (b) what role an Aboriginal father
is supposed to play (see, for instance, Bell 1983:56; Hamilton
1981:39,46; and Kaberry 1939:154; and a constrasting picture in
Meggitt 1962). If the present picture has any relationship to that
of the past, it would seem that this is only in the form of
"remnants" such as close-knit groups. However, the study of Koori
kinship must focus on how they perceive and act upon kin
relationships as a separate and prior question to problems they
experience as a result, for instance, of poverty (see also,
Kitaoji 1975:Ch.1).

The theory of disintegration is often no more than a failure
to recognize order in a complex system. Kitaoji's (1976) study of
Aboriginal kin-based social organization in the Macleay Valley of
northern New South Wales argues that structures and logic exist in
contemporary relationship patterns which have their roots in the
traditional system, although her argument still tends to take a "vestiges" approach. There is insufficient credit given to the fact that Koori kinship may be an expression of different values based on their own views of the world of social relationships.

In comparison with the mysteries of totem groups, sections and complex marriage arrangements, contemporary Aboriginal kinship in south-eastern Australia may seem a lack-lustre study which can be reduced to notions of the extended family or, at best, a dependence on kinship as a last bastion in the wake of colonization. However, the concept of extended family, implying a nuclear family unit with one or more usually dependent kin of collateral and/or ascending generations, is an inadequate means of describing Koori kin relations, their significance and their variability. Likewise, the argument that poverty has necessitated the maintenance of far-reaching kin links does not do justice to the exchange relations involved.

The analysis of Wiradjuri kin relations below is based on data acquired whilst interacting with Kooris in Cowra and elsewhere and observing and talking to them about their understandings. I also compiled genealogies for Cowra residents which include approximately 2,500 names to date. The use of kin terms was frequently discussed during the compilation which involved many people from both Cowra and other Wiradjuri communities. In addition I asked several people if they would compile lists of those relations with whom they had been in contact over the previous two years, and what they called them (such as aunty or cousin). I then compared these with actual genealogies to ascertain the range of kin term usage.
6.1.2: Kin networks and kin terms

The presence of certain clusters of people defined as kin and recognized by the use of kin terms is often treated as unproblematic in ethnographies. Kinship is generally used to refer to (a) to a particular form of reckoning genealogical connectedness within a society; and (b) particular modes of interaction relevant to the use of reciprocal kin terms. Kooris use both descriptive and classificatory kinship terminology, all of the terms being English. The relationship between kin terms and genealogical connectedness is not direct as I shall demonstrate.

Although Kooris use English kinship terminology their application does not correspond to conventional descriptive or classificatory usage amongst Europeans. The system of signification Kooris use is similar in many, if not most, respects to that of Europeans. However, as Scheffler (1976:88) notes:

Similarly defined kinds of social actors, together with systems of rights and duties associated with them, are components of many other cultures and societies in which they serve to order far wider ranges of social relationship than we do in our own.

This is true of the Koori case. The fact that the definitive meanings (the signification) of a kin term used by Kooris is similar or the same as those meant by Europeans, does not imply that the non-definitive meanings (the significance) of the term is the same. Likewise, there is a difference in meaning attributed by Kooris to terms of reference and the same terms used in address. Terms of reference are used in the manner similar to that of Europeans although the range of kin to whom classificatory terms apply is much broader. Terms of address vary to a greater extent. There is also variability in usage among Kooris themselves.

The range of genealogically and non-genealogically defined people included in a kin class will differ among Kooris and does
not enable election of who will be included or excluded in the ego-centrically defined universe. In fact, the variability which exists gives an impression that Kooris are fairly arbitrary when it comes to the designation of certain people as kin. However, patterns are discernible. The way in which Kooris interpret the concept of relations, who is or is not included in that category, and the differences between terms of reference and terms of address depends on a combination of factors: genealogical relationship, residence, mobility patterns, exchange relations and the influence that Europeans have had on the Wiradjuri domain generally.

Although Kooris may refer to each other as belonging to particular kin groups (referred to by use of a surname) rather than others, these are ego-centrically defined categories rather than a reference to concrete localized groups. When Mary talks about her husband's relatives as "his people" she is making a distinction between two groups of people which may not be made, for instance, by Bob who is related to both Mary and her husband and counts both them and their relatives amongst his relations. I refer to an individual's ego-centrically defined universe of kin as their network (see also, Sharpe 1964b:238-9). In doing so, I am departing from Barnes' (1954; also, 1968) well known broader definition of a network as those linkages which connect individuals or groups to other individuals or groups in a field of social interaction but which have no central or focal reference point. Barnes uses the term "set" (or "star" in Barnes 1968) to denote that part of any network which is ego-centrically defined but I do not find these terms sufficiently self-explanatory to evoke the appropriate connotations involved.

Kooris generally refer to their network as "my relations" (or
"relations"), "my people" and, occasionally "my mob". An individual's network may extend well beyond Cowra and include kin in other Wiradjuri locations, in link cities and sometimes interstate. Those members of a network residing at any particular time in Cowra are the grouping referred to when Kooris speak of "family". In fact, the term 'family' is used infrequently in Cowra, possibly because it is associated with a more restricted meaning among whites, implying "Mum, Dad and the kids" (the detached nuclear family). "Relations" or "my people" are preferred and are better able to convey unboundedness both structurally and geographically.

An individual's network is of primary significance throughout life but the people whom any particular person counts as kin will not constitute a fixed group over time. The process by which an individual recruits, or is encouraged by others to recruit, into this network is flexible. Obviously new relations are born and others die. Some move away and social links are severed. Nevertheless, changes in composition are not solely demographic but are subject to choices in allegiances that people make. The designation of certain people and the exclusion of others as kin often seems arbitrary: some are paternal or maternal connections; some genealogically-defined, others not; some "close", some "distant" - factors which depend on residence, age, mobility patterns, income levels, and so on. The network provides emotional and material support and social outlets, and is the major means by which Kooris may extend or maximize their life chances. It is the arena in which the self is realized and life becomes meaningful, a feature also noted by Sansom and Baines (1983:C-2) in their Darwin and Perth studies:
The essential source of value in social life comes of co-experience with known, named others. Co-experience creates and is regarded as the source of true and worthwhile relationship between people. Emphasizing the significance of co-experience, Aboriginal people invest directly in social relationships with others in ways that have consequences for (i) the establishment of individual identity and (ii) the composition of regional groupings.

There is a difference between known genealogical relationship and the relations of recognized kinship which an individual may activate (see, Schneider 1970; also Scheffler 1976). Genealogical distance, for instance, does not determine network membership or who is considered close or distant kin in the way in which it tends to delimit who is considered as a family member or relative amongst European Australians. Genealogically close relationships are the basis of a Koori network but do not reflect recruitment options as they are acted upon and negotiated in social life. A distinction can thus be made between genealogically and socially defined kinship, the latter being based on but not equal to the former. The principle of social kinship, as the extended and re-defined grouping, represents the actual network as an individual Koori's world of social and economic accounting. Network membership fluctuates over time in terms of both personnel and the emphasis Kooris placed on certain relationships. It is not a group who ever come together but, rather, what Jeremy Beckett (pers. comm. 1984) has described as a "kaleidoscopic arrangement of dyads". Sansom and Baines (1983–C2) refer to a similar situation among Aboriginal people of Darwin camps and urban Perth:

The social order is perpetually characterized by both recomposition of domestic groups and frequent alteration of the definition of the terms of relationship that obtain between kin.

The core of an individual's network includes the kin as represented in the English descriptive kin terms which Kooris use.
in referring to kin. There are twenty four of these terms (Fig.6.1). These basic terms are extended to encompass genealogically distant kin but an individual's network will not necessarily include all possible links. It reflects the choices each person has made within a range of people whom they could refer to by a kin term. Sansom and Baines (1983:C-3) refer to a distinction, also applicable to Kooris, between nominal and effective kinship. This is the distinction Kooris tend to refer to as "close" or "distant", these terms not having any necessary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>consanguineal kin</th>
<th>affinal kin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>collateral</td>
<td>lateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandfather</td>
<td>grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FF</td>
<td>FM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>MM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncle aunt(y)</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FB</td>
<td>FZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>MZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cousin</td>
<td>brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FaS/D</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MaS/D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nephew niece</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>BD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZS</td>
<td>ZD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grandson</td>
<td>granddaughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>DD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
- M Mother
- F Father
- D Daughter
- S Son
- Z Sister
- B Brother
- W Wife
- H Husband
- ≈ Sibling

Fig.6.1: Basic Kin Terms
genealogical reference. Kooris use various compound forms of kin terms. Qualifying terms such as "close" or "distant" are added, such as a "close aunty" and although these may occasionally, according to context, refer to genealogical distance they usually imply social distance. Thus, a "close cousin" may be one with whom someone has a close affective bond even though this cousin is genealogically more distant than other cousins described as "distant". "Close" kin are within the range of effective kinship. The in-law suffix is also extended on occasion to cousins: "cousin-in-law" refers to a cousin's spouse and sometimes to a spouse's cousin. A few Kooris use the terms "aunty" and "uncle" when addressing young nephews and nieces (BS/D, ZS/D) as terms of endearment. This practice has not occurred in reference and seems to be associated with the age when very young children first start to assert themselves, a time when adults often describe a child as becoming "a big woman" or "a big man".

Kooris may not necessarily be able to define each person in genealogical terms. They will know close connections - that their mother's sister is an aunty - but may not be able to compute their connection to all women referred to as aunty. One young woman, for instance, explained that a woman she called aunty was her mother's cousin. She was not sure how. Her actual relationship to her aunty is that of MFDD, where the greatgrandfather's son and daughter are half-siblings with different mothers (Fig.6.2).

Fig.6.2 about here

Young children often learn to use a kin term without knowing until they are older whether it designates an actual relationship or is a form of deference to an unrelated older person (see also, Beckett 1965:17). They have sometimes expressed surprise when
perusing genealogies to discover actual linkages. This does not imply, however, that older Kooris do not take genealogical connections into account (see further below).

**Fig. 6.2: Example of kin term extension**

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{MFFW1} & = \text{MFF} = \text{MFFW2} \\
\frac{1}{2} & = \frac{1}{2} \\
\text{MF} & = \text{MFFD} \\
\frac{1}{2} & = \frac{1}{2} \\
\text{M} & = \text{MFFDD (aunty)} \\
\frac{1}{2} & = \text{auncle (neice)}
\end{align*} \]

**Key:** (See Fig 6.1)
- \( W1 = \text{first wife} \)
- \( W2 = \text{second wife} \)

There is great variability in referential range as a result of the different life experiences of Kooris. Residential patterns, geographic mobility, histories of disputes and links established through marriages will affect the use of terms. Table 6.1 demonstrates the variability in range. It shows a network as described by a nineteen year old single Koori woman. As indicated in Table 6.1, she named 268 kin, 145 of whom were described as close. Close kin included people of up to six degrees of relationship and a few of up to nine degrees. Whilst these distinctions depend to a large extent on residential proximity, proximity does not determine whether a relationship is regarded as close or distant: several kin, genealogically close and distant, who reside nearby and with whom there is frequent interaction were not described as close. This woman's network included people living in eleven different centres: Cowra, three other Wiradjuri
Table 6.1: Example of one Network Composition in Terms of Consanguineal Distancing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees of distance</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>Non-Kin</th>
<th>Total in class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C  D  T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1  -  1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SISTER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4  -  4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPHEW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1  6  -  6</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIECE</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>5  -  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCLE</td>
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<td>11 3 14</td>
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<td>2 99 03 192</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2  1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1  0 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 23 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close:</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>260</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key:
- SISTER (Z) = term used by informant
- = normal limit of English kin term meaning
- FZM = link established affinally
- C / D = designated as close or distant by informant

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centres, one coastal town, the link cities of Sydney and Canberra, and a Victorian town. She had visited kin in all of these centres over the previous two years.

I then calculated genealogical relations from genealogies previously supplied by adult relations. Only in two cases did she specify people as relations (1 sister, 2 cousins) who were not related either consanguineally or affinally. Her range of kin is considerable and takes in many who would not be regarded as kin by most Europeans. By no means are all her potential kin relations encompassed in the network as it can be described at the time of compilation. A comparison with a list compiled by the same woman two years previously indicates that her network has changed slightly over this time. Core members remain the same with differences principally in those designated as cousins.

I have illustrated the range of genealogically defined links for one of the kin terms described in Table 6.1 in Fig. 6.3, that of aunty. In this example, my informant's aunties range across three generations and are related to her consanguineally and affinally.

Fig. 6.3: Designation of female kin as aunty - one example
Because of complex inter-relationships arising out of multiple marriages, it is possible for half or step siblings to have different degrees of relationship with people. Only actual siblings with the same parents have the same initial networks although these will alter with their respective marriages and will also differ in terms of the emphasis they place on certain links as against others. Tony and Ray have the same mother and different fathers and have siblings by their respective fathers from other marriages. If and when Ray counts Tony's other siblings as his own siblings is largely dependent on whether residential proximity has brought them together and on personal choice. In general, the bond between siblings of the same mother is stronger than among those of the same father, primarily because children usually stay with their mother or mother's kin and they are reared in this environment of co-experience.

6.1.3: Genealogies

Relationships arising out of re-marriages means that full, half and step siblings often have different surnames. Step parents' and siblings' kin become kin - so that a step-brother's cousin can be counted as a cousin if social proximity makes this desirable. When relationships can be traced through more than one linkage, people make strategic choices about which kin are to be considered close or distant. Such choices can have important consequences, as in the case of a fight between two men who were both related to the onlooker as a patrilineal and a matrilineal cousin. The onlooker's decision to support the cousin on his father's side rather than remain neutral caused a row with his mother. It became apparent that the logic behind the system people were using to designate and activate kin links did not rest upon
fixed principles of descent and consanguinity. Likewise, the number of affines regarded as close depends largely on residential proximity; the strength of the marital relationship; the extent to which the latter was recognized by others as a permanent or semi-permanent union; the desirability of maintaining links with people defined as in-laws from another area; and the presence of children from previous marriages.

The information people acquire about their genealogies is associated with the way in which they perceive their social positioning vis-à-vis others and thus the way they are, at that time, assessing their life chances. Emphasis on degrees of genealogical closeness can be disadvantageous because it distinguishes distance to a greater extent than may be desired in social relations - or, conversely, indicates closeness that someone may not wish to admit. Kin classification systems of the past would have had a similar effect. This means that there is variability in the way in which different people stress aspects of their genealogy which are associated with historical, economic, political and social factors peculiar to individuals. This not only applies to who is known and included but also to persons or marital liaisons which people may prefer not acknowledge or have publicly known. One woman, for instance, omitted mention of a marital union in compiling a genealogy - information which had been previously supplied to me by someone else. When I asked her if the information I had been given was incorrect, she admitted she did know of it but considered it "bad, they should never have got together in the first place" and it "didn't last and was best forgotten". This can also apply when people have speculated on the genitor of a child and the mother does not wish details to become common knowledge. One man maintained that it was merely a
coincidence that his surname was the same as members of another family in Cowra but when he gave me his genealogy it corresponded to that of the others residing there to whom he is in fact a second cousin. I learned that the others knew the link and were surprised that he maintained ignorance of it - in fact, they refused to believe that he did not know. As far as he was concerned, I felt that the link was insignificant to him. It was not socially activated, nor did it become so after the links were discussed. He simply was not very interested or was feigning lack of interest for reasons of his own.

Relationship links which a person deems significant may be defined either in terms of collaterality or descent. The extent to which they are stressed depends upon circumstances. One may wish to define one's status in the present, for instance, by asserting collateral linkages to a living prestigious person or to a deceased but prestigious ancestor. In this way the recent dead remain part of the kinship structure which lends logic to the present. Descent principles become important when people want to link themselves to particular networks and cannot do this through collateral links, or when disputes are concerned with peoples' rights to make decisions for others in the locality, and decision-makers appeal to historical links (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Among older Kooris the attention given to genealogical relations is precise. Although few can extend their genealogies back beyond two generations, they have extensive knowledge of collateral links. Considerable importance was attached to information concerning kin linkages and once divulged it was expected that it would be remembered: to understand it is a way of being "let in" on a constellation of relationships in the speaker's social world, and was valued accordingly. Older people,
women especially, are taking great interest in their family trees. For some people compiling genealogies is also a means of extending their social environment and they encouraged me to discover lost linkages on their behalf.

Compiling the family tree has become a valued activity in itself - as it is now with many Europeans. This suggests that the significance of tracing descent lineally may be becoming more important. Given that Barwick, Bell and Merlan (1979:38) describe genealogies as providing "a shorthand description of a person's place in society and information about his or her responsibilities to others", the new emphasis suggests that changes in the way people relate and identify are in a process of change. Although Kooris, in common with reports from various parts of Aboriginal Australia, have not previously been concerned with genealogical depth beyond two generations, the current political environment, which has been stressing the association of families with localities over time, and the anthropological enterprise of setting down such links in writing, appears to be encouraging Kooris to retain a greater knowledge of genealogical depth. As relationships with people and with places were based on a person's immediate ancestry and spiritual associations, long genealogies were previously unnecessary and at times embarrassing: what had gone before was continually recreated on the basis of the present. Such relationships have changed as a consequence of the different stress Europeans place on notions of time, and of rights and inheritance to material items and non-material values.

The system which I have been describing can be understood with reference to Scheffler's (1978) model of Aboriginal kinship. In discussing the early debate as to whether Aborigines did have a system of kin classification based on genealogical significata or
whether kin terms were merely means of assigning individuals to social classes, he concludes that:

The "kinship terms and extensions" interpretation of the meanings of Arunda and other Australian "terms of relationship" is the correct interpretation (1978:21).

The reference to extension follows the theory of Radcliffe-Brown (1913, 1930-31, 1951) and Elkin (1974) who saw:

the egocentric, genealogical designata of Australian 'terms of relationship' [as] structurally primary designata; each term designates one or more category of kin and may be extended along section or subsection lines... or in other ways. In other words, they argued that the kind of polysemy we have here is the kind that results from widening, that is, from the relaxing or weakening of the conditions for designation by a term and, therefore, for inclusion in a category (Scheffler 1978:20-21, emphasis in original).

This suggests that Wiradjuri Kooris today have a modified or transformed version of an earlier system, one which has been influenced by European models. It is not purely arbitrary or disorganized, nor is it merely an extended version of an extended family. They have adopted English kin terms but have applied them to meet the requirements of kin classification. Each English kin term used has a primary and specific meaning, such as uncle as father or mother's brother, and also derivative, expanded or broader meanings, such as uncle as MZH, MFB, MFBS, MFFBSS and so on (see also, Scheffler 1978:26). The extent to which each term can be expanded varies. Grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, son and daughter are the least flexible and Kooris usually apply these to people in a specific genealogical relationship or to someone who is fulfilling this particular role. However, they may be extended, as in the case of mother and grandmother both called Mummy (see also, Kitaoji 1976:Ch.4,p.39), a biological and stepfather both called Dad, grandparent's siblings called by grandparent terms, and also to parents-in-law. Expansion is
greater with the terms brother and sister, but most evident with aunty, cousin, niece and nephew and in-laws. Kooris use prefixes, such as "real" and "proper", "close" and "distant", indicating their awareness of the different meanings which may be attributed to a term and enabling specification, although these are not usually used in address or amongst other community members. Schulze (1891:224-5, cited in Scheffler 1978) also noted this among Finke River Aborigines:

They all know among themselves who is personally related and who is not. They are only used casually when conversing with strangers.

Koori kin terms are more specific for lateral kin and extension principles are more commonly employed in the case of collateral kin. As Kitaoji (1976:Ch.4,p.37) noted in the Macleay Valley this is a combination of a descriptive and classificatory system. Kitaoji also pointed to the limitations imposed by the English descriptive system of kin terms:

... as they tend to orient users towards a conception of the family as a small independent unit consisting of father, mother (husband, wife), son and daughter (brother and sister) (1976:Ch.4,p.37).

This tendency is probably the main reason why Kooris avoid the use of the expression "family" and they often explain their use of a particular kin term when speaking to non-Aborigines, sometimes with a simple statement such as "Well, she's not my real mother but I still call her that, see", or by indicating that people called uncle can include someone who is a father's father's brother's son. In practice, this might be described as:

Well, you see, it's like this. My grandfather on my Dad's side, he had four brothers and two sisters. The second brother was called Tommy and he married Ethel Norman. They had five kids, the eldest one was Uncle Tommy who was called for his dad but he's died now and then there was Uncle Lester, so you see that's how he's my uncle".
In such explanations, Kooris recognize that their usage is distinctive and extends beyond European conventions.

Kitaoji (1976:Ch.4,p.40) observed that, underlying the efforts to "bridge the difference between the classification of kin in the English system and Aboriginal systems" and "to overcome the arbitrary boundary of the nuclear family" implicit in the English kin terms, was "an Aboriginal conception of kinship relations based upon the traditional system". I do not believe Wiradjuri Kooris conceive of their system as being based on a traditional one but they do see it as uniquely Aboriginal. It is, however, more likely that the present system is a transformation of the old system in a new context rather than a series of vestiges. The way in which Kooris have appropriated and transformed English kin terms indicates their desire to encompass genealogically-variable as well as non-genealogical relations (see also, Scheffler 1978:30-33) whilst still defining people in terms of the reciprocal rights and obligations represented by kin terms.

6.2: The content of kinship
6.2.1: The Expectations of Kin

Terms of address specify the ways in which a person wishes to locate him or herself in the social order. They are used to assert a dyadic relationship within which there are certain expectations of each party as conveyed in the complementary use of terms. Each term represents the actuality or the expectation of that relationship. Although Kooris use European kin terms, the meanings conveyed are distinctive. They have adapted this usage to give them greater flexibility than is normal amongst Europeans. As Scheffler (1976:71) notes, however, it is important to distinguish
between the use of an expression and its meaning:

Its meanings ... consist in part of the conditions which are necessary (as well as sufficient) for designation by it; these conditions constitute the definitive meaning of the expression, or its definitive meanings in the case of a polysemous or homonymous expression. Its meanings consist also of those conditions which are merely sufficient for designation by it; these conditions constitute its non-definitive meaning or meanings, or its connotations. Knowledge of these several conditions is not sufficient, however, to enable us to predict the use of the expression. Its use depends not only on its meaning or meanings but also on the situation in which speakers find themselves, on their perceptions and conceptions of these situations, and on their intentions in dealing with the objects they perceive in these situations.

Although Kooris take their reference point from the basic genealogical model, the same term may encompass different meanings. The term "sister" can be used to illustrate. First, there are the categories of both relations and non-relatives whom a Koori may call sister. "Sister" refers to a primary sub-class which is genealogically defined. By extension, the term is also used to refer to secondary sub-classes, including half-sister, step-sister and cousin-sister. There are then metaphoric uses of the term, as in adopted sister and a non-genealogically defined female. In the latter case, Scheffler (1976:76) also points out that someone can be metaphorically a sister without necessarily being regarded metaphorically as a relative:

Prior meaning of sub-class:

sister: female offspring of ego's parents

Other meanings:

half-sister female offspring of ego's mother or father
sister-in-law wife of brother; sister of husband
step-sister female offspring of one of ego's parents by a previous marriage
adopted sister non-relative adopted as sister by parents
cousin-sister "close" cousin
non-relative non-related female with whom close affective bonds are shared
The signification does not necessarily tell us about its significance for a speaker. I could say that sisters are those people who are expected to be close and loyal, to share, to be dependable, and so on. In fact, someone may be called a sister because she is one's parents' offspring and the relationship may not be activated in these terms at all. On the other hand, someone who does relate according to such principles may be called a sister even though they are not related to the speaker.

When describing the meanings usually associated with the use of a kin term it is first necessary to distinguish between prior, extended and metaphorical usages. To draw up a list of expectations associated with a term suggests that a degree of conformity is required. This is true, but depends on the way in which the term is used within the applicable range. A term does not represent a single set of differentiated roles and relationships but "a composite, disjunctively defined class whose central and logically most prior sub-class is genealogically defined" (Scheffler 1976:76).

This then poses the question as to the status of a person who does not behave like a sister. This is important in the Koori context and they will often disown (temporarily or permanently) a person who does not conform to the minimum expectations implied in the use of a term. In practice, although two people may both be referred to as "aunty" without an affix distinguishing one as close and the other as distant, the expectations are not identical. More is expected of the close aunty than the distant aunty, although the dyadic relationship concerned will still conform to the general expectations of an aunty. On the other hand, someone referred to as a "real close cousin", for example, may in fact be genealogically distant but is seen to qualify for
that designation by virtue of their behaviour rather than precise genealogical proximity. Thus, genealogical distancing and the use of kin terms only provide a broad framework for understanding the meanings of kin terms.

The terminological system is primarily a means of limiting or extending as appropriate the number of people to whom one has rights and obligations. There is a subtle difference between maintaining that, if male A is called son by male B, then (1) B is father to A, as opposed to (2) B is expected to act as a father to A. In the Koori case the expectations of a relationship are of critical significance. The point of the usage is not necessarily to specify a blood or affinal link but to convey a set of rights and obligations. It is these expectations which people are referring to when they berate one another with an expression such as "Well, are you my brother or what?", implying that the other's behaviour or actions were not what those of a brother should be at the time. One woman, referring to an occasion when her sister had let her down, announced "She's not my sister, she's only my cousin!" Once in compiling lists of relatives I pointed out to one man that he had not included his sister-in-law (BW) or any of her kin. He dislikes his sister-in-law and avoids social contact and declared that she was no relative of his (see also, Sansom and Baines 1983:C-3).

Kin terms rather than genealogical proximity often order social relations in practice - with all the reciprocal and complementary rights, obligations and responsibilities (and ambiguities) that each term implies. Kooris may also exclude kin from social relations through a refusal to use an appropriate term. This was explained to me by a teenage girl who refers to her mother by her given name, Pamela, and calls her grandmother (MIM)
"Mummy". Her grandmother had raised her and she does not maintain with her biological mother the rights and obligations normally expected between daughter and mother. She treats her mother more as an elder sister. The practice of addressing her as Pamela would otherwise be considered incorrect and derogatory by Kooris.

Kooris with whom one wants little interaction may be denied the right to use a kin term. One insult is to suggest that they are more like a Gabba, or are a "Gabba-lova", implying that they are not willing to enter into Koori-style exchanges. A Gabba, on the other hand, who does enter into reciprocal relations may be designated as a "Gabba'original" or by the use of a kin term. McCall (1980:18) describes a similar system among the Rapanui, commenting that:

such a technique of actively using criteria of reciprocity and treating otherwise acknowledged kin as exchange partners whilst affirming that the exchanges at other times are nothing more than the sharing of resources appropriate to co-members of a family provides a rationale either for shedding unwanted kin or, when expedient, for counting a genealogically remote cousin as closer kin than one of lesser degree.

Thus, kin terms function as a shorthand way of describing a set of obligations and privileges. This allows for a great deal of flexibility and has contributed to the capacity of Kooris to adapt to changing circumstances over the past decades whilst still maintaining the basic principles of relating. One's world of "relations" could contract or expand as desired. Sometimes this would depend upon which relationships one wanted to activate, at other times on the necessity of adapting to externally imposed conditions - when people were left with few kin, when the Koori population started to increase again in the early decades of the twentieth century or when mobility patterns changed - and more people needed to be encompassed.
Because kin terms carry meanings related to social roles as well as genealogical relationship, Kooris can stress one relationship without the other: genealogical kin can be ignored and non-related people who are prepared to enter into exchange relations can be included in social relations. People who decided to call me by a kin term were also establishing the kinds of demands they could make on me and I on them. This does not mean that Kooris can only cope with relationships which are defined in terms of kinship: they have many relations with whites which are friendly but in which no commitments are made or expected, just as they do now with other Aborigines. In my case, at least, my designation in kin terms appeared to be more strategic. It denoted the type of relationship into which people wished me to enter — with all the emotional, social, political and economic dimensions entailed. However, the fact of my belonging (as in residing with, participating in and using kin terms) to one family has not prevented others from applying what would be genealogically inappropriate terms to indicate how they would like to define my relationship with them — although this has been restricted for the most part to the term "sister". My own case is of course peculiar in that I am not Aboriginal. However, Kooris also extend kin terms amongst one another in a similar way, sometimes in a familial way which is specific to a given context but at other times on a long term basis. A mother of one of two young women who were fighting a lot commented to me that the two unrelated women "always used to call each other sister, and just like sisters they were too, you couldn't part them — but you wouldn't think it to see them now".

Not to have kin links that can be mobilized can leave people feeling, and being, helpless and powerless. A stranger can be totally without resources. Introductions are very important (see
further Chapter 9). Prior to a visit I was making to a community north of the Wiradjuri area with two young Cowra women, the family I was staying with spent a couple of hours determining what linkages they had with the community which could be mobilized. As it had been many years since the mother of the family had been in contact with distant kin in the area she had no knowledge of whether they were still in the locality or even whether they still lived. She gave us the name of an old lady and told us of the early days they spent together and the people they knew at the time. Actual relationships were explained so that we would know how to introduce ourselves. The fact that the links seemed rather tenuous did not appear to matter, for when we arrived and, after lots of enquiries, contacted this lady and explained where we had come from we were greeted as distant kin and given hospitality accordingly. Sitting around over cups of tea I also realized the significance of the stories we had been told before going. Our hostess recounted them, reliving memories in which we were able to share more meaningfully (see also, Chapter 7).

I have already mentioned the distinction which is made in terms of social expectations between close and distant kin (see Beckett 1967:456; also, Kaberry 1939:49), referring to roles in terms of rights and obligations which are implied in the use of kin terms (see Hiatt 1965:Ch.3 and 4, esp pp.68–69). There are also advantages which accrue from certain kin defined relations over others, and there is an order of precedence. Mother, father, sister, brother, daughter, and son are the closest links. Then come aunty, uncle, cousin, niece, and nephew which are further classified as "close", "distant" or "somehow related". A "distant cousin" may become a "close cousin" or vice versa, depending upon factors such as residence, conflicts, or particular needs.
It is this order of precedence which confuses non-Kooris who do not appreciate that values such as sharing depend upon a variety of factors. The order is not firmly established and is subject to who is present at any particular time in a community or a gathering and the extent to which claims are respected. The order is not always the governing factor in interaction: in practice it can be upset by someone's non-fulfilment of the required expectations. There may also be competitive claims which over-ride considerations of precedence. A mother's claims are usually paramount in the case of young children but can be and often are challenged by the child's father, aunts, uncles and grandparents: parents are not considered to have the exclusive and primary rights that are generally recognized in Australian law. Other relations also have claims to a child's time as a child does to the attention and resources of other adult kin. The mother is bound to take these into account because of her own relationships with others. Many quarrels start because of the ambiguities this can create: for instance, a parent may resent the behaviour or attitudes of others, such as an aunty or a step-parent smacking a child without permission. There is an informal "pecking order" in almost any kind of social gathering which influences the ways in which people will respond to an activity or to other people. If the person deemed the appropriate one to take action, such as a mother keeping a noisy child quiet who is disturbing a card game, does not do so and does not hand over that right to another, others are unlikely to act without the mother's permission. They will often assume an air of indifference to what is going on - letting it be known that the responsibility is not theirs (and this may also be a strategy for communicating to the mother that she needs to do something about the noise). Those who attempt to
interfere may find themselves in a fight with the mother because such action would imply that she was not doing the right thing or was not in control of the situation. However, mothers will often tell other adults to discipline a child if need be, such as when they tell the aunty minding them while she is out to "give them a good whack if they play up for you".

Mothers are expected to be the primary providers for their children, and have disciplinary responsibilities and rights. In general a mother's claims take precedence until young adulthood which for Kooris begins in their mid-teens — when they start drinking or have children of their own. The role of the father and his claims on children will depend upon whether he is their genitor, whether he resides with them, what income he contributes to the household at the time, and his social standing generally. The latter is referred to explicitly by a woman if she rejects his interference with her dealings with a child on the ground that he is "only a hopeless drunk", or "didn't bother with them when I was sick". If he is well respected, she may defer to him more frequently, but rarely to the extent of becoming submissive.

A mother can make claims on daughters for most of their lives and frequently on sons-in-law by virtue of an emphasis on matri-uxorialocal residence. Her claims on her son decrease as he grows up and when he marries he may have to juggle her claims with those of his mother-in-law if all three reside in the same place. A mother's rights are not absolute, no matter what age her children are. The rights of kin are dependent upon people fulfilling the obligations implicit in the use of a kin term. It is not uncommon to hear comments such as "she's no mother to me" when off-spring want to reject the claims of someone designated as mother, whether she is a natural, putative or 'adopted' mother. The woman who
brought you up is your mother - in other words, the person who entered into the exchanges expected of that relationship and who thus has rights and responsibilities accordingly. In one instance, a mother had been badgering her son to buy her drinks in the pub one evening and he was obviously loath to part with the money he was using to establish credit with others at the time. When she remonstrated with him, referring to him as her son (implying that he should heed her wishes), he turned to her with the retort: "Don't you call me son, you've never been a mother to me", a reference to the fact that he had in fact been 'mothered' for the most part by his aunt whom he calls "Mummy". At other times he has been very willing to acknowledge her as his mother - presumably when it suits him. People who do not fulfil their expected roles have no claims. This kind of ambiguity in relationships is not necessarily seen as problematic: it contributes to the dynamic of social life.

Grandparents undoubtedly exercise a great influence, particularly a mother's mother. Often they have been involved in the rearing of a child, but whether or not this is the case, they are spoken of frequently, lovingly and with respect. They are depicted as the mediators, teachers and listeners. They are often the arbitrators of disputing claims, the refuge to which children may turn. This influence extends beyond the grave. It is not unusual to hear references in disputes such as "Your mother wouldn't have treated you like that" (mother's sister to sister's daughter) who was reputedly not caring adequately for her children at the time), or "I'm glad your dear old father isn't alive to see you now" (mother to son who was drinking heavily and getting involved in several fights). Children can also silence a parent by a similar reference to a deceased grandparent. Children miss
deceased grandparents or those who have gone to live elsewhere because of this mediating role. They often describe visits of deceased grandparents who come in the night to warn or comfort them. Sorrow is expressed by those who did not know their grandparents or who for some reason did not get on with them.

The claims of other kin depend on various factors, including who is in residence at the time, their sex and age, the competitiveness of the situation and the stakes (such as prestige or financial advantage) involved. Generalization about priority claims is difficult because of the family histories which pertain to each situation. People frequently legitimize their actions by reference to an implicit claims hierarchy. Often in disputes I have heard expressions such as "You shut up, I'm his aunty, not you!" (a woman to her husband concerning her sister's son). A young woman who lent her cousin (FZD) money but "knocked back" (refused) her sister's request was told, "Some kind of sister, you are. You can give her money but you don't care about your own!". One woman, whose son had twice been out with a girl, approached her for a loan as her "mother-in-law" despite the dubious basis for this premature assertion. In these cases, the emphasis on designating kin was primarily in terms of what rights or advantages would or should accrue. The "mother-in-law" also seemed to be testing the potential of this new relationship, and perhaps deciding what sort of commitment she would make to it.

The extent to which young or adult children take notice of kin, including parents, depends upon the respect they have for the person involved. It is not required of children that they blindly obey parental orders and, if parents are not seen to be doing the right thing by a child, other adults may support the child's right to ignore or disobey. No relationship is defined in terms of
rights without responsibilities, irrespective of age or generation differences between the parties. Children are very frank in both their appreciation and criticism of parents and adults in general—it is rare for them to be expected to give respect where it is not due: they can become very indignant when adults demand that they respond in ways which differ from the way they wish to define a relationship at the time. In such a way children (whose behaviour some Europeans might regard as highly precocious) acquire skills in relating and in shaping what will become their own future networks.

6.2.2: Ambiguity and Conflicts

There are plenty of conflicting claims and ambiguities in the Koori system: it makes for a social order in which, as von Sturmer (1982:93) put it, "the whole universe is negotiable ... the most tenuous link can be used to justify or legitimate interest". However, it also makes for, or imposes, a known order: one in which people know how they belong, know what to expect of those around them and whether, and by whom, they will be supported.

Although particular kin terms are associated with particular expectations, the very fact that they are mentioned so frequently suggests they are negotiable rather than assumed as role requirements. This negotiability also gives rise to the contradiction which appears to exist between the high value placed on kin solidarity, sharing and loyalty and the fact that kin often seem embroiled in conflicts. There is a dynamic of differentiation in the kinship system which simultaneously draws kin together and distinguishes them from each other.

The scope of an individual's network is developed, even amongst children, so as to contain and accommodate conflicts.
Although quarrels amongst close relations are often short-lived, it is helpful to be able to physically remove oneself—next door or to another town where one has relations—until things cool down. A trouble-maker who continually involves kin in disputes, or one who becomes too much of an economic drain on the household, may need to move on from time to time so as not to exhaust goodwill. The rejection of the commitments of a kin relationship may be temporary and related to a specific conflict situation but can occasionally be long-term—an effective severing of ties. More usual is short-term avoidance which flexible residence patterns make relatively easy.

McCall (1980:1) wrote of the Rapanui that their designation of people as kin rests:

...uncomfortably in deciding which persons are to be treated as non-kin, particularly when it comes to the distribution of scarce resources in goods and services, land and labor.

This is the other side of the coin—how to avoid claims and responsibilities. The denial of any kind of request, whether or not it is explicit, suggests a social rejection. If someone has been denied and someone else accommodated, whom the person rejected feels has a lesser or only equal right, quarrels or angry words may result and these often include a refutation of the kinship idiom: "He may be my cousin but he don't act like one".

The view that close kin should not fight is commented on from time to time, especially by older people, as reflected in one woman's comment when her two adult sons were arguing: "It is a terrible thing for brothers to fight". However, the sibling relationship, both in childhood and adulthood, is frequently competitive. There may be competition, for instance, for parental attention. In such cases, children may be able to sway the parent
of the opposite sex to a greater extent — so that a daughter may lose out and the mother/son dyad predominate. First and last born often seem to have some advantages over other siblings, as do children "called for" (named after) a close relative, who may thus get preferential treatment. Several people have talked quite openly about their "favourites" amongst their own children or their nieces and nephews, in their presence. Children are able to exploit this by requests directed through a "favourite" child. The competition over boyfriends or girlfriends, later potential spouses, is present from an early age. The amount of attention given by parents or by other adults and peers within the community leads to a form of prestige rivalry, often with material dimensions — other relationships represent valued exchanges from which a sibling may feel themselves excluded. On occasion I heard adults remonstrating with their parents for according greater attention to other siblings during childhood years. Favouritism means attention, more expensive birthday presents and the like. Having different parents can also mean different gifts, levels of attention and competition.

Access to parents also remains important through life because marriage is not intended to sever natal bonds and the natal home is often a necessary refuge and place of provision. Competition for parental loyalty can thus be important — people have to avoid sibling relations which imply the right of one to stand over another. In one household, for instance, in which a widow, her two daughters and the eldest daughter's husband reside, the single daughter often asserts herself aggressively in resisting what appears to be a takeover bid by the elder daughter in terms of householder status and rights. When non-resident kin return to this household for visits competition is increased.
A great deal of tolerance is extended towards kin. Kooris fight *because* they are close, not the reverse. In a study of conflicts in Pellasport in the French Jura, Layton (1971:98-9) observed that most quarrels were between kin and concluded that this was due to the development of intense social relations, both negative and positive. His observation reflects mine in Cowra:

It is important to note that the kind of person with whom one co-operates is exactly the kind of person with whom one most often quarrels, and that people may even co-operate with those with whom they have recently quarrelled (1971:118).

Tensions between kin can sometimes be long-standing, although this does not necessarily mean frequent conflict. Brothers in particular claim from time to time that they best avoid conflicts by staying out of each other's way. This may mean one of them living with kin across the street or in a different town. A quarrel between siblings or cousins has to be very severe to cause a permanent rift in the relationship. Most tensions are confronted and set aside.

Although kin networks serve to lessen tensions between spouses (see below) they often exacerbate fights between affinal kin. Even in a long-standing union consanguineal links will often take precedence in matters of sharing, loyalty and sanctions regarding physical violence. However close particular affines may be, the affinal network is rarely as dependable and loyal as that of kin. Affinal relations have the power to disrupt kin loyalties and conflicts inevitably arise as a result. I have often heard spouses berating each other for the amount of time they spend with their respective kin, the implication being that it should have been spent with the complaining spouse or with the spouse's kin.
Plates 6.1 and 6.2 Cowra kids
Taken in Cowra, June 1982 and March 1984
6.3: Marriage amongst Kooris

6.3.1: The significance of marriage

Wiradjuri people form a network in Barnes' (1954) sense of the term, that is, the sum of the connections in a field of social interaction but without a focal point. Amongst Wiradjuri people there are many diverse kin ties and frequent interaction and this becomes one of the principal features by which Kooris distinguish Wiradjuri from neighbouring non-Wiradjuri communities - where they may "feel strange" because they have no kin. Marriage patterns within the Wiradjuri region demonstrate the validity of identifying this area as having a social identity distinct from neighbouring regions, as is implied in the use of the term Wiradjuri: it is more than a geographical referrent. In the absence of any central authority or trade links, marriage is the governing mode of articulation between groups. Through marriage with Wiradjuri Kooris, the children are able to claim a sense of belonging based on parentage and place which will strengthen their claims as adults. Marriage also provides rights of access to networks which may have more status and decision-making powers and thus extends horizons, relationships and the ability to maximize resources and life chances generally. Marriage also enables the integration and acceptance of the refugees and migrants of past decades who were arbitrarily re-settled from non-Wiradjuri areas by the Aboriginal Welfare Board (see further, Chapter 7). Marriage within the Wiradjuri group is likely to provide expansion of social opportunities without any significant loss of exchange relations. It is easier for people to visit home and they are likely to have relatives of some kind in each of the other communities. This also includes Sydney and Canberra as Wiradjuri link cities.
Marriage represents the potential a person has to extend his or her network. In fact, the duration of a marriage often correlates with the extent to which it has expanded or contracted this network. Genealogies I collected indicated that approximately 80 per cent of Cowra Koori marriages over the past 100 years have involved a spouse who also came from a community in the Wiradjuri area. Several marriages with non-Wiradjuri, including Europeans, were reported for the years prior to World War I, but then there were few until recent years. Both the early part of the century and the present day represent times of greater freedom of movement and employment. The remainder of the time, during the mission era, marriage patterns have tended to reinforce geographic as well as social identity. There is no reason to suppose from genealogies obtained that this trend can be accounted for by the tendency of informants to remember marriages which have activated local support structures rather than those which cut themselves off from it in order to take up options outside.

People are "married" when they start living together. If not co-habiting they are more likely to be described as "going together" which suggests that a couple have established their sexual relations as exclusive, are probably thinking of living together but may not have a permanent or even temporary home available to them. Whether or not the union is legalized under Australian law is largely irrelevant. Young couples who have married in church or registry offices have at times been described as "mad" as there is no expectation that young alliances will or should be lasting. When Lickiss (1971:223) conducted a study in Sydney she maintained that:
The commonly observed practice of "marital experimentation" ... prior to serious consideration of legal marriage may represent a transition between cultural norms rather than merely a practice symptomatic of social disintegration.

It is certainly not indicative of social disintegration in Cowra, but neither is it a transitional process implying something "half-way" between the traditional past and European marriage norms (the latter are in fact now "following" the Koori norm in recognizing de facto unions). Young marriages are not experiments. They are socially recognized unions and open up a new constellation of social relations through the alliance. When this social positioning is seen to have positive results which have endured over time, the marriage may be formally legalized (see also, Kitaoji 1976). Most younger couples prefer de facto marriages, as do several older couples. They are prepared to acknowledge that they are happy as they are for the time being, although they may want to change things later. Marriages are not necessarily regarded as life-long unions and many men and women will marry more than once: they often expect what can be described as a marriage career - some will stay in one union over many years while others will change partners several times. Stable and enduring marriages have occasionally dissolved, with the partners remaining on good terms, when children are older because one or other, or both, feel like "a change". Sometimes this leads to another marriage, sometimes just to separate residential arrangements (see also, Beckett 1965; Kitaoji 1976).

However, once a marriage has produced a circle of exchange relations there is little onus on it to continue, for these alliances will persist even in the face of divorce. Divorce does not necessitate a denial or severing of affinal obligations which persist through the recognition of relations such as "my ex-
daughter-in-law", or through grandchildren. The network extensions which have been brought about may continue so as to exploit advantages of the relationships initially made available in the marriage. Offspring of a marriage obviously strengthen these alliances through visits to grandparents and other kin.

Praise of a good spouse is constantly reiterated and a frequently expressed desire on the part of single people (and sometimes married ones) is to find a good spouse. Care of home and children, and faithfulness are emphasized by men thinking of marital goals. Women tend to refer to such factors as low frequency of domestic violence and drinking, a good attitude to children, helpfulness and a lack of excessive jealousy. Whilst certain ideals may be goals aspired to, many express resignation that all of these are going to be difficult to find. The two most common reasons given for separations by women are bashing and "I couldn't get on with his/her people". Men refer to the latter. The two reasons are often related: too many bashing may mean a lack of support or constraints exercised by concerned relatives.

A man is not necessarily expected to be the sole or even major provider for his wife and children although it is required of him that he take responsibility according to his means. Gale and Wundersitz's (1982:152) assertion that the lack of employment opportunities for males and their consequent lower incomes leads to a downgrading of their role as family provider is not supported in Cowra. Men are seen to be able to contribute in ways other than financial and their involvement in non-paid community activities may augment their status more than wage labour per se. Gale and Wundersitz also noted that "[married] persons and those living in stable de facto relationships had the highest weekly incomes (1982:153) and "that there is an obvious relationship between

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marriage (both legal and de facto) and employment in which a significantly higher proportion of married Aborigines, especially married males, are employed" (1982:117) but they then conclude that the "married, the better educated and those aged twenty to thirty-nine years proved to be the most employable individuals". Observations of employment careers among Kooris suggest that this relationship could be reversed in many cases. It is often because people get involved in employment that they seek to supplement their education so as to augment their chances, and they then present as an attractive marriage partner.

Marriage is a relationship of co-operation and entails no exclusive rights over one spouse by another. In fact, any sign of one spouse trying to dominate the affairs or decisions of the other is likely to lead to conflict as both parties value a degree of personal autonomy within their partnership. Fidelity is expected even though a discreet occasional extra-marital affair might be condoned by other community members. Nevertheless, jealousy features highly—fuelled by the ambiguity which personal autonomy within marriage promotes. Marriage is not about unequal power, or control or deference on the part of one or other partner and is perhaps the most unpredictable of all Koori relationships.

The only marriage 'rule' Kooris refer to is that one should not marry one's relations (see also, Barwick 1978:201). The interpretation of this rule varies according to the scope given the definition of relations. First and second cousin marriages are usually regarded as incestuous ("disgusting", "like dogs") and rarely occur. Some casual liaisons and occasional marriages take place between third cousins although a few believe strongly that there should be no marriage if any consanguineal or affinal link is known—as one woman commented: "I had to go outside Wiradjuri
to find a husband - I'm related to everyone here". Disapproval of "wrong" marriages is marked. Describing people as "dogs" is highly insulting. Frequent angry and violent outbursts in two marriage relationships have been attributed by some as being due to the fact that the spouses are "too close". In one a man married his classificatory aunt (FMBD) and another married his second cousin (FMEDD). However, both men had been married before and the level of violence had been equally high with their former spouses who were not related to them. It seems unlikely that those condemning the marriages really ascribed high levels of conflict to the relatedness of the couples: rather, the relatedness provided a clinching argument for condemning the spouses' behaviour. Although the marriage "rule" only prohibits marriage with close kin, there is still a scarcity of suitable spouses available locally because the Cowra community is relatively small and the majority of people are related in some way. Yet more stable relationships depend upon supportive kin links and territorial referents.

The fact that marriage often seems a casually contracted alliance does not mean it is unimportant, either for the individuals concerned or the society as a whole. It certainly does not have the structural features observed in the kinship system yet it is an essential part of that system's dynamic. Berndt and Berndt (1970:219) made a similar observation:

Despite the undeniable importance of exchange and equivalence in the arrangement of marriages, this is not formally structured to the same extent as in a number of other societies. The formality lies in the kinship framework, which supplies rules for defining (a) who are the partners in the exchange - who is eligible, as a person or as a group, to engage in such a transaction - and (b) what is the content of the exchange - who has control over whom.

For Kooris today, the kinship system still plays a part in regulating the choice of exchange partners. Marriages are not
formally arranged, but they can be disarranged by disapproving kin, or strengthened by supporting kin. For instance, the lack of available accommodation for young people wishing to live together may reflect the unwillingness of others to recognize the union. To "put up" a couple implies a commitment to the relationship on the part of the householder. A union must be recognized by others in order for it to be able to activate affinal links. It is most unlikely to last if nobody is prepared to support it - by providing accommodation or coming to its defence from time to time. Thus, older relatives and in-laws take an active rather than passive role, not only in initially encouraging or discouraging a relationship, but in promoting its welfare after it is established. The involvement of in-laws is the factor which differentiates a casual liaison from a recognized union.

6.3.2: Marital conflict and the kinship system

Of thirty-eight marital unions observed over two years, sixteen couples had violent arguments from time to time. When both spouses were of Wiradjuri birth and both had a range of kin in Cowra as the community of current residence, the unions exhibited less fighting behaviour (less than three in ten fought). In cases where a Wiradjuri Koori had married a non-Wiradjuri, five in ten fought. When neither spouse belonged to Wiradjuri and had few or no kin supports, eight in every ten fought.

Thus, where both spouses have a kin network upon which to draw in the community of residence the partnership is more likely to be of an enduring nature and will foster inter-community relationships more generally. There is a high positive correlation between long-standing unions and the greater number of kin available to both spouses. When spouses come from communities with
few or no links, post-marital residence is more likely to be amongst the wife's kin. In Cowra there is only one incoming male spouse who does not have consanguineal links of some kind and one other with very distant links.

These conflicts do not arise to the same extent when Kooris marry Europeans. However, such alliances set up a tension between wanting to extend one's field of action, wanting a "good" spouse, and not wanting to sever known and dependable links. Marriages with Europeans usually require an orientation towards one or other domain: one of the parties will be required to sever previous links because of non-acceptance on the part of Kooris of Europeans or vice-versa. The acceptance of an Aboriginal spouse into the white domain is usually dependent upon whether he or she can pass as white, often in terms of appearance but more especially in terms of appropriate behaviour. From the Koori point of view, European spouses are accepted to the extent that they too are seen to conform to Koori life-styles and values. In the network illustrated earlier, only one individual is addressed as "sister-in-law": this is a white spouse, other Koori sisters-in-law are called "sister". There is a subtle distinction made towards a white affinal relative whom she does not fully accept. Kooris often stress, as an important requirement of "mixed marriages", that children should be reared as Kooris and white spouses are complimented when they encourage this orientation. Tensions arising from such marriages are more often expressed between kin competing for attention than between the spouses themselves.

Marriage with whites today is not seen as an opportunity for attaining greater acceptance by either the Aboriginal or European society, either for oneself or one's children, although this may occasionally have been the case in the past. Today, in an
environment which stresses Aboriginality, it can have the opposite
effect. Whites can also be the subject of criticism if they are
seen to exploit the advantages which accrue to them as spouses of
Kooris and there have been discussions as to whether such people
should be availing themselves of Aboriginal services such as free
medical and dental clinics and whether, after a separation, they
and their children should continue to get Aboriginal housing.
Usually, when such debates have taken place, older people have
tended to dominate the discussion in asserting the rights and
valuing the commitment shown by such whites but it remains an area
of disagreement.

The ambiguities in the Koori kinship system which are
occasioned by conflicting rights and claims are particularly
evident in the choices which need occasionally to be made between
those designated as consanguineal kin and those as affinal kin.
There is no clear-cut system which determines which claims should
take precedence. People designated as affines - husband, wife, and
in-laws (which may include "cousins-in-law") - often cut across
the expectations and demands of other kin-defined relationships.
There are pragmatic as well as sentimental reasons for calling a
man or woman son or daughter-in-law: in-laws are potential
providers in a generalized exchange system. The fact that such
relationships often outlive a marriage itself indicates their
value in exchange terms. However, there is no clear order of
precedence between, for instance, a mother and a spouse
(especially for men), or between a sister and husband's sister.
People keep their options open and do not, if possible, endanger
valued networks of the past in entering into new relationships,
which may not prove to be worthwhile. New alliances, played off
against old, give rise to new arenas of tension, potential
conflict and strategic involvement. This is the context in which affinity may be understood.

Although Barwick (1978:201) maintained that violence and assault were rare amongst Aboriginal spouses in south-eastern Australia, this has not been my observation. There are aspects of the marriage relationship in which the potential for conflict is evident: the relationships between spouses, affinal kin and residence patterns (see also, Barwick 1978:201); and the way in which rights over children (genetical rights) and rights over one's spouse (such as uxorilocal rights) are defined.

The question these tension provoking situations amongst spouses pose is, where, in the Koori system, is social stability located? In the kinship system or in that of marriage? Posing the question in such a way assumes that one or the other system takes precedence within a particular social system. In Christian-oriented European domains, marriage has long been given priority and a couple on marriage are expected to redefine their social universe. The Anglican marriage service exhorts the marrying couple to "forsake all others" - to "leave their mothers and fathers and become one". A history of patriliney made the husband the dominant partner with exclusive rights in uxor and genetricem. The Western system has become much more bilateral with a consequent lessening of both uxorilocal and genetical rights. The result would seem to be greater conflict and withdrawal: divorce and separation rates are higher and struggles over child custody can cause enormous hardship.

This would seem to support Gluckman's (1971) claim that the stabilizing influence in marriage was the transfer of genetical rights to the husband. Mitchell (1971:250), building on Gluckman's theme, thus posited marital conflict as a feature of both
matrilineal and bilateral kinship systems because it reflected the ambiguity between not only rights in genetricem but also in uxorem.

In this view, marriage stability implies both a transfer of rights, from woman to man and a suppression of conflict through an unequal distribution of power. In a system in which genetical rights were considered to be equal or remained ambiguous, competition over genetical rights would be more likely to occur. Partners would be regarded as having equal and therefore potentially competitive rights and this would tend to lead to the schismogenic tensions described by Bateson (1958:187ff) in symmetrically defined relations. A society which gives primacy to maintaining egalitarian features in social relations rather than structuring them in terms of deference might be expected to have to contend with higher levels of overtly expressed conflict - it cannot be legitimately contained through the control of one party by another.

If genetical rights belong to the mother, women are able or likely to change husbands more frequently. Thus, where transfers are not involved, marriages may be of shorter duration and more frequent. This does not mean that either the society or marriage as an institution are more unstable as a result. It only suggests that different values and structures are operating as compared with other systems which value marriage as a life-long institution, one commissioned with the roles of containing sexual practices, giving children socially-defined legitimation and then socializing them into the values of the society.

Kooris describe their own system as bilateral, with partners having equal rights to children but in practice women usually retain genetical rights and residence patterns show a strong
matrifocal emphasis. Thus genetical rights constitute an area of ambiguity. There is also a second and related ambiguity in the question of rights in uxorem. Husbands do not have exclusive rights over their wives - the latter vigorously defend their right to independence according to over-riding Koori values and both husbands and wives describe marriage in terms of an equal partnership, a co-operative venture in which neither partner dominates the other. There are various ways in which both sexes express this from time to time - affirmations of the principle of equality. They may go out without stating where they are going - and if questioned by their spouse will assert that they do not have to account for their every movement. Nevertheless, the marriage also implies a set of obligations and it is the recognition on the part of the community as a whole that these are, for the most part, being fulfilled, which prompts them to be supportive of the relationship and guard its interests. If a husband goes off and drinks with his relations all the time, leaving his wife alone too much he may be subject to public criticism. However, if others believe that he does so because his wife is not fulfilling her expectations - not cooking his meals or keeping their place clean - they may feel he has a right to ignore some of his obligations.

Mitchell (1971) argues that marriages in such cases are likely to be of short duration with a consequent decrease in the size of the corporate descent group. This is also a feature of the Koori system which is characterized by ego-centrically defined networks rather than descent groups. Where there is little emphasis on filiation there will be more competition between collateral kin and between the rights of kin versus affines. I do not, however, subscribe to Mitchell's view that there is
necessarily a higher degree of social stability and continuity in a corporate descent group structure. He maintains that the reverse situation, where there is a small kin range, shows a higher degree of unstable relations. However, a greater amount of change and flexibility and overt expressions of conflict cannot be assumed to point to social instability. Marital relations cannot be described as unstable just because they are frequently short-term unless societal values clearly indicate an expectations that marriage should be enduring. Nor do short term marriages suggest that the society is unstable.

Leach (1965) extends this argument, claiming that it is not rights over the children but whether the sibling link is severed upon marriage which promotes conflict or breakdown. Divorce is more frequent when the sibling tie is not severed. One or other of these relations - marital versus sibling - must be characterized by fission. It is very difficult to maintain one without loss to the other because each relationship implies a different set of loyalties. There is a structurally imposed rivalry between the claims of kin and those of spouses and affines.

Marriage represents a contradiction: people are redefined. Potential adversaries become kin and tensions in allegiances are evident. Affinal relations are important: they extend one's available resources and may augment prestige. However, the marriage relationship is a bonding of part of two different groupings. Intervention by either side can be construed negatively. This thesis is developed by Friedl (1975:138) in her study on Gururumba society where the society operates as:

A system in which husbands and wives are representatives of antagonistic kin groups that nevertheless depend on each other in crisis situations; consequently, loyalties of women are mixed, and relationships between men and women sexually available to each other are strained.
Thus, conflict between spouses can be expected - not because of individual or social pathology but because of the structuring of relationships around certain values which hold good for intra-Koori relations as a whole. Likewise, in the reverse case in the European-Australia value system, natalistically derived kin loyalties and exchanges can be seen to suffer from the later precedence given to marriage. Conflict is avoided by encouraging withdrawal from kin allegiances upon marriage. This is the feature Kooris are so critical of when they say Gabbas do not care for their relations like Kooris do. I have also heard young Koori women say, however, that white husbands treat their wives better.

Thus, while marriage is an essential part of the system of exchange relations which characterize Koori interaction, it is not the stabilizing feature of the Koori domain as is often held to be the case in European domains (see, for instance, Krupinski 1978). What I am suggesting, therefore, is that the Koori social system is stabilized and reproduced on the basis of the kinship rather than the marital system. As a result, dominant Koori values are oriented towards the maintenance of kin exchanges. When marriage is paramount as an institution, withdrawal from kin obligations is expected. The reverse situation, however, would deny the marriage union. Marital relations will thus become the focus of many of the structurally imposed tensions that result as a consequence of the primacy given to kin.

6.4: Kinship and exchange

6.4.1: Residential patterns

The themes of negotiability, flexibility and conflict management emerge in a consideration of residential and mobility patterns. Kooris operate on a kinship paradigm which appears to
allow what, to Europeans, seems limited social mobility: the emphasis on kinship suggests that their social contacts are prescribed rather than selected. From the Koori point of view, the reverse is the case. A network is large both numerically and geographically, it includes people of varying ages with different lifestyles, skills and interests and enables individuals to make claims and strategic choices. It ensures that there is always someone to turn to for support — emotional or material. A feature they describe as one of the saddest in European society is the number of people who are alone, especially those who die alone. Any kin have potential resources which may need to be exploited from time, even those with whom one rarely associates. Kin links may be needed when visiting a distant place and requiring some form of identification and acceptance.

The Koori population is characteristically divided up socially into networks of households comprising those people between whom there is regular social exchange. Although households are separate and function in many ways as single units, the exchanges between a network of households are significant both emotionally and materially. A network of households may share incomes and household items such as washing machines, irons and lawn-mowers. Sleeping arrangements may be fluid with often the household head being the only one who does not regularly stay overnight in another household except when on a holiday in a household which is outside of Cowra.

Each network of households has a focal household which can be identified by the number of interactions which focus on it as opposed to other households in the network. The head of a focal household is usually the most senior member of the kin networks of
the various members, which usually means that he or she is a grandparent or the eldest of a group of siblings. Age is not necessarily a determining criterion, however: in the case of one network, the focal household head is the youngest sibling in the oldest generation. Her husband (now deceased) was a member of a core kin grouping, unlike her siblings' spouses, and the fact that she has a larger number of offspring than the other siblings may also have contributed to her focal status.

A network of households is defined in relational rather than in spatial terms. It can be identified on the basis of visiting patterns and material and non-material exchanges which take place between members of the various households concerned. The highest number of households forming a network in Cowra is six (see Table 6.2). This number reaches nine when households outside Cowra are taken into account, including households in the cities of Sydney and Canberra, and country towns within the Wiradjuri area. Distance does not mitigate against regular exchanges between members of different households who see each other as part of a linked unity in some way.

I have identified a total of 15 focal households within Cowra (Table 6.2). Of these, seven are on Erambie and eight in town. Two of those on Erambie are focal households for other household on Erambie but do not include households in town (F2,F6). Likewise, two of those in town do not include households on Erambie (F14,F15). All other networks of households include people from Erambie and town. Five households are focal for members of households in either Sydney or Canberra, and seven are focal for households in other Wiradjuri towns.
Table 6.2: Location of networks of households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Networks of Households</th>
<th>Erambie</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erambie</td>
<td>F1 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal</td>
<td>F2 4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F3 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F4 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F5 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F6 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F7 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>F8 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal</td>
<td>F9 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F10 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F11 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F12 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F13 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F14 -</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F15 6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City = Sydney or Canberra
Country = other Wiradjuri towns
Figures include interaction between members of households where both households are defined as focal

No spatial pattern emerges in these networks of households. Households have frequently relocated in recent years as new housing becomes available both in town and on the mission. Thus, households have moved into town from Erambie and vice versa or have moved within each location. In addition, households outside of Cowra may also relocate to Cowra or to other locations from time to time. The relational aspects of the network may not change despite such spatial changes, excepting in cases of death of significant members or severe conflicts.

A total of 50 households are included in this survey, 25 in town and 25 on Erambie. Of these, there are 14 non-focal households in town whose focal households are in town, and two
whose members interact with two focal households, one on Erambie and one in town (Table 6.3). Where a non-focal household interacts with two different focal households, this is usually a result of spouses continuing close relations with their respective natal households. Erambie non-focal households are linked to nine Erambie-based focal households, two in town, and seven in which there are focal households in both town and on Erambie. There are five households outside Cowra with focal households on Erambie, and six with focal households in town. These figures exclude nine households in town which have been identified as having Koori residents but which are not part of the effective social population and about which no patterns are known. The 14 households in town with focal household in town does include three Koori households whose members some Kooris consider to be "poshies" who don't mix as Kooris. Nevertheless, members of these households do maintain links with other Kooris through association with focal households, although only in town.

Table 6.3 about here

Before housing became more readily available several of the members of a network of households often resided together - by necessity rather than choice. Kooris welcome the opportunity to have separate houses so as not to be "on top of" each other and thus to be able to exercise some choice in their commitments and exchanges. A network of households is not equal to an individual's network - the latter will usually include all the members in the network of households but extends beyond it. Residential arrangements do not limit or determine kin exchanges or the strength of ties (see also, Kaberry 1939:125).
Table 6.3: Relative Location of Non-focal to Focal Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal households</th>
<th>Erambie</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erambie</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although individual household composition (Table 6.4) may seem to reflect "nuclear families", when this is defined as meaning spouse/s and offspring only, and "extended families", which include a member/members or an ascending or descending generation, this is not the way in which Koori primary orientations should be regarded. As with the term "family", that of "household" as an independent unit distorts the realities of social exchange and significant interaction. Even the concept of networks of households cannot fully encompass the range of kin who form part of an individual's network as these are still conceptually limited by residence factors.

Table 6.4 about here

Of a total of 61 households surveyed, 33 have a female household head and 28 have a male head (Table 6.5). Household composition for 57 households surveyed (excluding four households for which there was insufficient information) indicates that over half (33) have residents of only two proximate generations. Of these, 27 represent a conventional nuclear family composition of parent(s) and child(ren). The remaining 6 have other consanguineal or affinal kin in residence. Sixteen households have kin of three
Table 6.4: Generational Composition of Household by Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generations</th>
<th>Erambie</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 generation with other kin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 generations with affines</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 generations with affines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation 1 and 3 with other kin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

generations, of which 7 include the spouses of offspring and three other collateral kin. Only four houses have kin of one generation, representing one married couple and 3 households with collateral kin. Only one person lives in a house with people to whom he is not related but with whom he has formed a strong attachment.

Table 6.5 about here

A network of households can be identified by the frequency of interactions between households. Within a network there is likely to be one household with a higher frequency of visits and this is generally the focal household for that network. Thus one household might be a focal household for members of seven other households. This does not imply closure of networks as certain members may have links with other networks, depending upon their own kin links. Those households with few or no interactions may be
Table 6.5: Sex of Household Head by Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Erambie</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex of Household Head</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

outsiders who have no kin in Cowra or represent households within a network who choose to limit their involvement and the demands that other households may make. Sometimes they are described as "flash" or "posh" as a result – implying that they do not think the Koori system is good enough for them. There may be other reasons for restricting claims and visits which are respected, even if regretted, such as marriage to a white person or sick elderly people in the house.

Some Cowra households also have strong links with those of other areas. Households in other areas (especially Sydney, Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, Blayney, Young and Orange) often represent close kin who have chosen to move from Cowra and establish a more independent base for themselves. Once established, these provide an "escape route" for Cowra people wanting to move out from time to time. Bureaucratic links with Canberra and Sydney has increased the need to travel to these centres of government administration: having kin in residence makes visits to these metropolitan centres easier.

There is often more interaction between residents of a local community and kin in another town or city than with local but non-related people. Each individual has a beat (Beckett 1965:9) – the

247
area within which they move—which is determined by kin links and, as Beckett predicted of the Wongaibon to the west, these beats are increasing in radius within the greatly expanded political context. A Cowra-based Koori's beat would at one time have been largely restricted to the Wiradjuri area but now takes in Sydney, Canberra and often parts of Victoria. Indeed, it is common for someone to go looking for another and be told that they have just left town on the spur of the moment— it is hard to pin people down except those with specific commitments such as regular employment in Cowra. Non-Aborigines often interpret such excursions (or unwillingness to turn up somewhere) as instability and have characterized it, erroneously, as an innate tendency to "walkabout". It is partly blamed for the problems some children experience with their schooling although there appears to be no correlation between educational attainment and number of schools attended amongst Koori students in Cowra. The consequences of mobility are not seen as problematical amongst Kooris themselves.

Fig.6.4 shows a Cowra-based network of households. The asterisk (*) denotes members who regularly commute between houses (floaters). Households 1 to 4 are in Cowra, 5 and 6 in Sydney and 7 in Bathurst. Despite the distances involved, they are still effectively part of one network which shares both socially and economically. A great deal of visiting takes place between members as well as temporary residence of the floaters indicated. Over a period of three years the basic pattern has not changed greatly although membership itself fluctuates.

Fig.6.4 about here

Two households in Fig.6.4 (3 and 4) moved from Cowra, one (3) returning a year later to join with another household (1), and
area within which they move - which is determined by kin links and, as Beckett predicted of the Wongaibon to the west, these beats are increasing in radius within the greatly expanded political context. A Cowra-based Koori's beat would at one time have been largely restricted to the Wiradjuri area but now takes in Sydney, Canberra and often parts of Victoria. Indeed, it is common for someone to go looking for another and be told that they have just left town on the spur of the moment - it is hard to pin people down except those with specific commitments such as regular employment in Cowra. Non-Aborigines often interpret such excursions (or unwillingness to turn up somewhere) as instability and have characterized it, erroneously, as an innate tendency to "walkabout". It is partly blamed for the problems some children experience with their schooling although there appears to be no correlation between educational attainment and number of schools attended amongst Koori students in Cowra. The consequences of mobility are not seen as problematical amongst Kooris themselves.

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Fig.6.4 about here

Two households in Fig.6.4 (3 and 4) moved from Cowra, one (3) returning a year later to join with another household (1), and
Fig 6.4: Cowra-based Network of Households, showing relationship to Ego (widow) as head of focal household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HH1</th>
<th>HH2</th>
<th>HH3</th>
<th>HH4</th>
<th>HH5</th>
<th>HH6</th>
<th>HH7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EGO</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>ZH</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>D2</td>
<td>D1</td>
<td>D3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1D1</td>
<td>BW</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>S2W</td>
<td>D2S1</td>
<td>D1*</td>
<td>D3S1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>S2S1</td>
<td>D2S2</td>
<td>D1S*</td>
<td>D3S2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>B51*</td>
<td>ZS3</td>
<td>S2S2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>D1D1*</td>
<td>S1D2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>D2H</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>D1D2*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1*</td>
<td>B52*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ZS2*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>D3H*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ZS1*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| HZD2 | - |
| HZ   | - |
| HZD1 | - |

**Key:**
- * Floaters temporarily in residence at any of households
- HH Household head
- S1 Indicates birth order
- Indicates income units

There was one death (in 6) and one divorce (2). As these latter events did not involve a change in household head they did not disturb the pattern. HH1 represents the focal household for most individuals, and "ego" may be considered the central figure, although this will vary with the business in hand. Members of each household have been ranked according to their ability to determine action within the household, likewise households themselves are ranked in relation to HH1. Those denoted with an asterisk are what Sutton (1978) has termed the "floaters", those who are mobile to a greater extent and are usually unmarried or divorced and unemployed. This does not mean they are uninvolved or "drop-outs", 249
although such individuals may have a tendency to engage in high levels of debt or social conflict and thus need to remove themselves often. They are often people who are looking for a meaningful way of socially locating themselves. Their mobility may also represent awareness of advantages which accrue to them in different places at different times. They are also a great source of news for those who travel less frequently and it is they who are charged with the major responsibility of activating network links both for themselves and for others back in Cowra (see also, Bell 1961:427).

Children are able to exercise a degree of freedom in deciding where they will sleep on any particular night. They, as well as single unemployed people, are likely to move frequently between houses; so is anyone finding themselves at odds with the rest of the household or feeling like "a change of scenery" (which may imply conflict with other members, a reluctance to meet the demands of others, boredom, and so on). They may descend without notice on another house within the network. Each person's own kin network opens up social alternatives, providing a variety of social experiences and a means of defusing tensions which arise in a household. As the household head rarely moves except for short visits, the arrangement of constituent households does not change as a result.

Shared housing is not a Koori ideal. Whilst householders may welcome kin visitors, they do not necessarily encourage extended stays and can be glad "when the house gets back to normal" or when "they can get their own place" (see Eckermann 1980:96). One household head complained that her house was too big — it encouraged too many long-term visitors. A small amount of extra income as board money does not compensate for overcrowding, noise,
difficult sleeping arrangements and more housework (see Eckermann 1980:95 and Young 1982:10 who also mention increased health risks). As housing has become available, Kooris have looked forward to having a place of their own and will collect furniture and furnishings in anticipation of moving. Average Aboriginal household size in New South Wales has decreased from 7.4 members in 1965 to 5.03 members in 1980 (Young 1982:6). This should not be interpreted as a desire to emulate Europeans now that incomes have increased slightly: it is a reflection of Koori values. Whilst they have managed within the restricted means previously available, they now have the opportunity to space themselves out in their preferred modes of living and exchange. As Young (1982:6) points out, Koori household composition in New South Wales is not moving towards a European model: it still has more in common with Aboriginal patterns in other parts of Australia than it does with those of Europeans.

Thus, my observations among Kooris in Cowra do not support Gale's (1977; see also, Gale and Wundersitz 1982) contention that Adelaide Aboriginal people prefer to live in multi-income households for financial reasons - so as to avoid economic hardship and maximize economic resources. A multiple income household is not the same as one in which income is pooled, as she seems to assume. Certainly in Cowra, most householders feel they will be better off financially when relatives staying with them can get their own houses. The board paid by other adults in the house is set at conventionally accepted limits (usually between $50 and $70 a fortnight, 1981-85) and this barely covers the additional costs of supporting that person. Only occasionally does a householder demand, or a wage-earning boarder pay, a sum which would represent a bonus to the household. Money left over after
paying board belongs exclusively to its recipient who has no further obligations to the household other than those prompted by generosity.

Kooris have maintained their particular value systems in spite of economic policies, such as welfare payments, which have been designed with the nuclear family household model in mind (Young 1982:6). The flexibility and hospitality which they value is still impeded by Housing Commission policies which insist on minimizing the occupants of dwellings and of fixing rent levels according to the number of income units involved. Housing policies do not lend themselves to expansion and contraction of facilities and personnel. Whilst there are obvious economic dimensions to the Koori styles of residential sharing, the assumption that these reflect Koori kinship values may be no more than a recognition that Kooris know how to adjust to difficult and uncomfortable situations. Koori modes of interaction persist in spite of rather than because of poverty levels: they assist in adjustment to poverty but do not disappear when poverty is alleviated, although exchanges may change in character. Poverty does not compel people to share any more than wealth does.

6.4.2: The efficacy of kinship

Although there have been times when extra-familial foci have been significant to Kooris, over the past century the world of kinship has been the primary and often sole orientation. As a result, the Koori kinship system is designed to accommodate all the exchange relations which, for a European, are met in a variety of ways. Kin dispense goods, services and favours, deal with conflicts, and are a source of personal esteem and social status. The significance of kin has been perhaps unwittingly fostered by
government policies which have denied Kooris alternative means of meeting such social needs, whether they had wanted to pursue them or not. Policies have confined them spatially in distinctly Aboriginal groupings and over-crowded conditions. Makin (1969:11) blamed the closeness of Aboriginal kin relationships for the failure of Aborigines in New South Wales to "penetrate very far into the wider social structures, the wider society". She attributed this to the insecurity of moving beyond the familial environment - in other words, to Aboriginal fears rather than conscious choice. Yet there are many needs met in the Koori world which cannot be accommodated by European values and structures and which go far beyond the evident desire for better financial, housing and health conditions.

There have been times when non-kin based linkages have been especially important. These are primarily associated with revenue and employment opportunities. As more jobs become available, particularly in the cities with their larger population of Aborigines as well as whites, more Kooris are extending their social networks to include non-related Kooris and non-Aborigines. The European concept of friend is referred to more frequently in urban environments, although usually when the speaker is addressing a European and referring to a non-related person or another European: amongst themselves they frequently refer to such people in metaphorical kin terms. A small but significant number of Wiradjuri Kooris are now developing formal and informal networks on a national and even international level. Not all workplaces offer the same kind of scope and several Kooris work with people they already define as kin and do not extend their networks very much beyond this. Those who do not work are more confined and continue with long-established networks based more
exclusively on kinship. The groups who play cards together, who drink together are predominantly kin. For them, being able to move between different communities is highly valued as a means of activating the network and providing variety. Europeans are able to move in and out of work or leisure networks, or from one to the other, without changing location; Kooris move in and out of familial networks in different locations. In both cases, the networks are governed by the way in which individuals perceive their life chances, and they develop socially significant relations accordingly.

Nowadays, as in the past, it is important to be well positioned in relation to those in a position to allocate goods. With the coming of social security payments and greater employment opportunities more non-Kooris have had to be taken into account. As in the past, certain Kooris are highly valued for the extent to which they use their access to Europeans, as officials of the state or as people willing to enter into exchange relations. One's position vis-a-vis these Kooris is also significant so as to maximize exchange processes. The kin-based network is a means of redistribution. It clusters people in exchange networks in which there exist rights to make social and economic claims. These are similar to the claims that Europeans might also make of kin but Europeans extend their range of non-kin exchange relations on the basis of education, skills, occupations, political relations and wealth. Kinship is a particularly effective idiom for Kooris because it defines channels of distribution to a greater extent: each person is obligated to others whose rights are ordered preferentially and limited through the classificatory method. It is an easy and convenient means of establishing social and therefore economic closeness or distance. It allows for the
incorporation of outsiders into the exchange unit through the simple process of re-defining them as kin. The emphasis on the fulfilment of role requirements enables the exclusion of kin who do not conform to the expectations of exchange.

The kinship idiom ceases to be effective when economic exchange requires an orientation which cuts across kin-based claims, such as that of employer/employee, where status is defined in contractual terms, or political involvement necessitates a concern for those outside one's own network. In a capitalist society the range of significant kin tends to be narrowly defined. It is acceptable and often desirable to restrict access by kin to one's time, resources, income and so on because other social groupings have demands which must be met first such as employers, colleagues, fellow workers, mates, neighbours, and peer groups. If the demands of kin are given priority then it is likely that one's prosperity or even one's economic survival will be jeopardised. Likewise, the priority given to, for instance, the demands of a work environment, enable the demands of kin to be limited or rejected. Kooris with greater incomes (for instance, full-time wages) are tending to have a smaller kin-based network range and are less able to respond to kin on demand because they have other demands on their time and resources. Presumably they themselves limit the number of people with whom they need to distribute—they are sufficiently independent not to have to depend on others and can, and perhaps need to, limit network obligations. At the same time, it is likely that others will be more reluctant to become debtors because the chances of balancing out the relationship are much less—it would tend to lead to inequality at too great a social cost. Kooris exhibit a preference for remaining poor and autonomous than better off and degraded. There
is no shame attached to a lack of material items (with the exception of food for children) but there is a great deal of shame in finding one's self in the position of a debtor who is unable, for reasons beyond one's control, to repay (see Chapter 9).

One of the major changes requiring a re-orientation of intra-Koori relations seems to have occurred in the 1960s when, for various reasons, unrelated or distantly related Kooris were relocated on Bramble. In Cowra at least, this was the beginning of a conscious shift from a grouping composed of relations to the broader notion of "community" which will be discussed in Chapter 7. More recently, with the increase in the number of Aboriginal service organizations and State and Commonwealth ministries of Aboriginal affairs, the world of people has expanded far beyond the "community". Kooris are in communication with non-related Wiradjuri through regional meetings, with those of other parts of the State and, increasingly, with those of other parts of Australia. This also means an increase in relations with non-Aborigines, both locally and in the capital cities of Sydney (State government) and Canberra (Commonwealth government).

The Koori kinship system is still subject to pressure to change from its place as the most significant definitional arena for Kooris. This is not, however, because it is no longer of value in improved economic conditions but because of definitions imposed, through such concepts as "family" or "extended family", in so much of the current literature concerning New South Wales. This means that government policies, such as those relating to housing, and child and other social welfare arenas, are often operating on hazy notions of the dynamics and values which operate in the Koori domain. There is a definitional power in government policy. The assumption that Koori kinship is no more than an
extended "extended family", produced by poverty, has led to policies in the past which have tended to cripple rather than support Koori familial life: the fostering out of children whose mothers could not care for them, irrespective of other effective kin, is one example. That co-experience is lost as a result has had disorienting effects for Koori inter-relationships generally, not just for close kin.

Urry (1981:77) has suggested in his study of the relations between the state, capital and civil society, that it is the relatively free interaction which is possible between households in civil society that both differentiates family life from capital and enables the family to protect itself from capitalism. Kooris would seem to demonstrate the strength of this argument. Their flexible and negotiable modes of recruitment, and the way in which they activate kin relations through mobility patterns, maintains an independence of relations of capital. This has in turn enabled them to define their own world of social practice to a great extent. The Koori kinship system is a politically strategic adaptation to the current environment in which Kooris find themselves. It is sufficiently flexible to enable people to maximize the resources available to them at any particular time and to accommodate variability in the composition of social relations. The tendency of Europeans to label the Koori system as vestiges of the past or as disintegrated is no more than an implicit recognition that the Koori system does not mesh well with the expectations of the European domain in which familial relations and exchange patterns are expected to be restricted in scope - numerically, socially and economically.
CHAPTER 7: CONFLICTING NOTIONS OF "COMMUNITY"

7.1: Koori community life

7.1.1: The notion of community

Discussion of the notion of community in Wiradjuri experience is made difficult by the existence of two conflicting meanings of the term. Social scientists have generally restricted its meaning to that of a relatively fixed group of persons with common interests and enduring physical proximity. Its use assumes that the major part of a person's life, whilst they are a community member, revolves around this spatially located group. Government officers also use this meaning when they refer to Aboriginal communities and, in fact, this has led to Kooris frequently using it in this way themselves. Before discussing community in this sense, I will look at distinctive Koori usage. This will enable an appreciation of the relationship between the two, and the problems which arise between domains as a result.

Kooris conceive of community as a constellation of people who form part of their social world and who are not necessarily co-residential or part of an individual's activated kin network. The people who are included as belonging to the Koori community, in this latter sense, are characterized by what can best be described as shared history.

If kinship is the ego-centric paradigm for Kooris, then community is the socio-centric paradigm — and, like kinship, it is an unbounded concept. However, the polysemous character of the term gives both flexibility to its usage and to the social relations to which it refers. In general Koori usage it does not refer to a group that is limited geographically, socially, economically or politically. It is a grouping of people bound
together by common experiences — people who have a shared history. Those who live apart from one another will consider themselves members of one community if they share, or share enough of, this history. Thus, a member of the Cowra community may live anywhere in the State but still identify him or herself primarily as belonging to a community whose core is located in Cowra. There are three facets to this sharing of history: the sharing of a common heritage, of common geographically defined roots and of common experience. These ingredients enable the term community in the Koori sense to be applied to any level of sharing appropriate to the context at hand. Thus one may speak of the Aboriginal community in nation-wide terms, the New South Wales Aboriginal community or the Cowra community. Different expectations of sharing are involved, according to context.

7.1.2: Shared history

Shared history is a form of knowledge. To have been through an experience is "to know". The sense of belonging to a community is not based on people's achievements or abilities, or an abstract measure of conformity but on activated and shared links and knowledge of events and relationships. This makes it stable and enduring. People belong because they are part of the common experience. Their very existence contributes to the whole. It is a notion of community which survives the vicissitudes of everyday encounters, long-standing antagonisms and great variability in personality, aptitudes and values. Despite the many differences between Kooris and the changes that occur in people's networks of relationships as others are born, marry, die, are ostracized and so on, community life goes on because there is a framework within which interaction is meaningful. This framework is the history
which people have gone through together, even though individuals have responded to it in different ways. They have been through it and that is what counts.

Kooris have several ways of communicating and acknowledging the fact that they share history. The closer the relationship - defined in terms of shared experiences throughout a lifetime - the more it can be taken for granted that the other will see the same significance in events as one's self without the need for verbal acknowledgement. This was evident when I was sitting with two women in a park, idly watching some white children playing. They got a blanket from their mother to spread out on the ground. I noticed that the attention of the Koori women was riveted on the scene. It emerged that the blanket was the old government style which had been handed out to Kooris for decades. It had become for them a symbol of rations, managers and mission life (see Broom and Jones 1973), a life they had shared together in Cowra. They had not seen one of these blankets for years themselves but it reminded them of the mission era and the way it affected their lives. Although all this was later explained to me, only a look passed between the two women at the time as they fleetingly relived that past.

There are myriad symbols of shared experience which are present in the life in which people are involved from day to day and these constantly reinforce the sense of belonging. A knowing smile, a look across a room, a verbal statement, recounting events or a story are some of the ways in which people are included in the common experience. Such actions convey degrees of knowledge and understanding and their frequency among Kooris suggests that the sharing of experience is not taken for granted but continually activated and re-affirmed. The same stories can be told over and
over without losing their colour because they are not merely listened to, they are experienced (see also, Myers 1982 on the repetitiveness of Pintupi culture).

It often seems that Koori stories and descriptions of events are bereft of detail and elaboration. In fact these are rarely necessary, except for outsiders. The mention of particular names, places or objects convey meanings in themselves. However, listening to an account of events which have transpired in one's absence never quite achieves the same degree of knowing had one been a participant or witness and one frequently gets the impression that an event is related with a sense of hopelessness on the part of the teller because of the inability to make up the lack. Sometimes this is expressed in frustration or a comment such as, "Well, you should have got there, shouldn't you". Explanations of events occurring within the community should not be necessary for its members. Why two people have fought, for instance, or why Tina is back in hospital again, are part of a whole history that is known. Not to know is to distinguish one's self as an outsider - and thus possibly with no right to know.

Thus, what might appear drab to the outsider - in a storytelling style or in a social activity - can be action-packed for the Koori who belongs. Storytelling reinforces the experience of sharing and brings newcomers into that experience as far as this is possible. The sharing of a story entails a revelation and sharing of self: stories are not told to people who are not trusted to treat them as part of the intimacy of being and belonging. Many are about the "old people", their accomplishments and misdemeanors. Others are humorous or tragic events which have happened to people, including visits from ghosts - either known or unknown deceased Kooris. They recall times when people have seen
signs warning of an impending death or the visit of relations. Every story draws the teller and listener towards each other.

It is the historical component of this sharing of knowledge that white people cannot share. No matter how close may be their personal relationships with Kooris, Kooris often pointed out that they have not been through the hardships of the past which are part of understanding what being a Koori is all about. Regret has been expressed that I have missed an experience of great significance in not knowing "the old people" who did so much to define what life is like for Kooris today. Whether Kooris knew these specified "old people" also differentiates them.

When birthplace and the location of focal households coincide, no matter where someone lives, associations can be assumed to be strong. If a person also resides at this community there is the likelihood of greater involvement in local affairs and higher status vis-à-vis those with loyalties to other places. Although membership, in the sense of belonging, extends to those who have been raised in or have married into the community and now reside there, there remains a differentiation of members on the basis of longer-standing historical links.

7.1.3: Missing out on shared history

While shared history binds those who have participated in its various dimensions together, it also excludes those who have missed out for some reason, whether intentionally or not. Even to be away for a few days may leave people feeling dislocated if noteworthy events have occurred in their absence. Longer periods accentuate this. I found myself easily adapting to the Koori habit of turning up in Cowra and asking what had been going on since my last visit but without at first appreciating the significance of
this practice. Generally there was one of two responses: either there was no news worth telling, "Nothing much been happening, everything's the same"; or else I received a run-down on the latest fights, births or deaths. In retrospect, I realized that the former was either a way of letting me know that I had missed little of importance - at least from the speaker's point of view - or, conversely, that it was not appropriate for the speaker to recount events which had taken place. To be filled-in on happenings enables people to re-orient themselves after an absence to any subtle or major changes that have taken place in community relations. Details are not necessary as it is usually enough to know, for instance, that two particular people had been fighting to realize all the implications. In this way people are re-incorporated and able to pick up the threads of community dynamics without much trouble.

Shared experience also distinguishes Aborigines who have or have not grown up in a particular domain. They are regarded as not being able to understand the meanings shared by members of that domain. This has often been given as the reason for the tensions between New South Wales Kooris and Aborigines from interstate. This is also true between Kooris who have been brought up on a reserve and those who haven't. That they may be well qualified for their jobs and identified generally as Aborigines will be recognized. However, this does not give them the more powerful knowledge which only comes from shared history. In these terms they may be unable to refute the claim that "they doesn't know", that "they haven't been through it like us". There is a logic in Koori rejections of people who have come from interstate which has escaped some of the white commentators on the subject. That this logic may be expressing all sorts of other tensions is also
The sharing of experience marks off one generation from another, one sex from the other, people of the fringe camps from those of the mission, those of one area from another. It serves to differentiate in much the same way as the kinship idiom is used to differentiate between significant others in the ego-centric network. Shared experience works like a genealogy, establishing links between people but introducing an element of exclusiveness. As with the kinship idiom, that of shared history also has some flexibility as story telling can serve to incorporate outsiders if accompanied by explanations. As with kinship, there are limits. Although the outsider can be drawn in, they have not been through those experiences and this constitutes a divide which is difficult to bridge. True incorporation is possible on the level of common experience only – common heritage is almost impossible to adopt. Consequently, white people, for instance, can be incorporated on one level but not another. The sharing of the Koori heritage is an experience that non-Kooris cannot go through, no matter how long they live within the Koori world and how well they understand it. They cannot belong in the Koori sense, and Kooris often assert that the nature of the experience is such that it cannot be learnt from books.

Similarly, and a significant problem, a Wiradjuri Koori raised by whites or outside of his or her own area will be unable to share experiences which shape a person’s whole life and social relationships from the time they are born. Whilst storytelling gives the system some flexibility, it is also the case that certain features of shared history can be completely missed out on, such as those experienced by children growing up together under the guidance of older kin. The lack can never be restored.
and the experiences lost are irrevocable. A great many Wiradjuri Kooris throughout the past century have experienced social dislocation as a result of the policies of the Aboriginal Protection Board and the Aboriginal Welfare Board which removed children from their kin to place them in institutions or in foster care. This resulted in the severing of children from kin relationships and community experiences during vital years. The unique educative process which only comes through community membership was lost (see also, Lyons 1983:55).

Some Kooris manage to find their way back to their communities when they reach adulthood but for those who have been away for most of their lives, the transition is not easy. Some of them only discover that they are Aborigines when they are eighteen and have the right to start enquiring into their background. Foster parents told one Wiradjuri girl when she was a child that she was an Islander and another fairer skinned boy explained how he was brought up on the common European diet of negative stereotypes of Aborigines, only to find out that he was one himself. No matter how compatible and sympathetic people are towards rediscovered kin, the birthright of those who were removed from their communities can rarely be restored to that of a full and close member of the community, although there are a few who manage the massive reconciliation processes involved (on the removal of children see, Hankins 1982; Read 1983, nd).

It is in this context that the problems some Kooris experience in marrying outside of their community of shared history can be understood. A Koori who moves elsewhere may feel like a severed limb, with the life-giving circulation of news, meaningful symbols and shared activities cut off. The constant affirmation of belongingness may not be experienced in a new
location with relatively unknown people. Some Kooris are better at adjusting to life in new surroundings than others but the creation of one's identity is so bound up with people and place that it is difficult to move far afield for long without coming back for an occasional transfusion. This influences the decisions people make about workplaces and marital unions, and, however light they may make of it, the separation experienced as a result of jail sentences can be very difficult. This also accounts for the relief of those at home if they know that other kin are in the same jail: "Oh, he'll be right, Tommy'll keep an eye on him", but concern to visit jails indicates otherwise (in fact, visiting kin in jail can be very difficult and costly which further increases the sense of isolation).

This makes the role of floaters mentioned earlier - those people who are always moving from one point of their network to another - very important. In terms of European values they are the unstable unemployed who are used to reinforce "walk-about" stereotypes. To Kooris they are the message bearers. They carry the news of goings on which keep people in touch. They are also free at a moment's notice to take off and see what is going on elsewhere or to give support where needed. In this sense, a community without floaters can be at a disadvantage. Often people will explain extended stays elsewhere by saying "Oh well, I thought I'd stick around and help out with the kids for a while, give her a break, see". When people get together at funerals, marriages and the like, they will not feel shamed because they do not know what has been happening elsewhere; the floaters will have kept them in touch. Some of the floaters now move on State-wide and interstate networks they have established and are promoting awareness of happenings in the wider Aboriginal context as well.
7.1.4: The sharing of geographically-defined roots

Kooris do not often refer to their physical surroundings in aesthetic terms, such as to admire a view or deplore an eyesore. Comments are nearly always specific, for their purpose is to acknowledge the role that their environment has played in their experience. Comments indicate, however, that they know the country they come from intimately. This is evident in the giving of directions but also is a characteristic of stories which often contain very specific references to locations, identifying particular buildings, trees, rocks or bush near which an event took place. If a particular corner is associated with an accident a silence may descend on travellers as they go past, sometimes but not necessarily acknowledged verbally. Often the acknowledgement will be in the form of a story about people associated with that place but without referring to the accident itself: "Do you remember how poor old Johnny used to sing the same old song over and over? I always think of him when I hear it now". The acknowledgement may come some time after an event, as when one person asks another, "Were you thinking what I was back there on the road?", and the response may be to retell the story connected with the places concerned. Even very young children will recount events connected with places passed as they travel and will remember with accuracy how to retrace their steps.

The knowledge of environment also serves to differentiate those who know from those who don't. Geographical knowledge is significant in that it can be assumed that the more distant the locations from which people come, the less sharing there will be of location-experiences. Thus the notion of "tribe" in the contemporary Wiradjuri context is the symbolic reference to both a geographical area which people know and within which they have
shared similar experiences and a consciousness of a common cultural heritage, the knowledge that not only they but also their forebears have lived out their daily lives in these places. Details of the past are not as significant as having this general awareness. To be a member of the Wiradjuri tribe is to align one's self with others who share common views of the past which shape characteristics of life in the present. It also signifies a knowingness that does not belong to people outside its loosely defined geographical range. Shared history therefore distinguishes Wiradjuri people from other tribes, other States, and south-eastern Australian Aborigines from those of other parts of Australia. The boundaries of shared history, however, are not fixed. Some elements are specific to the Wiradjuri and differentiate, others are held in common across neighbouring tribal groups and thus help to bind people in wider terms.

At meetings of the Wiradjuri Aboriginal Land Council in 1983 there was a unanimous vote not to have the local land councils in the region subdivided into different administrative areas. Despite the vast distances involved (approximately 80,000 square kilometres), Wiradjuri people have shown their commitment to retaining their social/tribal and geographic identity. They used their sense of belongingness, continually activated in social gatherings, and their shared history as the basis for their decision to remain together.

Thus, reference to one's "community" is to geographical, social and historical referents and does not imply current residence. The term is flexible and dependent upon context. The question "Where do you come from?" nearly always refers to the place someone calls "home", referring to the area with which they identify, where their roots are rather than the place where they
are living. In fact, they may not have lived there for many years. Nevertheless, it remains a primary focus of belonging and thus of identification of self in relation to place and people. To find out where people live requires a more specific question: "Are you staying down here now?", or "Where are you stopping these days?"

7.1.5: Links with the more distant past

This system of the acknowledgement of common experience is not so different from that of the past when knowledge was handed down in myth form. In the Wiradjuri past knowledge was handed down and belongingness and differentiating criteria affirmed through stories — such as the myths of the Dreamtime. These often terse sounding tales were also rich in meaning for those to whom the kangaroo of the story signified individuals, groups, events and spiritual ties. The direct continuity with the content of this past and its meanings has been severed for Kooris today: links with particular spirits and localities and the traditional significance of these in articulating people's relationships with each other and with places are no longer understood. However, the same processes are still operating. Story telling achieves for Kooris today what the myths, songs and dances of old used to do, locating people vis-à-vis each other and vis-à-vis place, and explaining social conflicts, contradictions or relationships by telling a story (see also, Sansom 1982; Macdonald 1986). Elaboration is unnecessary for the listeners who know the world which is spoken of and the people involved. The stories depict the ever-recurring themes of Koori life, thus also differentiating people into those who understand and those who do not.

Below I expand on various terms which Kooris employ to categorize people according to social distance measured by shared
history. This is not a form of stratification, although it has appeared to be so from a white point of view at times and, as will be described later, has been used to develop a theory of class differentiation amongst Kooris. The categories are primarily descriptive although from any individual's vantage point they may be used evaluatively in certain contexts. In the Cowra situation, as in other areas, there are people who are seen as having different degrees of involvement and experience in various spheres over the years. Differences have been brought about by both government and Koori activity within a particular economic and political environment. Whether or not people lived on the mission, where they came from, what use they made of an ability to read and write English, knowledge acquired travelling or working, different relations established with Europeans and so on, influence the extent to which people are involved in the Koori domain, accepted and accorded respect. These terms thus also refer to structures of relationships within the contemporary community context. One of the most obvious differentiations is that between Kooris and Gabbas but the lack of shared experience between these two groupings is only an extension of a general Koori approach rather than a particular form of discriminatory differentiation.

This extension principle may account for the frequent absence amongst Kooris of a tendency to stereotype people. Despite the general derogatory remarks that are passed about whites and anger about the degradation to which they have been subjected, Kooris are usually prepared to "check out" a Gabba, to give him or her the benefit of the doubt. If a white person or an unknown Aborigine is part of a group, others may wish to know if they are "OK" or "alright". These simple descriptions convey to another Koori whether someone should be trusted or incorporated into an
event. These messages are also conveyed non-verbally - a raised eyebrow and a nod to signify that it is alright to go ahead with a story in the presence of the stranger. Some Gabbas have been able to share with Kooris in ways that Kooris appreciate and they will thus distinguish these people from other whites.

7.2: The Wiradjuri community in Cowra

7.2.1: Community composition

The Cowra community includes people who live in Cowra and those who live elsewhere but identify with it as their birthplace or as the location of their focal household. Residence is not an essential feature of community membership and people who have lived in Sydney, Canberra or another Wiradjuri community for many years, some with little intention of returning, will still describe themselves in terms of their home community. As one Cowra woman put it:

Wherever they are now, they still think of this place as their home. They still identify with it, Erambie. They come back here. Through all there's the land, it's still the link. Our connection with the land, it's still everything. It's our dunghill (cited in Foster and Mellick 1981a:2-3).

There are also people living in Cowra, temporarily or permanently, who "belong" to another community and unless they have lived there many years are usually less involved in Cowra affairs. Because Kooris are first locked into the ego-centric network of kin which may extend to various centres throughout the State, this network often takes precedence, in terms of loyalties, over that of the community.

On meeting someone the two most frequent questions are: "Where do you come from?" and, "Who do you know from round here?" The implication in the first is where do you belong, with whom do you identify. Often it will be expressed as "Where were you born?"
If you were born in a place other than that you call home, the answer would include an explanation: "I was born in Bourke but I come from Narrandera". In the second question the emphasis is on identifying links which may establish a relationship between the speakers and change their stranger-status with regard to each other - or alternatively act as clues as to whether this person can be expected to be on-side or not. It is prudent to find out how people are related so as to avoid antagonisms which could arise, for instance, in idle chatter about others.

Each Koori identifies him or herself as belonging to one or more communities, depending upon the options available through birth, parents' communities and residence patterns. This identification or sense of belonging becomes a "passport" they will use all their lives. It largely determines social relations entered into elsewhere in that it helps to establish the kind of social links without which interaction is limited. Not to belong means one is not accountable, and thus not to be trusted to have others' interests at heart. This makes it particularly difficult for Aborigines from interstate to mix in, unless they are able to establish links as through marriage which will bind them to groupings in New South Wales. If a football knockout is held in Sydney teams are often expected to be formed on the basis of community allegiance rather than residence. The people playing for Cowra may live in Cowra, Sydney, Bathurst or Canberra. For the Condobolin man, for instance, who has married into the Cowra community there may be a choice of allegiance for the match in question - especially if a team lacks players.

The Kooris who presently live in Cowra can be grouped according to whether they live on Erambie or in town, whether their families have been in Cowra for several generations, and the
extent to which they identify as a part of the Koori domain. There are families on Erambie who can trace their links back several generations but there are also families in town with very long associations - some having moved into town a generation or two ago from fringe camps. Others have moved more recently and the strength of their identification will depend upon the ties that have been built up through marriage, the birth of children, or disassociation from their original community. These are the people often known as "visitors" as opposed to those who are "Cowra from way back". There are also some Kooris living in town who mix very little and who for most purposes "pass" as whites. They are often regarded as "the pushies" or "up-town niggers" who "think they're white but they're not". The various networks that can be identified in Cowra are not all inter-related: community is not dependent upon kinship but this does influence social interaction.

I have already noted that there is often more interaction between residents of a local community and their Wiradjuri kin in other places than with local but non-related Kooris. In writing of the Wongaibon to the west of Wiradjuri country, Beckett (1965:9) noted that mobility was of considerable social importance to Aboriginal people because of the lack of a wider co-ordinating principle governing face-to-face relations between geographically and politically separate communities: kin relations constitute a co-ordinating principle. The Wiradjuri area affords sufficient geographical and numerical scope for various kinds of social exchange without people having to extend their networks, except to take in links in Sydney and Canberra. This is now being effectively translated into political organization within the Wiradjuri Regional Aboriginal Land Council, many of whose members are related in some way. Mobility has increased rather than
decreased in frequency, even if its characteristics have changed somewhat - more cars are now travelling around to meetings, carrying people who come for the ride so as to catch up on kin in the community concerned.

Just as there are focal households around which individual action is oriented, there are also households which become focal for a localized community, at least one of whose members will be regarded formally or informally as a community leader - a focal person. Focal people in Cowra, and thus their close kin, are those with long standing ties to the area. Being able to trace one's history in the community is usually indicative of status and authority (see Chapter 8). Several Kooris on Erambie reserve can trace their Cowra-based genealogical relationships back to the establishment of the reserve and further. The surname Glass dates from the 1830s in Cowra (Musgrave 1926) and the Coe and Murray surnames from at least the 1890s. Consciousness of this history enables individuals to locate themselves in relation to other community members.

The reserves represent high density living to some Kooris, which many did not and often still do not relish. They prefer to be accessible to each other but separate, retaining a degree of privacy and autonomy. The refusal to live on the mission or the move away from the mission into the town does not necessarily represent a desire by people to disassociate themselves in terms of personal relationships, although it may indicate a desire to be more distant from certain authority structures. Kooris do not particularly enjoy living "on top of each other", even when they are "close" (see Read 1982:10,12; and also Trigger et al 1983 on proximity and high density living). Jeremy Beckett (pers.comm. 1984) confirmed that this was also true in Wilcannia, explaining
that some people had left the mission, because of "too much trouble", to live in shanties on the mallee where they were able to space out. Movements today to and from town or mission, from one town to another, represents the same dynamic, the same exercise of choice, as was shown by the fringe dwellers or is shown by householders in relation to kin: a refusal to accept a structural position or a mode of exchange which may be imposed by Europeans or by other Kooris. One person may want to get away from the constraints of living in a Housing Commission house and having white neighbours and another person to be away from "that mob". Gaining personal space or avoiding particular relationships are common reasons given for moves. Spatial mobility has probably always been an effective strategy amongst Kooris, both past and present, whereby they may remove themselves from a social situation which is seeming to impinge on their sense of self, their autonomy and the ways in which they utilize their resources. That such autonomy is generally valued means that the personal relationships involved do not have to be severed as a result. The consequent geographic differentiation, while it may increase separateness over time, is not necessarily seen as problematic.

A focus on the community as a set of residents in a particular location is increasing, in contrast to the Koori notion which is not tied to residence. This is not the result of a movement amongst Kooris within Cowra but rather of government policy. In fact, the community as defined in more conventional sociological terms is becoming actualized as an artifact of the state, although policy-making tends to be unable to accommodate mobility patterns and is designed for less flexible and more predictable structural arrangements. For several years now, governments have tended to treat "communities" as homogeneous and
discrete entities rather than in terms of the more amorphous Koori notion. The Ministerial Directive and Guidelines for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs frequently refers to community support but directs its policies towards formalized, structured organizations (see, for example, Department of Aboriginal Affairs 1981c).

Fisher (1984), a former Department of Aboriginal Affairs employee in Sydney, described community as the "magic word" which would get grants and other requests accepted: from the 1973 Whitlam Government on it became a "buzz-word" for social workers in general and for those in Aboriginal affairs in particular. Somehow the term seemed to create "community" and thus made better, if contrived, sense for Europeans of the Koori domain. This approach has often led to divisiveness within communities when different networks do not feel adequately represented in decision-making processes in organizations. The tensions which have surfaced as a result are not new in the Koori domain but have been contained through policy orientations in recent decades which have allowed for greater autonomy through different involvement in different organizations. However, these tensions becoming more marked under the system of Local Aboriginal Land Councils created under the Land Rights Act. The legislation provides for allocations to Local Land Councils made up of all Kooris residing in or identifying with a particular area. Departments such as the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and National Parks and Wildlife are adopting a policy of referring many matters to Land Council office bearers. This creates more of a centralized decision-making structure and a less flexible system by which allocations are received than Kooris have previously experienced. Its implications may be far-reaching in terms of social dynamics and it is already
causing conflict in some communities, although this is not evident in Cowra itself (see further, Chapter 8).

Part of the underlying rationale for the Fraser Liberal Government's continued policy stress on community was a cautionary attitude regarding special benefits for Aborigines in the welfare field. By funding co-operatives, it was possible to assert that Aborigines did not receive cash benefits for which whites were not eligible - with the sole exception of the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme (R. Fisher, pers.comm.1984). This has led Kooris to place greater value on collective rather than personal routes to power.

This is a significant change in Koori orientations. Private routes, in so far as they did not penalize or threaten others, were acknowledged and valued in the past. Policy changes have led people to realize the advantages which accrue from a united front and large numbers. In other words, this is the language of government and, as government is the supplier, conformity is required of Kooris by Kooris to a larger extent. There have been criticisms lately of Kooris who have applied for housing, for jobs or other resources without going through Aboriginal channels, and also of those who do not avail themselves of Aboriginal-run services. Whilst it is true that, at times, they might have got a better deal had they done so, it is also necessary that these Aboriginal channels be used for them to continue to be sanctioned by government. Thus the approach of government is effectively operating to deny Kooris the choices and autonomy they have always had some room to exercise, including the right not to use Aboriginal services. One example of this is the tendency to downgrade housing loans to Aboriginal individuals through the restriction of funding in favour of community grants to community organizations. Kooris who have had loan applications for housing
purchase or renovation knocked back have claimed the stated reason they were rejected was because there was not enough money left. Paradoxically, "self-management" has a certain "totalitarian" ring to it.

7.2.2: The "town mob" and the "mission mob"

The degree to which shared history is experienced between people brings about fine as well as coarse distinctions in the extent to which people are socially differentiated. Thus, the fact that different terms are used by Kooris to distinguish groupings does not imply the same measures of distancing in each pairing. The first contrast used in Cowra is the least socially divisive—that between Kooris in town and those on the mission. The most divisive is that between Kooris and Gabbas.

There are Kooris in town who have never lived on the mission, having come from different areas in the past or lived in town as a result of housing supplied with their work (usually on the Municipal Council). Some families were refused mission housing in the past by one of the managers and have since stayed in town. These people are still regarded as very much a part of the Koori community. Others who have moved off recently say they wanted to be free of certain difficulties faced on the mission or that they wanted better housing. The 'mission mob' is often critical of such attitudes, saying those who moved were too impatient to wait for improvements in housing conditions and lacked the incentive to stick with it and fight for better conditions like those who stayed. Those in town also experience problems, of course. Those living in Housing Commission houses often live under a cloud: they worry about eviction, about noise, about white neighbours and about payments to a much greater extent. Some also feel cut off
from the social life of the mission because it is too far for them to walk. There have also been moves from town back to the mission.

The occasional strains between these two groupings - the town mob and the mission mob - does result in conflict from time to time. Apart from the more separate "poshies", all are regarded as part of the Koori "community" but the exercise of choice involved in separate residential preferences means that a distinction remains. Resentment is felt when town people are seen to be interfering in mission life, or mission people are believed to be down-grading the town blacks. If a town person is fighting too much on the mission, or mission blacks in town, they might be told to get back where they belong. Each group is apt to make disparaging remarks about the other but as almost all of them are closely related to at least some of the other residential cluster, they do not really constitute two distinct groups and conflicts do not become town versus mission "feuds". The emphasis being given to Erambie residents by government officials means the onus is probably more on the part of the town people to concern and interest themselves in mission life (without interfering). However, it also means that those on the mission have an obligation to look after the interests of those in town. Mission Kooris do frequently come to the aid of town people needing support in some way - and complain when town people do not avail themselves of the services available on the mission, such as legal services or contacts established with Europeans.

The Koori respect for autonomy allows for differentiations between groupings such as the town versus mission mob without it necessarily leading to conflict. There is a contradiction between this value, however, and the desire for corporate strength and loyalty which is required to negotiate more forcibly with
government. Thus, sometimes the peace seems uneasy and the criticisms harsh of one mob by another. Kooris, however, stress that despite any differences they are all one people: although the town mob and the mission mob have their differences, they are united in their acknowledgement of their shared history.

7.2.3: "Battlers" and "poshies"

However, shared history has not proved a sufficiently binding force to prevent the exercise of options provided by a fair skin. Having a fair skin has meant that a few Aboriginal people could choose to "pass" as Europeans if they wanted. Passing was almost synonymous with assimilation. This, despite being an official government policy, was not simply a matter of choice. To be able to take advantage of this option one needed a fair skin. Dark-skinned Aborigines could compete in the white arenas of sport (cricket, boxing and football) but housing, employment and the white social networks were closed to them. Those with fair skins could, however, by taking certain precautions (such as moving to areas where they were unknown) gain access to these benefits.

Nevertheless, the economic policies which are obliging Kooris to work together in an atmosphere of consensus have also affected this part of the Koori population who, until relatively recently, have had little to do with the Koori domain. Kooris who are involved in the Koori domain have referred to such people as the "poshies", or the "flash ones". These terms may also include Kooris who have always identified as being Aboriginal but who have little to do with the daily life of either Kooris on the mission or those in town who are part of the involved Koori social population: "they don't mix in".

The poshies are those who have been most heralded in
anthropological studies of the post-World War II decades as examples of Aborigines who have shown themselves able to adapt and come to terms with the new world. In studies conducted in the 1940s and 1950s they were perceived by some writers as the "upper class" of Aborigine (Reay and Sitlington 1948; Reay 1949; Fink 1955, 1957; Bell 1965:409-414). In the economic terms of the overall capitalist structure of Australian society this was indeed the case. The position of Aborigines was lower than any other grouping in Australia measured by their involvement in productive processes or by such factors as occupation, income, status or interaction. The poshies are still referred to occasionally by Europeans as "middle class blacks", an expression many Kooris resent because it uses differentiating criteria which are inconsistent with their values.

In contrast, those whom Kooris refer to as the "battlers" on the missions and in the camps had no status, no power and few options except within the Koori domain. They just had to battle on within the restrictions imposed upon them - and battle to get changes made. Those who could "pass" could get housing, jobs, and could mix socially with whites: "upper class" implied more acceptable to Europeans. Although the poshies were still largely confined to the lower class, it was the battlers who were more acceptable in Koori terms - they did not "sell out".

However, the tables have now turned and "Aboriginality" is something to take pride in and is the source of new and specific allocations, many of which are not available to whites. In terms of intra-Koori economics, and the distributions which accrue to Aborigines now, it is proximity to Aboriginal decision-makers and government, not standards of living or acceptance by whites in town which determine evaluations. One woman asserted that "blacks
came out of the woodwork here in Cowra" after the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme was announced in 1967: some of the people who had never before identified as Aboriginal suddenly became prepared to resurrect Aboriginal ancestry in order to tap into the new benefits. As I noted previously, there have been consistently large discrepancies between official figures for Kooris in Cowra and the number of people whom involved Kooris can identify. The difference between the statistical and effective social populations is decreasing as more of the ambiguous cases are overtly redefining themselves as Kooris.

The people who rejected Koori ways in favour of white acceptance also rejected the experiences of the mission and fringe camp years. The battlers see themselves as those who continued the fight for all Kooris to receive better conditions. The term "poshy" implies people who think themselves too good to mix and who did not have to struggle or cope with discrimination. They are not evaluated as a higher class or as more successful by other Kooris. In referring to them as the "up-town niggers who think they're white but they're as black as me", one woman was stressing her equality with them in social terms. The poshies are people whom genetic factors have placed in an ambiguous structural relationship to both whites and other Kooris. They are all fair-skinned and all have Aboriginal ancestry which they may or may not acknowledge in different contexts. Some mix with other Kooris, some avoid them and confine themselves to the Europeans domain. In fact, some do not learn of their Aboriginal ancestry until late in life when they meet with other Koori relations and then have to exercise a choice in their allegiances.

Several of the battlers who express scorn of the poshies do so because the latter are seen by involved Kooris as having "gone
white" at the expense of other Kooris, as having consistently refused to enter into exchange relations with other Kooris and thus have exploited the alternative options available to them - options which are not, or have not been in the past, available to their critics. That they maximize the advantages their skin colour gives them does not seem to be the real point of contention but, rather, the fact that, in retaining their right to live autonomously, they did not also continue to subject themselves to the demands of sociality required of Kooris (see Chapter 9). The price demanded by whites in the past has also been high. It was expected that Kooris would renounce their own lifestyles in favour of assimilation and this worked against Kooris being able to reconcile the two domains: success required the abandonment of one or the other. Those of the so-called poshies who now wish to identify more strongly with the Koori domain have been accepted back for the most part. In this respect, Kooris do not "freeze" people into their pasts and accommodate people willing to make an effort to come to terms with a new reality. Likewise, Kooris do not reject alliances with Europeans but condemn them when their terms demand exclusiveness and denial of Koori social identity.

7.2.4: The "way back" people and the "visitors"

Despite discrepancies in shared history the respect for autonomy has allowed for reincorporation. However, there is a contrast in the next distinction which illustrates often irrevocable inclusions and exclusions brought about by shared history. There are families in Cowra who were arbitrarily re-located from other Wiradjuri, and later non-Wiradjuri, areas. The coming of these people was usually the result of the decision of an administrator or manager after they had experienced
difficulties in their previous place of residence. One woman described her request for a move as being the result of a need to get away from her violent husband and his people. Another was moved by welfare authorities without reason (possibly it seems because her house was to be demolished). Such people are often still referred to as "the visitors".

The visitors lack the sense of shared experience which characterizes those who come from the same geographical area and have extensive kin networks in that area. Nevertheless, they have been integrated in varying ways, some more successfully than others: a lack of shared history can be alleviated by marriage and associated alliances. The daughter of one visitor married a local man and their son identifies very strongly with Erambie as "home":

I just can't leave the Mission, because this is my home, where I was originally from. How can you leave something when you've had it? (cited in Read 1984:125).

Those who have not been in Cowra as long, or have not married into a "Cowra from way back" family, often express resentment at their non-acceptance in the past and the fact that they continue to see themselves as being discriminated against in matters such as housing allocation. There are two sides and a long history to this issue but the fact is that hostility is ever latent. I was told by one resentful woman, who used a very scornful tone, that "You've got to belong to the right mob ... you got to have the right relations".

Other Cowra Kooris distinguish themselves from the visitors by references to their historical links — they are "Cowra from way back" and can trace their genealogies (or assume that this is possible) through several generations associated with Cowra. Some have been very critical of the policies which brought the visitors to Erambie in the first place. It is not interpreted as being in
the humane interests of the people moved so much as the
government's attempt to try and break up the cohesiveness of the
mission itself (see Foster and Mellick 1981c:7). Gordon Simpson
gave the following explanation to Peter Read (1984:124-5):

And I think another reason why I say that the
authorities was trying to break up the mission and
trying to get them off was that they brought in a lot of
stirrers, no-hopers from other missions, people that
couldn't get on with their own crowd where they lived
before, to make things worse.

I found that these views were shared by several older people who
believed the authorities tried to break up the Cowra mission
because it was a very close knit and vocal group who were pressing
for reforms and making their presence uncomfortably felt. The "way
back" people state that the intention of the Welfare Board to
destroy networks in Cowra failed, citing their present strength
and appreciation of past Koori leadership and teaching as
evidence.

It was, and still is, the presence of these people as
outsiders, almost as intruders, which posed problems. It was not
the case that the visitors were necessarily personally obnoxious:
they were just not wanted. On one occasion, a way-back Koori woman
was criticizing a visitor, who had lived in Cowra for 20 years,
because of her fighting and and foul language. She was admonished
by her aunt who pointed out that the woman's behaviour was no
different to others on the mission, including her own: it was
unfair to single her out. Nevertheless, 16 of 27 fights recorded
in 1982 involved non-Wiradjuri members fighting Wiradjuri, and
three others were between non-Wiradjuri alone.

Matilda's House appreciated the difficulties the visitors must
have had over the years:

I'm not blaming the people who came here, (i.e., the
newcomers to Erambie for destroying morale). It was just
like chucking water on oil. They just didn't mix. It was like two cultures, Aboriginals together. It wasn't jealousy from the Cowra blacks. It was just that the white authorities didn't understand Aboriginal ways of life. Unless you were invited by the Aboriginals themselves to come there and live you weren't accepted. If you were put there by someone else, the Welfare or whatever, you just weren't accepted. The same goes today ... It was just as bad for the people who came here to live as it was for those who had to accept them. Because we were Aboriginals they lumped us together, but it wasn't on. Us kids, we thought it was great, stoning the living daylights out of a new family. When I think about it now, how cruel kids can be, even those kids who were relatives. Your brother might have been married to one of them or whatever. But in the beginning, when they first came there, it must have been hell for them" (cited in Read 1984:121-122).

However, it is also true that many of the Cowra Kooris who believe there to have been an escalation of fighting and violence in recent years attribute this to the coming of the visitors as much as they do to increased alcohol consumption. The visitors were not constrained to accept authority relations based on kinship. Until the late 1950s every person who had lived on the mission was related to others in some way and stories of "the old people" indicate that they inspired awe and respect in younger kin. But not so with newcomers. The supervised and controlled fights became less frequent from this time.

The visitors would fight anywhere anytime. The young ones would gang up against the Cowra kids. On one occasion in the early days of some of the visitors coming, the kids were all up at the bus stop. A visitor family and Cowra family "grouped up". The consequent fighting meant that next morning two older sisters of the Cowra family went up to set things right. While one sister downed one visitor, and measured up another, the other sister stepped in, hitting one right across the bonnet of a car. They questioned the visitor family: Why were they ganging up? They said it was the only way they could win. Kooris describe most of these
fights as a "lashing out and then everyone would forget about it".

Rules and conventions are locally specific and outsiders may have different ones, making fighting potentially much more dangerous. (See also Evans-Pritchard 1940:169 who pointed out in his study of the Nuer that an informal system of law which relied heavily on physical aggression or force has a limited radius of application). One of the greatest constraints in Koori fighting is the relationship and communication that exists between kin. One young man explained to me:

Well ... when you fight with your cousin, see ... well he's your best mate. Out of town blacks - they're sorta different ... You just don't know them.
You see ... you and your brother, your cousin, you're like this see -
[at this point he clasped his two forefingers together]
... you understand what they're doing. But if you fight with a bloke from another State, you don't know what's going on. There's that much gap between you -
[with palms held facing each other but about 20cm apart]
When you're fighting with your brother, you're thinking - that's your brother you're fightin'.
It's like you got to fight yourself. You see ... if you have a fight with your brother or cousin, ... then after, see, you go off and you have a drink together ... An' you know he's thinking the same, see.

The tension between the visitors and others is not peculiar to Cowra and has produced greater problems in many other areas, not only in New South Wales (see, for instance, Trigger et al 1983). The number of visitors to Cowra was small compared to the gathering of large numbers, often whole tribal groupings, together on other reserves. Much fighting in recent times can be understood, at least in part, as resulting from heavy handed policies of the past which exacerbated distinctly Koori modes of relating and differentiating. The problems which ensued from enforced inter-group mixing were continuations, thrown out of proportion, of past structurally agonistic relationships. Bell (1965:400) noted several years ago that there was never any
conception amongst New South Wales Aborigines of overall social cohesiveness and that:

Traditional enmity continues between people from different tribal regions; and these groups discourage strange Aborigines from joining them, often by forceful means. The part-Aborigines living on the reserve at La Perouse in the Sydney metropolitan area ... distrust part-Aborigines in other parts of the State, describing them as "bad mobs", "thieves" and "full of fight".

The structural oppositions which now exist in many communities between those who see themselves as the "original" inhabitants and the visitors is evidenced throughout the State. The young man who described Erambie as his only home (see above) suggests that it may resolve itself in time. Some of the visitors have already exercised options in moving from the mission to town or to other areas which defused antagonisms. The "way back" people, who are the principal decision-makers in Cowra, are also under more pressure to draw all disparate groupings together in order to show a united front to government.

The Koori domain is not without conflicts or divisions. What type of common experiences are called upon as a binding mechanisms depends upon the context at hand. Thus, a Koori community consists of sets of shifting aggregations. Labels applied to groupings are not hard and fast differentiations. Kooris often play down differentiations in their dealings with the European domain but this does not necessarily mean that the tensions disappear. As will be discussed in the next chapter, there is no clear means of establishing and legitimating decision-making processes within the Koori domain. European policy and legislative emphases, and the changing demographic structure of the domain, have made kinship rules of authority and precedence less tenable as means of maintaining order and gaining commitment to action.
Plate 7.1 An old house on Erambie, 1981
Most of these old weatherboard houses have now been replaced

Plate 7.2 New Koori-built houses on Erambie, 1985
The new houses are now being built by Kooris themselves under building trades apprenticeship schemes
CHAPTER 8: AUTHORITY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF DOMAIN

8.1: Koori bosses

8.1.1: Koori notions of authority

The topic addressed in this chapter is the political dimension of the Koori domain. I will use Easton's (1979:96) definition of a political system as:

... those patterns of interaction through which values are allocated for a society and these allocations are accepted as authoritative by most persons in the society most of the time.

What is given value partly depends upon people being able to assume authoritative positions through which they can define or influence the perceptions and actions of others. There is no acceptance among Kooris of centralized or hierarchized leadership as the power to define and demand appropriate behaviour for everyone within the domain. However, there are "bosses" for certain people, activities or places. A polity by definition can be assumed to contain mechanisms designed to maintain itself and to offset potential threatening crises. For Kooris, the polity refers to those sets of relationships perceived as constituting a particular activity at a given time. The notion of value in this context centres on the maintenance of both self in relation to others (self-as-domain) and the Koori domain in relation to other domains.

People act both to avert threats to their perceptions of their domain, and to engage in activities which strengthen these perceptions. Those people who are able to act for the benefit of self and/or others acquire authoritative positions. There are no Koori terms for distinguishing different means of structuring authority relations. They use the term "boss" as a general way of designating people who have authority in a specified context.
Before expanding on means by which authority is acquired, I will describe meanings associated with the Koori notion of "boss".

There is an apparent contradiction between the frequent denial by Kooris that authoritative people exist in their domain and the fact that some people are perceived by Kooris as having more authority or influence than others. The issue revolves around who exercises authority and how, how authority is legitimated and in what contexts, and what the outcomes of such people's actions are for others. Kooris are particularly concerned to disassociate the notion of boss from that of power. Power suggests the ability to control others. If it is seen to reside in those who can get others to do their bidding, in Cowra this is very limited, if not non-existent. There is no general power to coerce and no set of sanctions applicable to this exercise of power.

I asked various people whom they would consider as bosses, whom they would go to if in difficulty or requiring assistance, or who made the decisions in the community. There was evident reluctance to respond to the question. Most said after thought that they would only go to kin for help or advice. If pressed, they designated certain key figures as decision-makers and, although the lists varied, four names were common to all, other variations depending upon the kin linkages or special relationships those listed had with the speaker. It was clear in compiling these lists that even when people offered the information willingly many did not wish to acknowledge power differentials overtly. It was rare to hear expressions such as leader or boss used to describe others. Explanations would start with a denial: "Well, you wouldn't call them a boss, now ... but see, it's like this ... " and they would go on to describe activities in which such people were engaged - usually in terms of
what they did for others, as helpers or enablers: people who had done something tangible "for their people". They accepted that there were more influential and skilled people but not that this gave such people power over others.

Kooris like to feel that someone acts on their behalf only because they choose for that person to do so. The acknowledgement of status groupings and of unequal ability borders on a contradiction of the Koori egalitarian ethos and these are rarely admitted to except indirectly. However, it is recognized that jobs have to be done and that someone has to do them - and that this will often mean additional and unequal material benefits. It also means additional responsibility in the conduct or control of activities. The contradictions give flexibility and negotiability to social involvement but also make for conflicts. People do stand over others and do exercise powers given to them through their social roles. It is important that others continually act to ensure that there is no tendency to domination, of people becoming "too big for their boots".

The exercise of authority implies a role, whether long or short-term, in which people should be looking after the interests of others. It is not about exercising control over an activity so much as enabling it and ensuring that outsiders do not get in the way. People assert their right to maintain self-in-control and not let others "lord it over them". People acting in an authoritative capacity must ensure that they do not create the impression that they are dominating a situation, and that their actions are in the interests of others. Several writers have pointed to this "looking after" component of Aboriginal leadership (Berndt and Berndt 1970, Myers 1982, Anderson 1983, von Sturmer 1984a; see also Sansom 1982). It is not so much a matter of the exercise of power based
on coercion as of being recognized as someone who will do things for others and get things done. Things done for the benefit of all have much greater value than those done for self. The "all" is significant: one Koori who is highly regarded in the European community for work amongst Aborigines in the welfare field is often criticized at home because the benefits of his work are not felt directly by those at home. People's contributions are evaluated in terms of personally experienced effects. Remembering Kooris of the past for "what they did for their people" implies extracting benefits for local Kooris.

As the Koori domain expands and takes in relationships on a wider front, certain people are now credited with actions which are not experienced locally, or at least not immediately. Awareness of wider forces is increasing - the role of the State and Commonwealth Governments, of international affairs - and with it an acknowledgement that struggles to effect change may be long-term. The Wiradjuri support of Aboriginal delegations to the United Nations is one example. Whilst some Kooris started off perceiving the delegates as on an overseas holiday and into "the big time", there is now widespread support for actions seen as being in their interests.

There are a few Wiradjuri Kooris (two in particular in Cowra) who have a more cybernetic view of the universe than a preoccupation with the maintenance of self or the Koori domain might suggest. These people recognize a constellation of forces of which they are only a part. They can use this knowledge or insight to become influential by projecting events as under their control and, in doing so, projecting a view of themselves as in control. This is particularly evident in those people who are effective negotiators with the European domain. They become influential from
a belief on the part of those they influence that they can exert an influence over the environment (including the effects of the European domain) better than anyone else, or can influence the more strategic parts of it. Their effectiveness, gauged in terms of results, legitimates their position of authority in the domain generally. They recognize constraints, such as the exigencies of government policies or differences of opinion amongst European suppliers of resources, but they know how to exploit them — and how to deflect the blame for their failures. As an anthropological colleague once remarked: "Aboriginal leaders know there's a dialectic and that's powerful because they don't let on that they know".

In fact, this is an extension of an epistemological stance adopted in Wiradjuri society generally: each person is perceived as potentially in control and works to project a view of self-in-control. This is illustrated in frequent comments such as "No one's going to tell me what to do". Being boss, whether for self or others, means being perceived as in control (whether or not this is realistic).

The ideology of self-in-control necessarily implies that recourse to third parties or external agencies is discouraged. There are proper channels of intervention recognized. To act outside of conventional channels may unleash unknown or unknowable forces not under the control of those who should be (or want to be) in control (see also, von Sturmer 1984b and 1984c). Kooris dislike any situation in which they are beholden to Europeans, for instance, in having to employ them because Kooris lack certain skills. A reluctance to seek recourse to Europeans as third parties in dispute settlement is another example. It is an option which is available to Wiradjuri people but which disturbs the
value placed on internal control: it threatens the notion of
domain by threatening to weaken the internal controls over that
domain.

8.1.2: Legitimating the exercise of authority

The general comments about bosses apply in most contexts in
which authority is recognized. Who can become a boss depends on a
context and is specific to that context. One is boss for a
delineated sphere of activity, over which one is able to claim the
right to define and determine appropriate behaviour. There are
three principal means of establishing a position of authority.
These are all associated with a perception of ownership or control
of the components which constitute the activity in question. I
shall refer to them as ownership of place, people or knowledge
within the Koori domain; of channels whereby resources flow from
the European to the Koori domain; and of skills and personality
characteristics through which people are able to motivate and
mobilize others for specific activities. The sense in which I am
referring to ownership has been described by Sansom (1980:122) in
the following terms:

Aborigines own slices of action and also own the signs and
symbols that attest to a person's rightful capacity
to initiate the staging of events of distinguished sorts and kinds.

a) Ownership of people, place and knowledge

Ownership of rights established in relationships give some
Kooris more authority than others over certain people. This is
almost exclusively expressed in terms of kinship as a mode of
including or excluding people in exchange relations. Claims are
made on Europeans or non-related Kooris by appeal to kin
principles of structuration. The authority which derives from
seniority of generation is applied to relations to which these principles have been extended (as discussed in Chapter 6).

Ownership of place refers to a spatial area within which a person has a right to define the appropriate attitudes and behaviours of those who enter it. The most straightforward example is that of a household head. A household head is the person who is responsible for the house, such as the lessee who pays the rent and other accounts. If the house is in their name, they are the boss for it. Within the household they hold sway, no matter what their sex, age, generation, kin relationship to other members, or status in any other context: they can allocate food or beds, decide who can stay and who cannot, and kick people out who are fighting or creating a disturbance in other ways.

There are other spatial areas which constitute people as "owners". A person is boss, for example, of their own room at home or their office or, if an office is shared, the boss is the senior of the employees sharing the space. The Koorie Housing Company directors are bosses for Erambie generally. Company directors have a right to ask people to clean up areas they have been using or move from the park when requested – providing the requests are seen as a legitimate exercise of their role.

The significance of land in the Koori perception of their domain is poorly understood by Europeans, especially as this relates to authority relations. What has come to be known as historical association, in contrast to traditional rights, is undervalued in terms of its consequences for social organization and the construction of social identity. Wiradjuri people identify strongly with place – their places of birth and residence and with the network of Wiradjuri communities with which most have strong kin links. The very complex land-people relationships of other
parts of Australia show that various rights in land may be acquired through different means – inheritance, conception dreaming, birthplace, residence, marriage and burial places of one's kin (see, for instance, Bell 1983). Association with place is still influential in determining Koori bosses. Links with land have been transformed from traditional tribal lands to pastoral stations and then to reserves and camping places as Wiradjuri people continued to experience dispossession through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the significance of a land base in the formation and expression of social identity has not changed. Even when restricted to living on a small reserve, a concept of ownership, of belonging and of identity endured in very tangible forms.

"We are Cowra from way back" is a frequent means whereby some Kooris are able to assert prior or primary rights based on "ownership" of place. It denotes the right to make decisions or statements affecting the spatially defined Koori domain – the mission in particular. It is a statement made to other Kooris or occasionally to Europeans who could be expected to understand its implications. These Kooris' genealogies bear out their claims to a long standing relationship with the area, hence the increasing importance of compiling them. As the composition of the local community becomes more mixed and dealings with Europeans often cut across Koori principles of structuration, the exercise of authority associated with place now requires occasional legitimation.

People also own knowledge – of stories and interpretations of history. A person can be the boss for the telling of particular stories, or for making decisions as to who to include or exclude in the recounting of "shared history". One older Koori expressed
great concern at the number of Kooris who shared events of the past with Gabbas, especially if they would then be written up as a white person's account of "Koori history".

The authority stemming from knowledge of history refers to people who claim long-standing historical links with Cowra and Erambie. These people belong to core kin networks - those people who are deemed to belong to the original land holding networks, families who have been in Cowra for as long as anyone can remember. They derive their influence through their claim to a longer shared history. These people are also more likely to have kin links with other geographically relevant communities, who are part of the wider Wiradjuri shared history and this further reinforces their influence.

The people who are bosses for knowledge of history are often those referred to by some Kooris as "elders". These are people who have retained or acquired some knowledge of tribal lore and language or have respect and authority which are widely accepted within and often beyond a domain. The use of this term causes some concern at times. One Cowra Koori noted that there were no elders until recently and believed the concept to have been introduced by Europeans: who is an elder and what status they have is ambiguous. Some Kooris use the term selectively and others very generously when referring to older people. The same reluctance to use labels such as "boss or "leader" also applies to "elder": it implies an authority which people may want to keep more ambiguous. However, its use has become a means of demanding from Europeans the recognition of a distinctive Koori knowledge and authority held by older Kooris which Europeans are expected to respect.

One woman in Cowra mourned the fact that, unlike other communities, they have no elders now, none who remember the old
tribal ways. The Wiradjuri area does have few such people as compared, for instance, with the south and north coastal areas of New South Wales. This is most likely to be due to the different ways in which Europeans these colonized areas, and thus to different relations developed with Aboriginal people. One factor may be the disproportionate number of children from the Wiradjuri area who were taken into care by the Aboriginal Welfare Board (Read 1983, nd). This would have disrupted Wiradjuri socialization processes and the handing over of knowledge. The sense of loss Wiradjuri people express has strengthened their resolve to facilitate the "re-ownership" of knowledge. Kooris involved in this process - in the writing up of historical material or site recording and protection - claim long-standing Wiradjuri links.

b) Owners of resource channels

Whilst Wiradjuri people may not claim many "tribal elders", it could be argued that they have, instead, a great number of people with skills in negotiating with the European domain. This gives rise to another, often more important in real terms, type of "boss" based on the ability to secure allocations of resources from Europeans. Authority is based on long term relations with the European domain, as mediators, trusted employees, or fellow workers, which produce tangible, usually material, benefits for Kooris.

Stories about leaders of the past frequently focus on their achievements in negotiating better deals for Kooris from Europeans. They are usually remembered as people who had the ability to obtain and then to redistribute resources obtained from the European domain. The emphasis is on what they did for Kooris: improvements which they had initiated, the skills they had
acquired, and influential Europeans they had developed as sponsors. They were all people seen to be capable and willing to fight for their rights in whatever manner seemed applicable. They were "the battlers" who worked to make things better for everyone and Kooris note that they were also regarded highly by Europeans.

Ernie 'Buffalo' Whitty is frequently mentioned. He belonged to a "Cowra from way back" family and was related in some way or another to everyone on the mission up until the time the "visitors" started coming in. He is credited with many improvements in the lot of the Cowra Kooris in the days of the mission managers, with establishing good rapport with whites and for his fairness. He is frequently given as an example of a man who could regulate intra-domain affairs and whose intervention was legitimated: "He was a man everyone could look up to and it didn't matter whether you were related to him or not". 'Buffalo' Whitty was instrumental in putting pressure to bear to get a telephone put on the mission, thus providing Kooris with a link to the 'outside world' which did not have to depend upon a manager.

Those who have long been the negotiators with the outside world have more control over access to European-derived resources – which essentially means services from town or government. In one family this can be documented back to the 1890s and the start of Erambie. They are thus the more obvious decision-makers and as such are involved in various ways in the organizations set up within the community. They need not necessarily have any public role, although several are or have been employees or office bearers in locally-based Aboriginal organizations.

These people are looked to when decisions have to be made or problems arise which affect relations with the outside world rather than those arising out of intra-domain relations. The major
resource or skill they offer is their experience at dealing with Europeans in different contexts. They can assist others who want access to resources but lack the requisite skills. As people through whom allocations from the European domain are channelled they become intra-domain allocators and thus have some control over supplies that come into the community (see also, Chapter 10). There is also what could be called a set of intermediary people of influence, those who have influence with these bosses but do not themselves have external contacts or resources.

c) Ownership of skills and personal characteristics

Demonstrated proficiency will often constitute someone as the boss for a particular activity, particularly if the skill is augmented by a force of personality which is able to motivate others to participate. An obvious example is in sporting contexts. A good footballer or netball player who is able to get a team together and sustain its performance is accorded an authoritative position for that activity. The recognition of such a person may result in the activity only being engaged in when that person is around: "If only Ben was in Cowra, we'd be able to get a team together". This may inhibit others even in this person's absence as they may be seen to be usurping another's position. It is an authority which is often delegated. Ben may state on a visit home: "You should get Tommy to pull a team together".

A person may also have an authority which derives from people's perception that they constitute an activity as meaningful in some way. Terry may be seen as indispensable to a fun drinking session, or Sarah to a good card game. If they are otherwise occupied, the event may not transpire or will seem lack-lustre for the remaining participants. When they are present, they are able
to define events to a large extent: determining who will participate, where an activity takes place and when it will end.

8.1.3: Constraints on the exercise of authority

a) Accountability

These means of attaining authority are not mutually exclusive. The more claims a person can make, the greater their authoritative capacity. Nevertheless, they are seldom concentrated in one person. There are several constraints on the exercise of authority which are designed to curb any tendency for leadership to become centralized or hierarchized. At the same time, this ensures that people retain control over their own spheres of activity. The emphasis Kooris place on bosses as enablers or helpers acts as a constraint on people who might seem to "get too big for their boots". Bosses, in any context, have to be accountable and their authority is not automatically ascribed, even in the case of senior kin. To the extent that any activity consists of a particular structure of relationships, meanings and roles are constituted within that context. The person who is looked to as the boss for an activity is defined in terms of that activity. If one is not part of it, one has no right to intervene, to determine events or to give opinions.

One must be able to respect someone who claims to act on behalf of others and a fall from grace is not tolerated kindly. People accorded the right to act authoritatively in a situation must not be seen to be self-centred or usurping their position. They must be perceived as having the interests of other participants at heart. There is a reluctance on the part of some Kooris to take on positions of authority in certain contexts as the responsibilities involved may have an adverse effect on one's
social relations. Inevitably many decisions will be unpopular with some. For instance, there is an expectation on the part of kin that they will get preferential treatment from a person in authority but also a demand from distant or non-kin that they get equal treatment. Conflict and criticism are inevitable: resources are not without their limits. This applies as much to who will be included in the sharing of a flagon of wine as it does to who will be allocated new housing.

In the first allocations of new housing in 1980 and 1981 there were accusations by Kooris that the housing committee was favouring its own "relations". These accusations had a basis in fact: the first allocations were made to people who were close kin of the committee. Members of the committee, on the other hand, pointed out that houses were allocated according to two criteria: first, the order in which applications were received and, second, need (priority going to those in the worst housing conditions at the time). It is undoubtedly also true that those on the committee, and those of their kin, were more aware of the processes involved and thus likely to be quicker off the mark. Such criticisms have become less frequent now that there is more housing available - and the newer batch of houses is regarded as superior. Thus, those who had to wait longer often got houses that were better designed and equipped.

Grumbling about bosses is not the same as challenging their positions. It is designed more to keep things in order - a kind of watching brief. Complaints I heard were not about the people concerned in general terms or their right to their positions but what some saw as an abuse of that position in terms of unequal distribution of resources. One woman believed, for instance, that when gifts were donated to the community at Christmas for
distribution to the children that they were sorted by the Koori organizers first and the best items kept aside. She did not substantiate this comment: it was more an expectation of what she believed would happen in the normal course of events—and perhaps what she would do herself under the same circumstances. Nevertheless, she was referring to the obligation that those who have access to resources which are to be shared (as a condition of their receipt) should share them.

Authoritative people are just as vocal in their complaints about others lack of involvement and unwillingness to shoulder the load of responsibility—not attending gatherings, not speaking up at meetings, not joining others for a drink, or choosing to sit and gamble when there are jobs to be done. In other words, they are critical of actions (or the lack of) on the part of others which would otherwise help to legitimate their activities. Members of the Koori domain know each other well and will perceive the difference between withdrawal of support, a recognition of a division of labour, or a lack of interest.

The exercise of authority is dependent upon having a sufficient degree of support from others. Kooris frequently refer to the option people have resorted to from time to time to "vote with their feet." Moving out of the community or refusing to attend functions is one response to people who get "too big for their boots." Co-operative effort is based very much on personal allegiances and individually defined priorities rather than on strength of community loyalty. The most effective sanctions available to individuals are to ignore people trying to impose their will or to refuse to co-operate—a technique also used in relation to unwelcome decisions imposed by Europeans, although the latter often misinterpret it as apathy.

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The structuring of kin and community relations also influences the social arenas in which people participate. Certain people may not wish to work with "them lot" - people with whom they are not related. If they do so, they may receive criticism from their own kin, being accused of being "up themselves" or "letting that mob fill your head with their ideas". The involvement of a person with another "mob" may constitute a threat to others in that it has the potential to rearrange habitual patterns of social intercourse and to challenge the position or authority of bosses. Working in town, or leaving for another city or town, may be easier and less disruptive on one hand. In this way people can return to visit the community on the usual or established terms without disturbing the status quo. On the other hand, it may weaken the authority of bosses both with and beyond the community when it is known that others refused to having anything to do with them.

Several of the recent arrivals in Cowra are to some extent spatially and socially dislocated. If they are Wiradjuri they have distinct advantages over those who are not because they will undoubtedly find more kin links which will bond them and through which they can operate. Also, they can identify with the Wiradjuri shared history. Those with little decision-making power, or access to decision-makers, are the non-Wiradjuri, particularly those who have not made advantageous marriages. This would also include those who are of Wiradjuri descent but who have chosen not to identify with the Koori domain, or those who are ambivalent.

The "visitors" constituted a threat to Koori perceptions of their domain. The visitors were not constrained to observe local principles of authority legitimation, and were excluded from access to positions of authority available to local Kooris. They
acted with a degree of independence and could not be called to account as effectively: they were not part of the established "pecking orders". I was approached from time to time to act as an intermediary when a Koori without such links perceived my relationships, and thus ability to intercede, with the appropriate bosses as being potentially more effective. The requests ranged from obtaining invitations to parties to people who wanted urgent consideration for new housing. I possibly also offered an indirect route, enabling others to avoid any shame which might have been occasioned by the giving or receiving of a refusal to the request.

Although prestige may be accorded others who have moved from non-Wiradjuri areas and who have gained general respect, it will not enable that person to achieve much influence unless they have married into a core network. Marriage links can help to expand this core but spouses and affines are rarely involved in decision-making processes to the same extent. Even when they take active roles in domain affairs they tend to avoid confrontation or seeming to be "pushy", although their right to intervene strengthens with age and length of residence. Core network members, on the other hand, are accorded more right to make decisions involving others and to challenge and make demands of people to a greater extent.

One man mentioned to me during a discussion on fighting that "there are two different factions up here - but you'd know about that as you mix with them both". He appeared to be referring to the fact that he resents the authority exercised by certain others and has no recourse to an alternative power base himself. He wanted more independence and not to have to account to Kooris whose boss-ship he did not sanction but by whom he was employed. Complex kin links, marriage alliances and individual interests and
participation do not give any neat picture of factions as
dissentious and identifiable groups. Although it can often matter
whom one is related to, most people have various options available
to them to maximize or manipulate relationships.

b) Age and sex

An evident constraint on who may hold a position which
involves a decision-making capacity for the Koori domain generally
is that of age. This applies particularly to ownership of
historical knowledge and dealings with Europeans. Many young
people have demonstrated leadership capacity and have responsible
and demanding jobs but they are often serving "apprenticeships" as
far as the community as a whole is concerned. The more highly
respected decision-makers are over 40 years of age and more often
over 50, although occasionally younger people in core kin networks
do acquire influence.

Older people, the generation of grandparents or even great-
grandparents, exercise considerable influence in their own kin
spheres but they are not necessarily perceived as being bosses in
other contexts. In everyday speech there is a distinction made
between "the old people" or "elders", implying authoritative
people, and "older people" as a general category denoting age.
Although some Kooris do refer to all older people as "elders", it
was evident that age in itself does not ascribe positions of
authority. How bosses are succeeded on their retirement or death
does not follow a pattern.

The most influential people in both Cowra and other Wiradjuri
areas are often women. It is widely asserted, by both men and
women, that Wiradjuri women were largely responsible for the
maintenance of a corporate and cohesive social life during the
mission era when many men were away working. Today, women describe themselves as in partnership with men. Some tasks or knowledge, such as information about certain sacred sites and traditional spiritual beliefs, are still regarded as the perogative of men and to be avoided by women. It is difficult to tell whether this attitude has been passed down through the years or has been recently asserted on the basis of increasing knowledge of practices in other parts of Australia. Either way, there is a more recent "counter-movement" in which women are tending to emphasize that there are also women's sites and women's knowledge. In the absence of traditional frameworks concerning ownership of country and knowledge, avoidance is a way in which possibly contentious issues concerning beliefs or their oral transmission are handled.

It has become fashionable to stress the role and influence of Aboriginal women vis-à-vis men as a response to androcentrism in anthropological literature and observations of Cowra Koori women would seem on the surface to reinforce the view that the authoritative influence of women has been undervalued. Recent literature from other parts of Australia is tending to emphasize the dual dynamic in interdependent male-female relationships in Aboriginal societies and the co-operative nature of many of their enterprises (Hamilton 1981; Bell 1983). Wiradjuri women demonstrate a great deal of autonomy and decision-making power. On the other hand, it is possible to argue that women attain their positions of power only by virtue of their status as daughter, wife or mother. This would be what Friedl (1975:137) referred to as "quasi-inheritance" - as the only way, in the modern industrial world, in which women could gain political office:

In societies such as the United States, where political power is routinely achieved by men in competition with other men, a woman closely connected with a prominent
man may upon his death inherit his male prerogative for office, and may in a sense be freed from the political curse of her femininity.

There are no sanctions operating amongst Cowra Kooris which expressly discourage women from positions of leadership. They are certainly more conspicuous when there is an absence of older men. In such cases, women who are the wives or mothers of men who would have taken up these roles but have died, or who are too young, may be exercising the role until an appropriate male successor does emerge. Given that the life expectancy of women is greater than for men, this would often be the case. Even where men do fill these positions, women retain their right to speak out, disagree or act autonomously. Women are often regarded as the better organizers, by both men and women: they are the ones more able to "get things moving."

8.2: Averting threats to one's domain

8.2.1: The maintenance of the domain of self

The way in which Kooris legitimize the exercise of authority ensures that the domain of self is protected from the undue intrusions of others. In limiting the authority of bosses to spheres of specific ownership, and making them accountable if they are to continue to exercise their roles, Kooris strengthen their perceptions of self-in-control.

Because no person is conceded the right to make decisions which appear to redefine other people's domains, Kooris see themselves as free to accept or ignore directives. There is a joke solidly grounded in fact that it is impossible to get anyone to do anything when there is a card game in process or a serious drinking party. No matter how important a meeting or other function might be, which had been planned perhaps at the request
Kooris themselves, no one can be coerced let alone persuaded to
give up their rights to decide how to spend their time. They will
work out their own priorities in any particular situation.
Decisions may be made without them but they can later say that
others had no right to hold a meeting at an inconvenient time,
especially if they knew people had commitments. It could be
assumed that an activity might loose its appeal when there were
other important issues at hand but attendance may signify a form
of deference (for example, to white officials) which runs counter
to other values. To hold a meeting on pension day, for instance,
when there is shopping and catching up with people to be attended
to, represents a refusal to acknowledge prior and long established
social engagements – in other words, a lack of consideration for
others. That there may be white people involved who do not
appreciate such priorities is of little account: they too have to
learn that Kooris cannot be dictated to.

In practice, the impossibility of independence from social
constraints is counter-balanced by the value Kooris place on
sharing as the right to demand from privileged or favoured others
(see Chapters 9 and 10). This is a means of acknowledging
interdependence without adopting a deferential position in a
relationship. Deference implies unequal power and thus a lack of
ability to define one's own way of being. One Wiradjuri man
described Kooris to me as anti-authoritarian, attributing this to
their harsh treatment by agents of white society, such as the
police, over the years. However, it is consistent with their own
value system and is not restricted to relations with Europeans. To
submit to the authority of others is to concede dependency.
Someone who allows themselves to be stood over is narrabung, a
poor fool: "You can't do nothing for them". More forceful Kooris
also have their rights: it is not their fault if they are allowed to stand over others.

Although people may try to resist any action on the part of others which looks like an attempt to stand over them, or to impose a definition of them, in practice this happens all the time. There are various ways of refusing to accept a relationship of deference: the withdrawal of support, complaining bitterly and vocally while complying (children often do this in the home), challenging someone to a fight, or just ignoring them. The latter is common, expressed in phrases such as "Let 'em go, see if I care what they do", or "All that's got nothing to do with anything, they just want to play at being big shots - 'lot of hot air, I say". Non-involvement can effectively curb the power of others or, if it does not, justifies later complaints about the outcome of actions: "See, they didn't listen to me so what do they expect". These are means of refuting action of the part of others which is perceived as unacceptably definitional or coercive, and thus of protecting the domain of self.

Non-involvement does not always imply lack of interest. It may demonstrate confidence in those acting on their behalf: "They don't need me there, dear ... Charlie knows how I feel anyway". Some people participate less often in meetings concerned with domain affairs because they say their opinions will be of little consequence. In fact, this is probably not the case to the extent that they claim as the more authoritative people have obligations which require them to listen to and consider others. They can only maintain their positions if they are seen to be doing the job expected of them.

The refusal to accept guest status has meant that some people find themselves located in relationships they find unacceptable.
If they are unable to challenge the status quo, they frequently move out and establish alternative domains (see also, von Sturmer 1984c). The search for an independent power base provided people who moved with the impetus to set up of some of the many Aboriginal political and service organizations throughout the State, as well as relocations to towns and cities where there were previously few Aboriginal residents. Sometimes such moves are in direct competition with other authoritative people or kin networks but diversification and relocation have not necessarily been seen as problematic by Kooris. Those who move elsewhere to "do their own thing" are rarely discouraged. In fact, these are often means of avoiding tensions, and perhaps confrontations, for both those who leave and whose who stay. It doesn't matter how many domains are established, only that one's own is secure. What started as splinter groups in different areas are starting to become united as independent but affiliated bodies. The Aboriginal Legal Services, now with a national secretariat, and different localized communities joined at a regional land council level, are examples.

The option "to go your own way" or to "do your own thing" may mean a fissioning process or simply non-involvement. Splitting is common. However, this is not an heretical "following after other doctrines or mores", but "schismatic fissioning", "a following after other leaders without a change in dogma" (Bateson 1973:51). This distinction suggests a reason for European concern and preoccupation with factionalism or divisiveness amongst Aborigines. Dissent and conflict are interpreted, usually incorrectly, as heretical divisiveness when they should be regarded in terms of power struggles between people with the same basic orientations: they are conducted within a world of shared meanings and, if potentially disintegrative, the issue which must
be addressed is not so much this as the incorporation mechanisms which work against these disintegrative tendencies. To interpret Koori conflicts as a sign of anomie is to downgrade and misunderstand Koori social organization. Kooris often take pains to repudiate the anomic view held by both Europeans and some Aboriginal people by asserting their similarities and corporateness. This, however, produces an apparent contradiction if Europeans interpret this as meaning that Kooris do not, or should not, have divisions and conflicts. It creates problems for people who cannot reconcile how, on the one hand, Kooris can assert that they are all one and, on the other hand, fight or row with each other.

Kooris do not deny the existence of schisms within their domain. In fact, they often encourage them as being an affirmation of self (or group) vis-à-vis others. However, dissention or divisions may, if they come to the attention of European administrators of Koori affairs, affect allocations. For Kooris themselves, they are the outcome of different power bases and, however much they may feel they ought to be working together, they are very reluctant to relinquish a power base in order to do so. This is evident not only within a Koori domain but between Koori domains throughout the State and interstate.

The lack of overt conflict or power struggles in the case of Cowra does not mean that individuals or families who do not belong to the "elite" boss category have not wanted or had opportunities to develop competitive avenues of access in the past but only that, in the Cowra case, this has not been actualizable and they have usually left Cowra to establish themselves elsewhere. The reasons for leaving are often clearly expressed: "because you can't do anything up there", "'cos I'd never get a job if I
stayed". People do not necessarily identify explicitly that there are power inequalities at the heart of their grievances. Sometimes this is out of a belief that they should not communicate divisiveness to Europeans. Sometimes it is because they are not prepared to acknowledge their non-acceptance of others' authority to make decisions for them. Stated reasons may refer to the desire for better housing or to be closer to other kin. They resolve the potential conflicts by opting to move out and retain greater independence - to do their own thing, similar to moves made by the fringe dwellers of the past.

8.2.2: Appeal to the European domain

There were few sanctions available to leaders in the mission era other than those based on kinship and locality allegiances. For the most part these seem to have been restricted to refusing exchanges (of money, food or alcohol) or making people feel unwelcome to participate in activities they plan. However, sanctions are increasing now that Kooris have more control over affairs in their own domain. Local Aboriginal organizations are now the major employers of Kooris and the owners of Koori land and housing. Sanctions are thus made available through the adoption of European-style structures, backed by authority emanating from the European domain.

A recently developed means of applying recognized sanctions is the power vested in The Koori Housing Company. Although also limited in its powers of jurisdiction, the responsibility for housing building programmes, allocation and maintenance gives the Housing Company enforceable sanctions for exercising control, such as summoning people who damage property or threatening to deprive them of housing if they do not pay rent or are creating a
disturbance. It may also choose to use the powers vested in European agencies (the legal system, local Shire Council requirements or those of a government funding body) as a back-up. They have on one occasion charged a community member with property damage which occurred during a domestic fight. The husband wilfully caused considerable damage to the house (which was in his wife's name) and the Housing Company took him to court. Once he had paid his fine (this took several weeks) he returned to his wife on the mission and no more was said. Property damage is not a factor in many fights. However, this case did serve as a deterrent as one now occasionally hears reference to Housing Company action, not just in relation to court summonses but also to their right to refuse rental accommodation or to evict tenants. Thus the Housing Company is in charge of a vital resource, and has recourse to European enforcement agencies if required to enable it to take appropriate action against offenders (for instance, for non-payment of rent). In fact, the Company is under pressure from the Aboriginal Development Corporation, as its major funding body, to apply sanctions.

The extent to which external authority sources (such as the police or government agencies) are called upon is more a matter of strategy now. There is nothing to prevent Kooris from using the legal or welfare systems as sanctions but they prefer not to, although they use the potential as a threat. A mother perceived as neglecting her children may be threatened with welfare proceedings by other female kin, or a wife may threaten to leave her husband and take legal action to deny him access to their children. Occasionally this type of action is taken. As in the criticism of recourse to third parties in fights, there is disgust or dismay expressed in contexts where outsiders are asked to intervene when
Kooris feel they could have adequately dealt affairs internally.

Kooris have been able to exploit various relations set up with different Europeans as individuals or organizations, allowing some independence of authority relations within the Koori domain. This can provoke tensions if resources received from one source are not shared, or if the avenues constitute a threat to the Koori control of their domain. I was told the story of one Cowra woman who canvassed support from the Country Women's Association in town because she was told there was no house available for her on the mission. Pressure from the Association did result in her getting a house but she damaged her Koori social relations to the extent that life became uncomfortable. Although she won the right to remain on the mission she did not in fact stay long. The action had severely damaged her standing with other Kooris and a degree of bitterness is still evident among the women who recounted the story to me. They described her actions as an "Uncle Tom" approach. It encouraged the intervention of Europeans as definers of appropriate behaviour in the Koori domain and possibly seemed to set an unacceptable precedent.

The cultivation of independent sponsors by people who are not in decision-making roles can constitute a direct challenge and there are various ways in which this may be confronted: there may be attempts to discredit the sponsor, the sponsor may be taken over by decision-makers, or the Koori concerned may be ostracized so as to discourage others from disloyal activity.

Koori reminiscences about bosses of the past stress the fact that such people got things done by patient perseverance, not by "selling out" to whites. Status, for instance, in the European domain should not be aspired to at the expense of one's own people - if it results in a person ceasing to be part of Koori exchange
relations or if it does not include Kooris in its benefits. It is acceptable only to the extent that it augments the Koori domain in some recognizable way. Achieving fame is precarious in terms of inter-Koori relations. One is not respected for becoming "high and mighty" or a "big-shot", implying that the person has ceased to identify with their home community. Setting oneself up above others is never acceptable in any context and such people are referred to by Kooris as needing to "come back to earth".

A successful boss will maximize external resources in such a way that he or she does not appear to have incurred too great a debt to the providers. This is done by projecting affairs as under their control. They must seem to be maintaining a degree of autonomy – as it is the result of their efforts rather than those of others (such as Europeans as suppliers) which caused allocations of whatever kind to be made. Gabbas are thus seen only to be giving what Kooris demand as their due. The acknowledgement of indebtedness to Europeans would seem to imply that the whole community is in a dependent, inferior position as far as Europeans are concerned: there are too few avenues to square off debts (see Chapter 9). This is what Kooris mean when they refer to "selling out" to Europeans. They want to avoid methods of receiving money, goods or services which put them in an untenable position – unable to repay debts and thus maintain self-respect with its attendant notion of self-in-control. They also are highly critical of Kooris who exploit a "broker" position for their own ends (cf. Howard 1982 who has written on brokerage systems in other Aboriginal contexts): the results of interdomain action should be able to be experienced by others, not just by an individual or their close kin. This may also be a reason why Kooris describe and demand allocations from government as compensation for past ill-
treatment. The right to receive negates the obligation to return in kind – the money is the return not the incurring of a debt.

However, the significance of different Europeans as allocators changes over time. Valued opportunities Kooris have had in the past to develop alternative avenues of sponsorship have decreased as Europeans increasingly perceive the government as the adequate and appropriate (and often too generous) supplier. The Land Rights legislation limits many of the options available in the past by setting up indivisible channels by which key resources are allocated. The potential for conflicts within the Koori domain increases: Kooris are constrained from exercising a variety of options and dissent is turned inwards. Government grants administered by specified Kooris not only makes these Koori allocators more accountable to government officials but also puts them in the firing line as far as other Kooris are concerned. The prophecy of some members of the Wiradjuri Land Council prior to the passing of the Act, that it would bring about more conflict between Kooris, and thus contribute to government control on a divide-and-rule basis, has been demonstrated in some areas and is challenging Kooris to devise new forms of conflict resolution.

In the past, limited but varied types of allocations ensured a structurally imposed equality of sorts: they limited aspirations, ensured certain levels of redistribution and camouflaged contradictions. This may not be possible in the future. The media have already been quick to pounce on anything that looks like favouritism or nepotism amongst Aborigines: it has been assumed that this is a contradiction of Aboriginal values but in fact it is due to a flaw in the image which Europeans have had of Aborigines (see further, Chapter 10). Keateven (1984:144) noted a similar feature among Aboriginal people in western Arnhem Land.
She maintained that structures designed to disburse mining money did not reflect Aboriginal social organization (1984:144-5):

The norm for communal goods (such as an outstation vehicle) is for one person, or one family, to monopolise its use, and be effective bosses for it. Individuals on community councils are likely to spend money on items from which they can derive particular benefit. In other words, there is a pre-existing framework for channels that may not be obvious to non-Aborigines, especially if they believe in a false view of Aboriginal society as egalitarian, sharing, communistic, and altruistic.

Diversification and differentiation among Aborigines have not been valued on the whole by Europeans, although they have valued competition and avenues of dissent in political and economic relations and in policy in non-Aboriginal fields. Instead, the European reaction has been to condemn Aborigines for divisions and differences: projecting a stereotype of egalitarianism onto Aborigines rather than recognizing social and political diversity.

Silverman (1969:102) maintains that negotiability in social relations, which he describes as the desire to "keep your options open", will obtain in either a relatively undifferentiated society with an ego-oriented structure or in a dependent unit of a colonial structure. Both are the case for Kooris. If politics is the study of the ways in which values are allocated in a society, one would expect a high degree of individual autonomy and negotiability only in societies in which there is a relatively high level of resources available to people as individuals - without them having to work through stratified channels to gain access (as, for instance, in many hunter/gatherer economies). Where access is restricted or a division of labour or individual ownership is highly specialized, certain resources can be acquired only through deferential relations. Differential access to Europeans has been encouraged by variations in the mode of colonization and in attitudes of colonizers in different areas.
Kooris have been able to exploit alternatives in their articulation with the European domain.

The host-guest relationship set up a stratified mutuality between groups: they retained their autonomy and discrete identity vis-à-vis each other. The proliferation of Aboriginal organizations achieves much the same, although not all kin networks have been in a position to create a bureaucratic or organizational niche. Many organizations are kin oriented. That is often the Koori way: it creates an accountable and known team, much as in a sporting context. Just as kin/locality sporting teams have been started up, first to express independence of whites and then of other Kooris, so with Aboriginal organizations. These are means of promoting domain or sub-domain autonomy, providing a power base through control of some allocations, providing for those to whom they are obligated, and defining people in new ways as hosts. No one group controls all others. They each tend to be doing their own thing in as many different ways as there are ideas and needs and kindreds. Hierarchization, in the sense that one person or group becomes the controller or definer for others, is limited to the extent that there are alternate avenues available to others, and that people will need access to resources controlled by others.

Although Kooris have been able to act out their notions of appropriate authority relations as far as some relationship sets are concerned, there is a pressure to change in order to conform to and accommodate European structures, a demand connected with the increased allocation of money from government sources. This requires adjustment by Wiradjuri people as European models often cut across Koori modes of interaction.

Changes can be anticipated within the Koori domain as they
seek to reconcile preferred modes of relating with the constraints introduced along with new resources. The Koori desire to improve their access to and control over resources of the European domain, such as housing and grants for business development and employment creation schemes, introduces disturbances to long-established patterns of relating. Channels of communication are formalized through the creation of European-designed organizations and new principles of structuration often remove ambiguities which camouflaged competitive relations in the past. Conflicts arise when avenues for boss-ship are curtailed or when the receipt of new resources does not have the desired consequences and bosses are perceived (often unrealistically) as not doing their job.

Recolonization of components of the European-shaped environment in terms of the Koori way of being highlights those areas in which Kooris are inadequately prepared, or unwilling or unable, to enter into the sets of relationships which the new resources demand. The fact that new housing means a Housing Company whose officers have hitherto unacceptable powers to sanction other community members was not appreciated and led to resentment. Each time Kooris gain access to new or increased resources, adjustments are required in their way of being and their principles of structuration. For Kooris, the adjustment process is complicated by their lack of control of resources in real terms. Contradictions in their way of being are inevitable.
8.1 Wiradjuri Regional Aboriginal Land Council Members
Wagga Wagga, December 1984

8.2 The Wiradjuri Regional Aboriginal Land Council Office
Taken in Wagga Wagga at the opening of the Regional building
December 1984
CHAPTER 9: WAYS OF BEING IN THE WIRADJURI DOMAIN

9.1: Economies of debt and obligation

9.1.1: Asking, giving and taking

Attempts to describe an apparent incoherence in the Wiradjuri domain in terms of (a) a reconstructed society that is neither traditional nor European, or (b) as often thwarted resistance, often fail to bring coherent meaning to Koori action because they lack a historical dimension and reduce Wiradjuri action to reaction. If we look at a deeper level, are there principles which connect the different strands of Wiradjuri life not only in the present but over time?

The two primary features which have been identified in other studies as having contributed to the construction of contemporary Aboriginal life in settled Australia are, first, the high value placed on family life as the way in which values could continue to be transmitted; and, second, the persistence of shared world-views to account for similarities between Aboriginal people throughout Australia: what Sansom (1982:127) refers to as "the pan-continental generation of essential similitude". The first is typified in Kitaoji's (1976:VII-58) study of the Aborigines of the Macleay Valley in which she maintained:

Aboriginal social identity survived even in the midst of social disorganisation on the basis of the family system. On it Aboriginal group survival and collective consciousness depended. It allowed regeneration of an internally defined nation, rather than an externally defined ethnic category. It also provided a social structure, internalised by individuals as a set of behavioural principles.

Sansom's (1982:122) theme is rather different. He goes deeper to look for the creation and perpetuation of "Aboriginal commonality". To him, the "recomposing household or fluctuating group" - Kitaoji's "family system" - is a method rather than an
explanation of the sustaining of Aboriginal ways of "doing business". Aboriginal business is seen to undergird such notions as the distinctive Aboriginal view of ownership. Sansom illustrates how the Aboriginal way of doing business has been transformed so as to give shape to contemporary Aboriginal social formations and to Aboriginal-European transactions. This is what Kitaogi seems to allude to when she mentions a "set of behavioural principles". I believe they are both referring to what Wiradjuri people call "the Koori way".

A certain way of being can be expected to characterize interactions within a domain and thus distinguish it from other domains. In previous chapters I have looked at principles of structuration within the Wiradjuri domain. In this chapter I focus on the distinctive "style" (see Sansom 1980:22) of Koori modes of interaction. Kooris share many elements of what Sansom (1982:117) describes as the Aboriginal commonality: sets of understandings that make them feel at home with other Kooris and also Aborigines in other parts of the country:

Aboriginal commonality comprehends things about life and the business of living with fellow Aborigines that a Fourth World people have in common right across an island Continent (1982:117).

This is what Barwick (1981:117) refers to as a "world-view based on common experience" but which I, using von Sturmer's expression (pers.comm 1986), refer to as a way of being. It is discerned in principles of Koori interaction rather than in formalized social structures or cultural activities. In Sansom's (1982) words again, it is the distinct Koori way of "doing business". Kooris do not use this expression. They refer to the "Koori way": "we'll do it Koori way"; "for a Koori it's different", "Kooris got their own way". The way Kooris perceive themselves in interactive contexts
is the basis they use for distinguishing the distinctiveness of their lifestyle as opposed to those of Europeans.

Koori action, relationships and thought are influenced by the interplay between the two dominant values of sharing and autonomy. In the kinship realm they ensure the maintenance of significant exchange relations whilst differentiating members and providing scope for individual flexibility. In the community they ensure a co-operative base while retaining the historically defined relationships with place which then structure relations between groupings. They ensure that leaders are not coercive but enabling and accountable. In each case these values shape the design and the constraints of both social relationships and the events in which people participate.

I refer to economies in this chapter as Koori modes of keeping tallies in social relationships - the distinctive ways in which they tackle contradictory demands and level up scores. An economy is a way of "making both ends meet" and thus of ensuring control. Myers (1976:523-4) has referred to similar dynamics in his discussion of Pintupi relations where the expression "squaring up" is used. Kooris have a similar notion, referring to means of "keeping things square" or asking, "Ok, are we even now?"

One of the major principles of interaction concerns the tension between wanting to assert one's autonomy and wanting to be included in social relations. Kooris continually balance these contradictory demands through systems of exchange based on debts, obligations and rights which bind people without submerging their sense of self. The economy of debts undergirds Koori social structures and social action.

In Sansom's (1982) discussion of Aboriginal concepts of ownership he makes the point that "for each category of Aboriginal
ownership there is a corresponding sort of debt" (1982:134). My focus here is on the Koori notion of debt. The general argument complements that of Sansom but it also extends it in that I perceive this notion as fundamental to an understanding of all Koori relations, not only those concerned with ownership - except insofar as ownership means any assertion of rights.

The proposition to be discussed here is that formulated by Mauss when he argued that:

Prestations which are in theory voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous ... are in fact obligatory and interested. The form is usually that of the gift generously offered; but the accompanying behaviour is formal pretense and social deception, while the transaction itself is based on obligation and economic self-interest (1970:1).

The extent of the economic dependence of Kooris on government and European sponsors has encouraged an intra-Koori economy which can be described as a system of commensality. By this I refer to those relations in which one party extracts from the other on the basis of a tenant or guest-type relationship. The dominant party, the host, is under an obligation to look after and provide for guests. The relationship is one of inequality but which enables the subordinate party to claim rights which are defined by the nature of the relationship itself. If, in the normal expectation of the host/guest relationship, there are opportunities to reverse the relationship from time to time - for the hosts to become guests, people can avoid fixed stratification on the basis of power and can continue to relate as relative equals. Intra-Koori relations are based on the concept of owner/non-owner of resources or on the privileges/obligations entailed in the host/guest relationship - in the obligation to share what one has gained by privilege. The fact of possession (= privileges) obligates the possessor to enter into exchange relations - or lose access to social relations.
This is the basis of a well developed economy of debts which operates between Kooris to extend sociality and maximize a person's life chances. It is the system Kooris refer to when they speak of sharing as one of their highest attributes. Kooris see consumption as a legitimate activity but only certain forms of accumulation are sanctioned as this leads to inequalities. Sharing or "doing things for" others has much greater status value than anything perceived as being solely for self-advancement (see also, Myers 1982). The "culture heroes" of the past are people like Windradyne who fought for his people; "Buffalo" Whitty who was instrumental in getting better conditions on the mission; those who could obtain alcohol from town which they were prepared to share, and so on. These people are respected locally more than some of the better known (among Europeans) Aboriginal people. Whilst Cowra Kooris may be given credit for the things they do for others elsewhere, the overall reaction to them is likely to be negative if this does not also include benefits experienced locally (directly or indirectly).

Kooris pride themselves on their sharing and the way in which they extend hospitality (see also, Eckermann 1980:96-99). They are not trusting of strangers, particularly whites, but once someone is accepted they extend the reciprocal relations which characterize their relations with each other. They use it as a means of distinguishing between themselves and Gabbas who they say do not share in the same way. Alongside this virtue is placed that of their treatment of kin relations, the primacy and caring shown to kin which they also feel is lacking amongst Gabbas - and even at times amongst other Kooris: "If they're at a 'do' together", explained one girl, "they (Cowra Kooris) will sit together - not like other blacks".

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Although sharing is an activity to which Kooris often refer, certainly not all agree that it characterizes Koori interaction. Kevin Gilbert (1977:1), a Wiradjuri Koori writer, maintains that it is "a fallacy". Part of the problem is that sharing is an inadequate translation of a complex Koori practice. It is similar to that described by Hamilton in Anbarra society (1981:151). She sees it as an activity based on relationship and need: "the one who has is obligated to give to the one who lacks as long as the latter indicates his desires". While a system of reciprocity has an expectation of like return, Koori sharing is primarily about the obligation to distribute (see also, Hiatt 1965:103). Some people are expected to share because of what and how they receive. Demands are both met and limited by employing a kinship paradigm which is both exclusive and hierarchical. One does not have to meet the demands of non-kin, but nor can one demand of them. The kin classification into which people are slotted, through use of a kin term, indicates the type of demands and the priority they must be given. It should be no surprise that attempts were made, from the early days of contact, to slot Europeans who had the potential to become sponsors or partners, into kin classes - the closer the better, although, as Peter Sutton (pers.comm 1984, see also 1978) has pointed out, Europeans were generally slotted into junior status in the adjacent descending generation.

It is not expected that Kooris should share indiscriminately with all but it is felt that no-one should go without because of the actions of another. This does not oblige someone to step in and assist a person missing out: others will heap a great deal of criticism and scorn on a person who is without resources as a result of not fulfilling his or her own responsibilities. Sharing refers to the expectation that people in a certain relationship
will meet the obligations of that particular relationship, in terms of asking, giving and taking. It does not imply that all relationships merit the same attention, or that those in other relationships have to help out when things are not right.

Genuine requests are rarely refused in times of real need unless the person asked simply does not have the wherewithal, although this may be dependent upon the kin relations and the extent to which people are felt to be able to make legitimate demands (for instance, if one is already in debt to them). Only some people may be approached in particular contexts. Providing for daily needs and bills, such as food, clothing, electricity and rent are the responsibility of those actually living in a household. Requests for items which may be procured through other avenues may be denied. Kin, for instance, may refer others to the Department of Youth and Community Services (who administer welfare payments and services) as the appropriate body to assist. Only if such avenues are unavailable would the request be considered. Major disasters such as fire will bring assistance in all forms from kin and non-kin alike. The need to pay for unexpected and costly funerals will also be shared between a wide range of kin and, occasionally, the community as a whole. Several Kooris have recounted the story of the old migrant fellow who died in town some years ago and was buried as a pauper. The Sergeant of Police at the time commented that "You wouldn't see that at Erabbie". One Koori said that in their case, "Even the old winos put in a few cents - what they have - in such times".

Generosity is valued but even this has limits which must be understood. Those who do not honour their debts, whether of money, hospitality, friendship or services, are regarded as bludgers. To extend further credit to them demeans the giver who is being
"conned". If a person persists in making demands on someone to whom he or she is in debt this denotes a lack of respect for the relationship. The requests are presumptuous and the indiscriminate giver probably "cought to wake up to him/herself" as they are being "too weak". In one case, a young woman with children was spending most of her pension on alcohol and expecting kin to provide her children with food. At first they did so for the sake of the children as they were concerned that "the welfare" would step in. However, the demands became so insistent that they stopped and the children were taken into state care. People are expected to keep their own affairs in order and there are limits to sharing if it encourages bludging.

There are no people in the community who do not have an income of some kind. Even children may exercise rights over child endowments and education supplements. If income is limited to the dole then people are expected to live accordingly. The person with resources (as perceived by the asker) who never shares or gives is regarded unfavourably because they are refusing to enter into a relationship pattern. Too much of what is perceived as selfishness or self-centeredness may cut them out of social interaction. People are often characterized as askers, "bludgers", or givers, and may be either "good" or "stupid" depending on context. This is a means of describing where one stands in relation to them. Not to share at all is not to relate. This leads to people being described as mean or as "all for themselves". These points are not restricted to the exchange of money but also to items such as food, clothing and alcohol, and to the use of vehicles, washing machines and lawnmowers. Exchange is also expected in terms of involvement in social activities generally, as in the willingness to help out or take on responsibility for functions.
However, over-giving is as demeaning to the giver as over-asking is to the bludger. The most respected people are those who give in appropriate circumstances, defined according to context, but are themselves rarely in a position of debt, which implies indebtedness. Nor do they create a situation in which others are indebted to them to the extent that the latter are shamed, humbled or made more than temporarily unequal. Borrowing or bludging small amounts - a couple of cigarettes, a couple of dollars, a can of beer - is usually unimportant unless it starts to happen consistently without return. Large unreturned gifts, or gifts which one is unable to return, can put great strain on a relationship.

It is generally accepted that if someone is loaned, for instance, money, the person to whom it is owed is responsible to ensure its return. The obligation to repay is not left to the spontaneity of the recipient: it has to be asked for. There appears to be an equalizing element in the act of asking in the first place and then in the asking for repayment. Thus on pension day there will be people who make sure they are outside the post office when someone gets their cheque - to make sure they get money owing to them, whether a loan or board, as soon as the cheque is cashed. If someone asks outright for a return of a loan the request should not be refused. To do so will constitute an insult if it is known that the person being asked has resources. Kesteven (1984:143) also noted this in western Arnhem Land:

It is pressure from a potential borrower which leads to sharing, not benevolence on the part of the person from when something is sought (in fact, it is more socially acceptable to lie about what one has than to refuse to share that which is known one has).

There are ways of getting around this without losing face - by claiming an inability to meet the demand because other commitments
must take precedence, or by stating that one does not have the required resources - money having to be been spent paying back-rent or a large electricity bill. This is obviously more difficult if the item requested is visible, sitting on the table at the time. The person asked can persuade the asker that visible items are the property of another ("That's not my two dollars, I'm only minding it for Annie") which one has no right to distribute. As long as such refusals are handled delicately they cause no offence - but they can lead to abusive insults and grievances, and sometimes to quarrelling or fighting.

Although these complex relations often lead to conflicts, it is evident that they have long been a feature of Koori modes of sharing and are not the result of current economic striagencies. Smyth (1878a:182) noted in the nineteenth century in New South Wales that the relationships of trade amongst Aborigines were complex and often carried out between third parties, "giving security to the tribes that there will be no collusion between their agents for their own private advantage". He also noted that the majority of quarrels arose from the refusal to barter or through events associated with the bartering process.

Those who ensure that they do not need to bludge to get through the fortnight retain more independence of action and more control over their own resources. It is harder to refuse someone to whom one has been in debt previously since this has built up a type of credit system. Those people who manage their affairs so as not to have to ask others for anything are in a position of power. It is a situation which creates inequality if others cannot establish claims of similar value. If carried too far it may create resentment and the persons concerned may become more and more removed from social relations generally. Such people are
occasionally referred to as being more like Gabbas, having learnt "Gabbas' ways". This points to the difficulty Kooris have in the European domain, in which gains are seen by Kooris to be made at the expense of others (including themselves), whilst they still attempt to remain part of the Koori world.

The basis for the assessment that Gabbas do not share is probably that the latter do not enter into the reciprocal sharing system of Kooris. Gabbas, as individuals and corporate bodies such as government, do give to Kooris - but in such a way that they assert their superior status and reduce avenues of repayment because they do not encourage social interaction such as visiting. The relationship is unequal. Kooris have many occasions when they ask from whites but the reverse is rarely the case. Having tried to be very independent during my fieldwork I could not help but notice the qualitative change in relationships with members of my household when my back-up savings were exhausted and I found myself running out of money for the first time. Until then I had not only been paying board but had been able to help out financially in other ways, as well as helping with cooking, shopping and running around in the car. My own desire not to be a burden had been creating a social imbalance I had not been aware of. I had assumed that paying my way set up an equal exchange but it was not perceived in this way. The payment created a relationship in which the householder was responsible for me - but she was given no opportunity to look after or care for me whilst I maintained self-sufficiency. I was not behaving like a guest, which implies expecting to be looked after. There was much more involved than me doing the right thing for the privilege of having a roof over my head. Indebtedness creates a closer relationship, albeit one with greater potential tensions. Kooris have a great
capacity for setting up situations — such as return visits — which avoid the relationship of inequality thus created from persisting over time. But if indebtedness is not created, there is no opportunity to extend the relationship, to reverse the roles. Kooris are thus willing to promote and incur debts as this is the basis of both present and future sociality.

The host role is a "looking after" one but it should not be one-sided. There should be appropriate occasions set up when the looked after can look after as well. Koori reciprocity does not necessitate equal return in kind but that return take place so as not to create inequalities which get out of hand. The person to whom one is indebted is in a position of power, at least momentarily. It is they, as much as the debtor, who should create the conditions in which the balance may be restored. When this is not the case, there is still a tendency to avoid having to accept stratified power relations. It may lead, for instance, to fissioning as groups or individuals move off to other areas where they can establish a new base. This may lead to a severing of the former relationships but more usually enables the fissioning group to re-establish greater equality vis-à-vis other groups through a competitive or complementary interdependence.

Europeans past and present have failed to appreciate the meaning and function of the debt in the Wiradjuri world. Giving to Kooris, far from promoting relationships with them, has preserved distance: whilst honouring the providing aspect of the role of host, Europeans allowed the interactive aspects to atrophy. They did not create the indebtedness of Kooris because of the ways in which they gave — as power holders with attitudes and values that Kooris saw as demeaning, not as hosts who cared for and would one day expect to be cared for. To give begrudgingly or in such a way

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that return is neither expected nor possible is to negate the properties of the gift in building relationships. There are few ways of making a return to Gabbas. The looking after role is an obligation for Kooris. The guest may legitimately expect certain attentions from people defined as hosts and the relationship is defined in this way. Whilst people do extend open invitations, it is the previous host who must take the initiative in actually visiting and restoring the balance in the relationship (as also evidenced in asking for the return of a loan) - to be in turn a guest and looked after.

Koori expectations of employers and white administrators of Aboriginal affairs make more sense if viewed in this light. They are very critical of the person who is in an authority position who does not enter into the looking after relationship. Anything else is hypocrisy. It creates a structural imbalance which breeds resentment - hence accusations that Kooris often seem ungrateful and unappreciative. They are not as tuned to giving profuse thanks (the expectation of gratefulness is itself demeaning) but to watching for opportunities to reciprocate. The reverse is more often the case among Europeans: they give thanks as a means of negating the obligations of reciprocity, possibly because the social arena does not always guarantee opportunities for return but also because they do not wish to remain indebted. Exchanges tend to be as immediate as possible - giving a return dinner party within a specified period of time, bringing wine to a party, or direct exchanges of Christmas or birthday gifts of equal value. That Kooris have no need to give thanks in such a way is an unstated understanding between them and an important basis of their sociality. It is based on an assurance that the relationships in question should continue. It is a significant
feature of kin relations and compounds the communication problems experienced in communities in which "visitor" Kooris or different "mobs" do not necessarily accept either kinship or host/guest definitions of their relationships with each other.

9.1.2: The self and the other

The Koori economy of obligations stems from their perceptions of the interplay between, on the one hand, sharing and indebtedness and, on the other, a high value placed on autonomy. The contradiction between these values leads to inevitable tensions as a result of the perceptions and demands of one person in relation to others.

Every Koori is considered unique. People are defined in relation to each other rather than in terms of roles and are thus not replaceable. Any change in personnel, whether by separation, relocation, death, or by divisive conflict results in shifts in social relations which affect a chain of relationships. One's place in the community is determined by a particular constellation of social relations based on various forms of exchange, and changes in allegiances or composition affect everyone.

The relationship between a person and their community of others is particularly evident in the emphasis placed on attendance at funerals. Such events have always been considered very important for Kooris and this expectation is not limited to close kin. It is a time when people are expected to indicate their respect for the deceased and also for each other – re-affirming in coming together their sense of oneness, re-established after the loss of a community member. The funeral is thus a healing time not only in terms of dealing with personal grief but also for a fractured community which needs to be rebound. It also explains
why weddings are relatively infrequent: the rite of passage is of less consequence as a marital union is recognized whether or not it is formalized. The relationships of exchange are already activated in the recognition stage: a wedding provides for a social get-together but without the significance that a funeral has for the society as a whole (see also, Sansom 1980).

The Koori working model of social relations has been described by von Sturmer (pers.comm. 1984) as an organic model in which inter-related but distinct parts make up a whole. People are differentiated one from another but as parts of one body. Each person is irreplaceable: a change in one of the parts necessarily means an adjustment of the whole. For Kooris, the middle-class European presumption that the self is changeable is regarded more as an insult, a sign of non-acceptance. It suggests a need to conform to another's expectations or to a societal norm or ideal. It thus denies the notion of autonomy as self-in-control. Kooris are reluctant to delve into the personal lives of others. There is little soul-searching in discussion, analyses of people's motives or suggestions as to how people might change. Hiatt (1965:111) observed this among the Gidjingali, where "people readily discussed most sexual behaviour but were reticent about motives".

Social conformity is perceived differently by Kooris. Reay (1963:20) described it in the following terms:

The attribution of cultural uniformity to the aboriginal tribe does not imply either a high degree of conformity with social rules or an exceptional standardization of human personality. Every anthropologist who has worked among Australian aborigines is aware of the often startling variations both in individual personality and in the extent to which different persons conform to social rules. Cultural uniformity is simply an identical cultural heritage. Cultural heritage includes modes of livelihood, material equipment, patterns of eating and drinking, religious attitudes (belief systems and ritual participation), and other bodies of cultural behaviour.
Reay has not identified the expectation that prevails amongst Kooris that people should be consistent: change is resisted, or at least not encouraged. Her emphasis on the activities in which people engage does not take the ways in which they engage in them sufficiently into account. Reay does, however, note a difference between Aboriginal notions of conformity and those expected of people in the European domain. The Western world is generally described as stressing individuality, the right of people to be different, but in fact it places great emphasis on social conformity ("living up to the Jones's") - as evidenced in socialization processes (see also, Hamilton 1981:150). The conformity expected is to a socially defined ideal model which can become a straitjacket for action and behaviour, even for personality development. Psychiatrists and psychologists are employed to help people fit back in. People are protected by society to the extent to which they conform, which in turn reduces the obligations of individuals to each other.

Among Kooris, however, individuality implies the right of the individual to be what they are, however different this might make them. They acknowledge great differences between each other all the time (see Barwick 1981:75). What they are encouraged to conform to is the pattern of actions and attitudes by which they become known and which has been encouraged from early childhood. Kooris are not as tolerant of changes in others. There has, for instance, often been amused scepticism expressed by Kooris at the conversion of others to fundamentalist Christian sects: "There's no way you can tell me they've given up their bottle for a Bible - see if it lasts first! I wouldn't trust them if I were you". Kooris tend to label others and the labels tend to stick: "Oh, she's a noisy one, that one, you won't shut her up", or "Thinks
he's a big man already, he'll be standing over them all, you wait and see". A self-fulfilling prophecy goes to work as a result. There is no way in which people cannot fit in in such a system - no ideal to aspire to with its inevitable casualties. Kooris can accommodate a variety of personalities, activities and beliefs. There is an acceptance of people on the grounds that "that's just the way they are". If a person is "silly in the head", he or she demands certain responses which are well known. There are givens which have to be accepted: they are part of an immutable personality structure. Often, when querying the reasons for a person's actions or behaviour, I have been told "Well, it's in their blood, you see". This means, of course, that people are expected to be predictable. Change or conversion means that others would have to re-orient themselves as well - to change themselves and their attitudes accordingly.

Evaluations of people's actions, whether positive or negative, are usually situation-specific. Someone may be regarded as a shameful fighter but honourable parent, or good at talking up in meetings but not reliable. Judgments about actors as against actions are not equated as they tend to be in Western thought (see Barwick 1981:23). The right to be, the recognition that some people are the way they are, the refusal to accept another's right to define one (even though others have in fact helped to create what one is), maintains belongingness at the same time that it promotes autonomy. Kooris learn to live with each other, not just next door to each other.

One reflection of this is the lack of fantasy in stories and general conversations. Stories are about real events and real people - with sufficient drama, adventure, suspense and humour to render fantasy irrelevant. The closest that a conversation got to
fantasy was talking about what someone would do when they won the lotto, but even this is a potential actuality – one Cowra Koori won $10,000 and another $2,000 during my field work. Fantasy implies an ideal state: that someone can actually be something other than they are. The acceptance of the actual renders fantasy unappealing although it may also be seen by Europeans as promoting apathy, a lack of achievement orientation or lack of concern for the future.

Changes in the self are those that come about with age – not through an emphasis on formal teaching or on psychoanalysis. An enquiring child's questions are answered. If they do not ask they miss out. In this way Kooris recognize a child's potential or lack of it early in life and respond to him or her accordingly. The process of learning is a natural one, not based on competition with others or on a reward–cost schedule (Brittan 1973:142-3). In comparison with European values regarding learning and personal improvement, this may seem very limiting. However, viewed in the Koori context, the differences may be understood in terms of their particular constellation of values. Kooris do not attribute the inability of a person to attain what is seen as their potential to these features of their own value system but to the non-nurturative aspects of the environment in which they live. Failure is, for instance, because of discriminatory attitudes on the part of school teachers or employers. Nevertheless, Kooris do not express a belief that everyone should achieve certain similar goals: there is room for differences. The assessment of which activities or behaviours cause the group as a whole to suffer and thus warrant the penalization or ostracism of the "offender" differ from those of Europeans. European-defined social impediments (such as illiteracy, heavy use of alcohol or early
childbearing) do not carry the same meanings for Kooris. As Brady (1983:7) noted in the north of Australia, people are regarded as having a right to drink and others have no right to interfere. The denial of a person's right to be and to do their own thing, no matter what inconvenience they cause, necessarily puts the whole notion of rights in jeopardy.

"Yarning on" and story-telling revolve around actions which are seen as legitimately public but these do not extend to gossip or discussion of differences. Silverman (1969:104) maintained that gossip was a means by which information enabling the assessment of others' dispositions could be obtained, and important where there was no patterned system of expectations. The patterns of expectations are reasonably clear in the case of Kooris and stories rather than gossip can achieve the same purposes. Stories are about events rather than opinions and judgments even if the net result communicated is the same. On occasions when others are talked about who are not present there will be a tentative, initially non-evaluative feeler statement to test the reactions and involvement of the listener - who may respond positively by involving themselves in the talk, or negatively by cutting off further discussion through an abrupt change of topic. This can even be direct: a clear statement that such things or such people should not be talked about, at all or in present company. This testing is essential. Trust is given only after long acquaintance and even where kin are concerned, the multiple allegiances involved may require caution. The extent to which individuals were prepared to "have a good yarn" in my presence, or to include me as an informant/listener changed over time as I got to know people better. It is a system of calculated risks. Failures are evidenced in the challenges to fight over insults that have been
heard through the grape-vine. Malicious gossip or scandalmongering
have the potential to backfire and a major deterrent is that they
establish the person concerned as someone not to be trusted.

Insistence on rational decision-making or the discussion of
differences may also threaten people's sense of self (see also,
Levy 1973:217). When people are asked questions they either do not
wish to answer or do not want to commit themselves to they will
ignore the question or change the subject, coming back to it, if
they decide to make a statement, hours or even days later (see
Eades 1981:13). Europeans often find it difficult to appreciate
the concern of Kooris for the integrity of the self which affects
Koori behaviour in a social context, promoting both a concern
about appearing to others in a bad light and a reluctance to
express attitudes which may be interpreted as domineering,
conceited or which may prove unacceptable or shameful. These would
challenge the assumption of equality implicit in the value of
autonomy. A sensitivity to shame remains active throughout a
Koori's life and leads to cautiousness, particularly in ambiguous
or unknown situations (see Honigmann 1963:244-5). Cawte (1969,
cited in Moodie 1973:201) has noted the consequent difficulties of
interpretation in a cross-cultural situation:

Europeans see Aborigines as indecisive and lacking
initiative. Observations of riots suggest that this is
related to evasion of confrontation and to the necessity
to consult group opinion - than take an individual stand
and so run the risk of group conflict. It is an ethos
that puts Aborigines at a disadvantage with Europeans
who expect communications of a more direct kind and
irritability expressed but controlled.

If someone wants to denounce what is going on in a meeting they
may wait until it is over when they can avoid confrontation, being
"put down", and do not have to account as publicly for their
views. Outside the hall they can disassociate themselves from the
events with such statements as "They're all narrakunun that lot", people one should feel sorry for who are not necessarily in control of themselves (narrakunun in Wiradjuri = sling for carrying a child, McGuire 1901:116), or "They're all a bunch of dickheads (stupid), I don't know why I went along".

There is an obligation on the part of Kooris to involve themselves as part of the body. The ways in which people do this vary but there is something wrong with a person who spends too much time on their own or who never mixes socially: they may cease to be part of the body in time. There is, for those who enjoy a drink, frequent pressure to join a drinking group for reasons of sociability. If a person is invited and refuses to join outright, they are being unfriendly - particularly if they are known as drinkers. If they have a good reason for not wanting a drink (such as a long drive later in the day) they could join and drink tea or water if they wanted. They may also be able to provide an acceptable excuse for not joining at the time. The presence of others may help to lend legitimacy to an activity but the inclusion of people must not be forced. It is also necessary to devise a means of refusing an invitation without causing offence or appearing too "high and mighty" to join in.

9.2: Economies of rights and controls

9.2.1: Shaming

Shaming is generally depicted in anthropological studies as either a socialization technique or a means of social control (see, for instance, Piers and Singer 1953, Honigmann 1963). Both are true in the Cowra Koori context but it is the definitional aspect of shame with which I am concerned here. To act in such a way that one places oneself in a shameful position reduces one's
capacity to act, to define one's position in the social universe. As self esteem is based on the concept of self in relationship it can be, and often is, thwarted by the actions of others. Being accused directly or indirectly of doing the wrong thing suggests both a lack of self control and the threat of others intervening in a social relationship through an attempt to redefine it. Before looking at the phenomenon of shame I thus want to outline the Koori notion of control.

Daily life in the Koori domain is charged with a kind of creative tension. People are constantly demanding and responding to demands, thus reiterating and reaffirming their relationships with one another. A relationship that is taken too much for granted and not nurtured by appropriate affirmative behaviour will quickly cease to be of account. Koori social relations can be characterized as negotiable precisely because of indebtedness and obligations which set limits within which people make their day to day decisions. To be in control assumes one knows one's limits and one's scope. For Kooris, their domain is perceived as knowable and controllable and it is this which enables them to act meaningfully upon social relations. The other in a relationship is the means whereby one achieves and maximizes one's sense of self - George Herbert Mead's (1962; also 1964) "generalized other" - and this other can range from kin, to community, to Gabbas, government officials or to parliamentarians. The way in which the "other" facilitates the sense of self is variously conceived: he or she may be a helper or an interferer. If people are prevented from doing what they want this is because of the intervention or interference of others - from one's own or another domain.

Kooris are very perceptive and aware of the nuances in speech and behaviour of those around them. Their attention is
concentrated on the particular events and behaviours in any interaction context. They weigh up situations all the time, whether it be in a meeting with whites or joking in the pub, and they assume self-control and awareness on the part of others. This means that an angry relation, or a publican in town who is discriminatory, are each held individually accountable for their actions and attitudes; the social context which may give rise to their actions and attitudes is rarely taken into account. From another point of view, this means Kooris appreciate generous and caring actions and never take them for granted, assuming conscious choices on the part of others as to how they decide to relate. Underlying motives are seldom sought. This means, however, that Kooris tend to limit their perceptions of the forces at work to a specific context: one does not work to effect changes in the social environment but in the people most immediately perceived as blocking pathways to action. People are not necessarily seen as being part of a wider constellation of social forces over which they may have little control. There is, however, an exception in the case of powerful Kooris who become so because they are aware of wider constraining forces which influence action and know how to exploit them.

Koori daily life is substantially made up of negotiations and renegotiations which concern the way one sees one's self, or wishes to be seen, vis-à-vis others. These negotiations are evident in anything from jocular banter and ridicule, to insults and physical violence. The repertoire depends on the closeness of those negotiating and the importance of the stakes involved. However, where annoying remarks or actions on the part of others are clearly not attributable to any attempt to alter one's own way of being but are due to the predictable behaviour of a difficult
personality, then remarkable tolerance will often be shown. Kooris might want everyone to be predictable and unchanging but the fact that people and relationships are always being tested out and not taken for granted indicates that control and predictability are goals rather than realities.

Koori ownership of slices of action, including the right to define themselves in an interactive context, is observed in various ways: as in claims to precedence in relationships, "She may be your aunty but she's my mother"; in the necessary repudiation of insults; in the need to be invited to join an activity or in having to defer to someone who has the greater right to tell a particular story. The way people are introduced is interesting. Formal introductions by a third party are important because they place the two strangers into the context of a wider relationship of debt and obligation from the start. I have a debt and an obligation to Lilly who introduces me to Rita: I have to do the right thing by Lilly to whom the relationship with Rita initially belongs. Rita likewise has to honour Lilly's relationship with me. Lilly, as the mediator, establishes a relationship rather than an encounter.

At times people are deliberately not introduced. Johnny may not want to share or risk relinquishing the set of obligations established with Tom by introducing a potential competitor. A young man turning up at the pub with a new girlfriend may have to be asked to introduce her. If he is, he may do so with a warning comment (usually delivered in a jocular manner) such as "But watch out, She's mine you know!" An introduction implies a sharing of rights. Where non-kin others are concerned these claims have to be established. A stranger needs to be incorporated in such a way as to encourage sharing if he or she is to become part of the local
situation. Thus Johnny also takes on a responsibility in introducing someone to the community. The sanctions attached to rights of access are usually sufficient to cause people to respect the relationships in question. One visiting Koori, having very distant relations with whom to stay, stole a radio from another community member. The theft was discovered and the radio returned to its owner but there was anger expressed by the owner and dismay from the man's hosts. He immediately left town of his own accord: "Before he gets busted up", as one woman explained. Any future relations will be greatly impaired and he will not be able to expect the same hospitality or generosity again, even though those he stayed with were not involved. It was they, however, who introduced him to the community and are shamed by his conduct. If a relationship is valued the withdrawal of rights is sufficient deterrent and recourse to legal action is deemed unnecessary. Where relationships are not valued, the severing of such ties is of little consequence anyway and legal action makes very little difference as it does not restore relationships.

Introductions of people are like introductions of ideas. In either case the onus is on the one introducing change to be able to control potential consequences. Both forms of change are greeted with caution until tested and knowable. Likewise, the right to be involved in events of significance only comes with time as people's willingness to adhere to appropriate behaviours is demonstrated; then they will be given rights. This determines the spheres of influence a person may have but, no matter how limited their rights in the community at large, they always maintain the right to stage-manage their own lives - to live them out as they want. This is where shaming creates tension.

The terms "shame" and gwenda (the Wiradjuri form) are used
frequently in daily conversation. *Gwenda* is one of the most commonly used Wiradjuri terms in current usage and is thus the more conspicuous. It is used of people who see themselves or are seen by others as committing some kind of misdemeanor or causing embarrassment. The contexts vary considerably and the term can be applied both jocularly, as when someone makes a fool of themselves, or in a very serious manner. It is referred to directly, as in the simple response "shame!", or "*gwenda!*", to a certain action, or more indirectly through tone of voice, on in ridicule.

Guilt is the more common corollary in Anglo-Australian culture, whereby an individual knows the nature of wrong-doing whether or not their deed is public (Honigmann 1963:305). The internalization of shame and guilt differ in that the latter may be experienced whether or not people are aware of one's actions. Shaming operates in a public context in which ridicule and embarrassment are acutely felt and its effectiveness as an agent of control is limited by the requirement that it take place before a socially significant audience. Therefore, it is situationally specific. It is not effective in contexts where social relations do not count for much, or if the opinions of others are scorned or rejected as having no weight. Shame is publicly experienced and must be publicly repudiated: yelling abuse which can be heard through the street, or fighting, are effective means of repudiation because they are dramatic and attention-getting.

There is no specific term which signifies the opposite of shame. Honour, pride or reputation are characteristics which can be deduced from shaming situations but to which reference is rarely made by Kooris. There have only been occasional times when people have said they were "proud to be a Koori". This lack of
linguistic reference does not mean that Kooris have no sense of pride. On the contrary, it is very strong but there are factors which mitigate against expressing it overtly. It would seem to imply connotations of conceit, superior attitudes or remoteness.

The old saying that "sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me" is not part of Aboriginal socialization. Words are effective and explosive weapons and insults in certain contexts are taken seriously and can cause great offence. Kooris react quickly to insults directed at themselves and their kin. An insult is another's definition of oneself or of significant people in one's social world that is unacceptable. Struulby (in Graham 1863) recorded *yarnkul* as the greatest insult one Wiradjuri could hurl at another. This term means "lies" or "making things up" in the present sense in which it is used but it has largely lost its force to provoke anger. What it does still refer to is an imposition — a re-defining of the ways things should be. Most insults are of this nature: calling someone "a slut", "a dog", or "a Gabba-luva" are certain to provoke an angry response today.

Insults may also be indirectly implied but just as disturbing. If a child is playing up and is criticized by adults around, the mother may feel she has been shamed by the suggestion that her child is no good or that she lacks control over her children. She may react in various ways: telling others to mind their own business, challenging them to fight or apologize, berating the child, or upholding the right of the child to do its own thing. Her response would depend upon the context and how she perceived herself within it. Choosing not to act would mean that someone was establishing him or herself as unmindful of the rights of others — thus irresponsible and unsociable. This is the implication behind the expression "He/she's got no shame". It
means that person does not care about what is decent and proper and is liable to bring disgrace on others.

Whilst much insulting language or unacceptable behaviour is ignored, laughed at or reacted to only verbally, it is important to appreciate the relations between those who have this kind of license and those who do not. There is a slender line between jest and insult, the perception of which requires sensitivity and an intimate knowledge of a person's characteristics and their personal allegiances. Some people can be teased when they are sober but not when they are drunk. Others may take all sorts of insults directed at themselves but not at their close kin. The potential for a fight to arise because of insults restrains much malicious gossip or careless words unless one deliberately seeks conflict (to create the excuse to have a fight with someone).

An insulting remark or action, even if it is claimed to have been intended in a jocular way, is rarely taken as a joke if the relationship is not sufficiently close; it becomes an infringement of a person's integrity. The retort "I was only joking, can't you take a joke?" is rarely an adequate excuse as others are expected to know the impact such actions will have. A sincerely given apology is much more acceptable and avoids any suggestion that a person has lost control. Kooris now have friendships with others of different geographical backgrounds and tensions can be hard to avoid. The main difficulty is that people who are not sufficiently closely related cannot take the risks and freedom which are exercised with kin. Europeans who presume they have adopted Koori styles of relating are often regarded as insulting, over-inquisitive or nosey because they are unable to distinguish the context in which the observations they base their action on have been made. One woman, for instance, who swears a lot when with
Kooris (but not, I noticed, among her white friends) was often described by Kooris as "foul-mouthed". She did not appreciate how swear words are used by Kooris, nor that Kooris may value the fact that such vocabulary serves to distinguish them from whites (see also, Sansom 1980:31). They may not want whites to participate. Acceptance of people is not based on whether they can act like oneself but on whether they are true to themselves – as defined by Kooris as well as by the person concerned. There is no pressure to dress, speak or act in accordance with the standards of others.

One Koori woman told me that the main reason for fights and rows was all the jealousy. This is a frequently encountered explanation for conflicts and especially prevalent in the case of married couples. Jealousy relates to the legitimacy of rightful claims over people, ideas or resources. It is a public statement about one's rights. Thus, it is largely about avoiding shame and not being seen to be out of control of a situation – in other words, about avoiding loss of face. Jealous attitudes are described when someone resents the job another has got or when a person complains about the supposed or potential in attentions of a spouse. The person accused may become tense, over-protective, watchful or suspicious as a result. Jealousy may be regarded negatively but it also has positive aspects in that it indicates adherence to the claiming and maintaining of one's rights and thus to loyalty and faithfulness. Having a jealous spouse is either a burden and restriction one has to bear or, conversely, a compliment attesting to their love and concern. It signifies involvement in the relationship.

Another source of shame stems from a betrayal of trust. The tendency to label others through nicknames implies certain expectations of their behaviour through life. A person may fail to
attain these expectations or, conversely, prove the label inadequate and limiting. Some form of redemption is necessary — for the one who applied the wrong label, or the one who did not conform to it. This can be achieved through disassociation, a public declaration of the inevitable: "Ah, she had it going for her, that one did. She'll never make any good now — she didn't play her cards right!" — which is a way of saying "It was not my fault" and also implies that this person is unlikely to be given another chance because of the risk of repeated failure. In fact, it alleviates the speaker of the necessity or obligation of providing further opportunities. The person accused, directly or indirectly, of failure may accuse the other of applying unrealistic expectations through denying their right to expect anything: "I'm meself, I'm not here to do what you want!".

Shame can also be the result of inadvertent action which can be expunged by a simple apology and all is forgotten in the acknowledgement of no ill intent. The apology is usually accepted unless it is regarded as insincere which may lead to further conflict. An apology is not appropriate if the action is, or is seen to be, deliberately insulting, as an attempt to put down someone, to make them appear socially inadequate or deviant: this constitutes a threat to one's social existence and requires some form of confrontation. Although the resultant conflicts may be confined to verbal repudiations, if these are seen as inadequate to expunge the shame they may lead to a fight. Whether verbal or physical, the confrontation will be public so as to reject the public insinuation of shamefulness.

Another side to the phenomenon of shame is discerned in dealings with Europeans. Being shamed in front of Europeans could be interpreted as a recognition of Koori inferiority in such
situations but I doubt that this is what is intended. Hiatt (1978:185-6) records that the Gidjingali use the same term for "to be afraid" and "to be ashamed", referring to either fear and shame or to one without the other. He suggests that the two emotions are similarly expressed because they "both manifest a strong impulse to retreat from the stimulus" (1978:186). Although there is no available record of a Wiradjuri term gwenda in early literature, Richard (1902-3) indicates that geil-geil had a similar dual meaning for the Wiradjuri. The use of gwenda today often conveys fear or apprehension about possible consequences rather than being ashamed of one's current position. When a woman opened the door to an unexpected visit from the Housing Commission officer she afterwards exclaimed "Gwenda, fancy him coming in with the house like this" - referring to the fact that it was not as tidy as she might have liked had she known of his coming. The state of the house was normal and was not her real concern. She was expressing her awareness of his different values and his power to chastise or even evict her if he was not happy with her circumstances. Likewise, when I was paying for petrol one day and absent-mindedly gave the attendant a $5 note instead of $10, one of the young men present said to me, "Shame, watch yourself!" In this case I felt he was referring to the possible consequences of being accused of deception or theft rather than the stupidity of the action.

Because shame is effective only in a situation in which shared standards can be appealed to, there is less compulsion to conform to social expectations when one is amongst strangers. The sense of obligation is confined to one's immediate, predominantly ego-centric world of social relations rather than to others in general. Actions, such as gross insults or thieving, which may bring great shame in one's home environment may be engaged in
further afield where the social costs are not as high. Sanctions applied in other domains (such as the stigma of a term in jail) have little effect as other domains do not constitute one's definitional arena. In some respects this also gives Kooris a degree of freedom from constraint—they may often choose to act "where angels fear to tread" and will, for instance, confront public officials as members of European domains with readiness. They are not ingratiating and will not hide hostility—believing that such attitudes make it difficult to trust people.

Shaming illustrates the emphasis placed on autonomy. Antagonisms frequently emerge when this is threatened. In everyday terms Kooris express this as "Don't think you can stand over me", or "Nobody's going to tell me what to do". Koori social relationships are not characterized by deference although there are important exceptions, as between younger and older generations and recognized leaders. Deference, even in these cases, is not accorded as a right and must be founded on respect.

This lack of deference maintains people's autonomy and avoids obligations based on debts. It makes for a different style of hospitality as can be seen in many of the small every day actions such as pouring cups of tea. People do not expect to be served by others; the tea is made and placed on the table with the announcement, "Tea's made". This is the signal for others to come and pour their own. In fact, to be served may imply a lack of closeness: visitors who are not so well known may be served and this maintains a certain distance. Being told to help oneself indicates acceptance not neglect. Observing this style of hospitality brings to mind the early days when Europeans would offer Aborigines food, such as potatoes from their fields and then retaliate with punitive raids when the Aborigines came and helped
themselves next time round. Today, this is still the way in which hospitality and acceptance are understood between Kooris and it still creates awkwardness in dealing socially with Europeans who do not know how to interpret Koori actions and responses in such situations. What to Europeans may be a gesture of hospitality and friendship may reinforce rather than break down social differences.

Likewise, one also has to be careful about helping people in such a way that suggests they are incapable of doing things for themselves. To pick up something someone has dropped when they feel they could have done it with equal ease can appear demeaning: "What you think you're doing, don't you think I can do things for myself?" Thus Kooris avoid any actions which can be interpreted as a desire to boss others around or as an attempt to use stand-over tactics. Conversely, picking things up or serving tea to someone may be a way of repaying previously incurred debts. This is often misunderstood by Europeans socialized into to a different form of deference and courtesy relations (see also, Hamilton 1981:150ff). For Kooris it is a means of asserting autonomy and thereby reducing indebtedness: it avoids making people any more beholden to others than they need be or choose to be. It sets limits on interaction in such a way that a squared up economy may be retained and the demands of one person vis-a-vis those of others kept in delicate balance.

9.2.2: Concern about conflicts

It is possible to make some generalizations about the Wiradjuri and European domains in terms of principles of structuration and styles of interaction. The differences also indicate a possible reason for the different concerns that members
of each domain have about conflict, its expression and management. Reay (1963) has made a distinction between Aboriginal and European familial life which can be developed to illustrate the differences throughout the social fabric of each domain. She argues that:

The major difference between the aboriginal family and the white Australian family is a significant difference in the relationship between social structure and culture in the context of the family. The white Australian family is remarkably uniform in structure, and the aboriginal family is remarkably diverse; the familial cultures of white Australia are diverse, and those of aboriginal Australia uniform.

In one domain a cloth is woven, painted with different patterns and then cut it into similar shapes; in the other, many different types of cloth are woven, painted with the same pattern and then cut in myriad ways. There are themes of diversity and uniformity at levels in the Koori system which do not correspond to those found in the European domain. The diversity in kin network composition, residential patterns, community composition, and leadership structures, is in conflict with an expectation on the part of Europeans that there will be greater uniformity and predictability in such spheres. However, in terms of "familial culture", as a way of being in relationship, Kooris demonstrate greater uniformity than is apparent or expected amongst Europeans.

Wiradjuri people share a way of being which is based on a relatively common experience of social and material constraints (see further, Chapter 10). This is true of Aboriginal people in very general terms and has often lead Europeans to treat all Aborigines as a racially defined, homogenous category. Non-Aboriginal Australians, on the other hand, are recognized as being located in various ways in the hierarchy of relations possible within a capitalist economy - not all experience constraints in the same ways and it is in the nature of the capitalist system
that they should not do so. That diversity should be recognized, whether or not legitimated, amongst non-Aborigines, is not perceived by Europeans as relevant or significant when it comes to addressing issues defined as having to do with Aborigines.

This approach to understanding the differences between the two domains assumes, therefore, that social structures are not an adequate starting point for the comparison of different systems. Great flexibility in structures is accommodated in the Wiradjuri approach. However, in their ways of acting upon social relations they seem remarkably similar - in the way of being they share as Wiradjuri people, both in terms of the way they perceive and experience the social and material environment and the ways in which they activate social relations. Thus, underlying the apparent diversity of Wiradjuri experience is uniformity.

This interpretation suggests other differences which will pertain between Wiradjuri and Europeans. It can be expected that people's concern with order in social life will focus on arenas of uniformity - those levels at which commonality is experienced and at which social life is strengthened. Thus it is to be expected that Europeans will express concern at the "breakdown" of family, political or legal structures, and that this will be where laws and policies are focussed. The preoccupation in a Wiradjuri context will be in the spheres in which they stress uniformity: in values, and in modes of relating and exchange.

Conversely, conflicts will become a focus for social concern at the levels where commonality is stressed. This will mean that the expressions of conflict, the extent to which it is tolerated and the ways in which it is managed will differ accordingly. The types of diversity which threaten social order through the promotion of heretical schisms will be those less tolerated and
will be those occurring at the level of commonality, where social bonding is expected. Different perceptions of what constitutes a social threat, different expressions and valuations of conflict and different means of conflict management can be expected to prevail in the Wiradjuri as compared with the European domain (see further, Chapter 11).

What the economies described in this chapter do indicate is a Koori preoccupation with the domain of self. To the extent that this orientation is common to most Kooris it allows for a great deal of independent action and difference without constituting a threat to the Koori way of being in relationship. It also implies that Kooris do not necessarily calculate change in terms of its consequences for Koori interaction at the community level. Thus, the Koori community is constantly under stress, particularly when people have differential access to European allocators and do not have to be generally accountable.

Nevertheless, the officers of the Cowra Local Aboriginal Land Council and, to a lesser extent, the Koori Housing Company, can be called to account both by Kooris and government. This is encouraging more of a community focus. The implications of this in terms of personal autonomy and the right not to be accountable to others for one's own actions are not yet clear. Changes in the way allocations are made, and in attitudes towards employment, are likely to have a significant effect on the Koori way of being and of the relationship of self to others.
9.1 The Lachlan River below Erambil
The "second rocks" has long been a regarded by Kooris as part of their domain

9.2 The Lachlan River frontage to the Koori Market Garden
For Kooris, a valued part of the property purchased by the Cowra Local Aboriginal Land Council
PART IV

ADJUSTMENT TO COLONIZATION
CHAPTER 10: A WAY OF BEING IN AN ECONOMIC WORLD

10.1: Wiradjuri economic perspectives

10.1.1: Introduction

Preceding chapters have demonstrated that the Wiradjuri domain has persisted over time even though it has changed considerably. How, then, is this process of change to be conceptualized? In this and the following chapter I want to explore adjustment processes whereby Wiradjuri people redefined their perceptions of their domain and their way of being. In this chapter I have used the concept of transformation as an example of an adjustment process which provides a more dynamic approach to the study of change in a colonization situation than the modernization/development approach implicit in many European interpretations of Koori life in New South Wales.

I have focussed on Wiradjuri economic perspectives in developing this discussion. If the forces of production upon which Wiradjuri life is constructed are indistinguishable from those generally prevailing in other Australian domains, one might conclude that a distinct Wiradjuri mode of production is impossible. However, the ways in which people of different domains conceptualize components of their material and social environment as resources may vary considerably: a tree is regarded as a resource in very different terms by a timber merchant and a conservationist. I examine the extent to which Wiradjuri people perceive components of their environment as resources in ways which differ from perceptions held more generally in the European domain — although it should be recognized that differences exist between European domains as well as within Wiradjuri domains.

According to Kapferer (1979), the transformation of contexts
may be taking place even when the surface elements, the ingredients of social action, appear incoherent. It is such an "incoherence" which, to Europeans, seems to constitute the Aboriginal experience today. It looks neither traditionally Aboriginal nor European. However, transformation, as a means of reconciling the known with change, is not necessarily an obvious process (see, for instance, Levi-Strauss 1963; also Hunt 1977). Changes may occur in the content of social relations such that the new content is altered but retains the same significance as the previous content in the social system. For instance, Wiradjuri people changed from speaking the Wiradjuri language to speaking English. The question which could then be posed is whether English is used as if it were Wiradjuri or whether there has been a change at a structural level as well. The actual situation is more dynamic, with innovative or structural change at some levels and a transformation of content only at others.

The present can be viewed as one point in a series of spatial-temporal phases in which there is simultaneous permanence and change (Hunt 1977). Social life is never static: changes are inevitable, with or without the relations set up by colonization. Europeans have generally assumed that the effects of European colonization and capitalism are all-pervasive, that a hunter-gather society would not have means of incorporating the new system within the logic of the old. This does not imply that accommodation to European ways does not taken place: in fact, this was necessitated as Europeans redefined the Wiradjuri environment and thus the Wiradjuri resource base. However, neither does it imply that change has to take place in terms of a European way of being. Indeed, it is not possible to make adjustments or transformations in terms of someone else's way of being.
Transformation may suggest continuity as a process over time, or refer to a persistence in features of social life. In common usage continuity often implies a "carry over from" or "clinging on to" the past such that change can be seen not to have occurred, and where the object of research is an attempt to identify contexts or their elements in their supposedly pristine state. This is not my aim. Continuity in this sense cannot be maintained for Wiradjuri people. Too much change has occurred and there is no context which retains its pre-conquest characteristics unaltered: there is no area of social life which the influence of Europeans has left untouched. It is true, however, that Wiradjuri people as well as Europeans often look for vestiges of the past in the search for ideologies which will adequately express the various ways in which they wish to articulate with each other.

10.1.2: Welfare and dependency

My starting point in the examination of Wiradjuri economic perspectives is the assumption that a particular form of an historically-given mode of production involves a certain way of being. At the time when Europeans first entered Wiradjuri country, the Wiradjuri people were already engaged in a mode of production which generated its own way of being. If it can be agreed that people calculate their life chances, the calculation will be made in terms of the way of being which is already available. Wiradjuri people would have been able to penetrate another mode of production to the extent that components of it - either at the level of forces of production or relations of production - could be "material" for the operation of that way of being. For example, by drawing Europeans into kin relations or establishing camps on pastoral stations, Wiradjuri people could gain access to resources
stemming from the European mode of production.

Stockton (1976:30), on the basis of studies in Sydney, argues that the factor which most surely divides Aboriginal people from white Australians is not differences in culture or values but in economic perspective. By economic perspective he refers to:

A total outlook, a world view or all inclusive framework, which an individual adopts towards his environment in terms of how that environment supplies his needs and wants.

He maintains that there is a deep-seated frustration among white Australians in relation to Aboriginal people no matter how well-informed and well-intentioned they may be:

It is not simply the difference in culture and the attendant difference in value systems. Educated sympathetic people can usually cope with cross-cultural situations. So, for example Australian-born whites have had relatively little difficulty in accommodating to non-European migrants among whom patterns of thought, religious beliefs and practices, domestic habits, priority of values, etc. differ markedly from those of the majority. I am suggesting that what Australian-born whites share with migrants, both European and non-European, but do not share with Aborigines, is [an economic perspective] which is more basic than culture and can be seen as a major determinant of culture.

Stockton also argues for an unbroken continuity amongst Aboriginal people in domestic culture and economic thinking (1976:33): "nothing in 200 years has happened to change his [the modern, urbanized Aboriginal person] economic goals" (1976:34).

I agree that there is a divide in terms of economic perspective and would argue more strongly than Stockton that culture and values cannot be separated from economic relations. It is not possible fully to understand the dynamics of Koori social life without an appreciation of the economic exchange content of such relations which activates particular patterns of relating. It is the particular history of the ways in which Kooris have acquired resources, and the role played in that process by white
agents of various kinds that has given Koori relationships their distinctive characteristics over time. Differences in economic perspective help to explain, as Stockton also maintains, some of the conflicts which have occurred over time between Aboriginal groups and Europeans. These differences cannot merely be attributed to European refusals or ineptness in accommodating Kooris into their social and economic arena: they are also due to the fact that Kooris had and still have a distinctively different system of exchange which undergirds their whole way of life. Most have been unwilling or unable, even when they had opportunities, to renounce features of this system for what they now see as the questionable benefits of entry into the European domain.

Sansom (1982:132) has argued that the Aboriginal way of doing business has been transformed so as to give shape to contemporary Aboriginal social formations and to Aboriginal-European transactions. He identifies the results in terms of problems that members of one system will have as a result in coming to an appreciation of the other:

It takes a great deal of flexibility of mind for a person of one set of practices for doing business to adjust his thinking and accept the values and procedures of a foreign system for exchange when the axioms of that system contradict all the imperatives and prescriptions of the system that contains him and which he knows. To understand how Aborigines do business nothing less than a conversion of market thinking into service thinking is required. Such conscious and appreciated transformations are not easy.

Kooris are inextricably part of the Australian economic and political arena and have been dependent recipients for much of the time since European colonization began. They live today in a world that is shaped in large part by external forces: international and domestic economics, government policy, and social attitudes. The economic relations which have developed over time between them and
with people in other domains have influenced the pattern of everyday existence - social relations, employment patterns, food preferences, visiting and even the marking of time.

There are two analytically distinct ways in which Wiradjuri economic life may be understood. First, there are economic relations between Kooris and Europeans. These relationships have been dominated by government although local whites have been influential at various times. Second, there are the exchanges between Kooris themselves which operate on a different model but in relationship to the first.

The Wiradjuri system is the result of historical processes in which styles of relating have evolved as a means by which Kooris have obtained resources. In the past resources have been obtained from three main sources: cash and goods to individuals from local white sponsors; direct allocations of goods and services from various government sources, either to individuals, domestic groups or communities; and wages from private industry (usually in part-time or seasonal labour), or from government as employer.

In the nineteenth century economic relations between Wiradjuri people and Europeans developed on a localized and individual basis. At times, Wiradjuri people were defined as a valued resource - in tracking, assisting in the setting up of stations and as general hands - but this was not the case when European labour was available. There was convict labour to be usefully employed and later increasing numbers of Europeans competing for jobs. As land holdings became smaller, employers were unable to support surplus labour.

In the twentieth century, Wiradjuri people had casual labour opportunities fairly consistently, augmented in times of general labour shortage such as during war years but restricted in times
of economic scarcity when it became convenient for Europeans to appeal to ideologies of racial difference in order to exclude not only Aboriginal people but also non-European Australians. However, to varying degrees, Wiradjuri people did continue localized and individual exchange and developed sponsor/patron relations with Europeans. Fluctuations in the general economy over time and different industrial development across Wiradjuri country (such as agriculture versus pastoralism and primary versus secondary industry) led to differential access to Europeans, accentuating or reinforcing differentiations within the Wiradjuri domain.

When child endowment was introduced and other social services, Wiradjuri people had access to resources independent of other Wiradjuri and a measure of intra-Koori economic autonomy was possible. It may well be that the mission days which are remembered for their cohesion and greater discipline may be those prior to welfare allocations when interdependent kin networks were necessary to a greater extent. The allocation of money to individuals enabled increased mobility—especially for people who were not employed—less accountability and a lesser responsibility to redistribute. Although in some respects this might seem like a trend towards a more individually-oriented, integrative economy, as is the case in capitalist relations, the money involved was scant, unevenly distributed and consumed very rapidly. Accumulation or financial investment was rare. There was little impetus for Kooris to develop economic relations which were consistent with relations of capital.

The different stages in economic relationships have in common a basic structure within which Kooris throughout New South Wales receive goods and which has led to what may be called a distinctive Koori mode of economic articulation. In a marxist
style of analysis the focus is on the product and process of production, the product being that which is initially extracted or appropriated from nature — the land. O'Laughlin (1975:365) notes:

In a capitalist system of production, the relations of production are defined in terms of appropriation of surplus-value from labor by capital in the process of production, but she then adds that:

Forms of labor which do not correspond to the wage-labour relation cannot therefore be analytically assimilated to capitalist relations of production".

She develops the concept of dominant and accessory relations of production as an alternative to a plural model. Plurality of modes is obviously not applicable in this case in which it is the welfare aspect of the capitalist economy which is pertinent to the Wiradjuri. Nevertheless, as Godelier (1977:25) maintains, it is necessary to look at what forms of relationships actually function as relations of production. The *intra*-Koori economy cannot be described in conventional class terms because Kooris perceive and act upon economic relations in non-capitalist terms at the same time that they are encapsulated within a capitalist economy.

Whilst Kooris live under the umbrella of the Australian capitalist system, few are integrated directly into relations of capital. They articulate in terms of an accessory mode of production which is linked to but is not the same as the welfare system. Welfare has become an adjunct of capitalism and caters not only for Kooris but many other Australians. It does not necessarily give rise to particular forms of social relations except in so far as it establishes inequality between the distributor as donor and the recipient as supplicant (Shamgar-Handelman 1981:45). Kooris articulate differently with the welfare system compared with other welfare recipients who do not.
necessarily develop accessory modes. Social discriminants, such as age or ethnicity, do mark them off from conventional relations of capital. This enables such groupings to appropriate in minor ways - such as claiming special educational facilities - without locating themselves outside the capitalist system.

The major differences between Kooris and other welfare recipients are that: (a) unlike the immigrant population, government intervention has characterized relations with Aborigines from the beginning (Beckett 1983); and (b) Kooris receive resources according to two criteria - because of welfare categories to which they conform (pensioners, unemployed, single parents, and so on), and because of the special relationship which has developed between government and Aborigines. Money from government is received by Kooris as:

a) direct payments to individuals (social security)

b) government grants to communities for development projects

c) wages obtained in government funded Aboriginal organizations

d) wages as public servants in positions created specially for Aborigines (Health Commission, schools, Department of Youth and Community Services)

Anyone entitled to welfare payments will receive (a) but the other allocations are received by Kooris and other Aboriginal people because of relations developed through colonization. These relations are perceived by both Kooris and Europeans as having left Kooris disadvantaged vis-a-vis Europeans - and left Europeans (through government) with a moral responsibility to provide. Beckett (1963) refers to this kind of relationship as "welfare colonialism" which, in his model, leads to certain characteristics of political relations. More than that, it has become an ideological basis for continuing the particular exchange relations.
that have developed between Kooris and Europeans which at various times have been seen as being to each other's mutual advantage or disadvantage.

Whilst welfare denotes a certain power relationship between the government (or, perhaps more broadly, the state) and Wiradjuri people, from the Koori point of view it is not so much a dependency relationship as a part of a "technology of production" - a means by which resources are obtained which both shapes and sets limits on the formation of social relations. Godelier (1977:22) maintains that the real logic of an economic system lies in the production of goods rather than their circulation. Welfare and government grants might appear to be modes of circulation or redistribution rather than production but I am arguing that Kooris do have a sense of themselves as producers in that they perceive themselves as appropriating by right the resources of the state. Goods provided by government, including money, are not exchanged for labour but on the basis of a certain relationship with particular historical roots. What Europeans give is theirs by historically-defined right - a right which has largely been defined or determined by Europeans themselves in their dealings with Kooris. This is different from the normal experience of unemployed non-Aborigines who may expect and are expected to join the labour force in stronger economic times: they constitute the labour "reserve army" and are not defined as having additional rights. Kooris have not had an expectation of regular wage-labour relations except at particular times. However, they have been able to develop relations of appropriation in distinctive ways - establishing what may be referred to as a Wiradjuri economy, which is part of and shaped by the dominant capitalist system but analytically distinct from it.
There is a commonly held, if unstated, notion that welfare recipients do not appropriate (although there are many who are said to usurp or 'abuse' the system) but that they merely receive the chaff, the residue of the dominant economy. The economic relationship is seen as unidirectional: there are allocators and recipients. The Wiradjuri situation differs in that Kooris have evolved their own response to the receipt of government subsidies, conceived as their only major prospect of income. For Kooris there is room for exploitation and manipulation of this structured relationship of allocation. The Gabba in the pub who is cajoled into buying drinks all-round all evening for the "poor black buggers" is entering into the same kind of economic relations as the Aboriginal organization capitalizing on international consensus about treatment of indigenous minorities to increase a grant. This has been recognized by Beckett (1983:1) who describes the distinctive Koori rhetoric as one "in which claims to special assistance are directed to the public conscience, to national pride, to humanitarianism, and so on", all of which give recipients a degree of bargaining power, however slight. In the Koori case, bargaining power is strengthened by the depiction of their experiences of colonization as debilitating. They are able to exploit this to advantage and it has accrued for them distinctive benefits.

Nevertheless, there are Kooris who are concerned about this dependency orientation. At a meeting of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, attended by Augustus Diaz of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and Howard Bergman, legal counsel with the Iroquois Indians, Bergman explained to the Council that many Indian nations in the United States have made a decision not to take government money:
There are dependency relations which are created when government money is involved, and strings attached, and, despite their poverty and despite the difficulties that it causes, they just won't take a dime from the government.

At the time, Gavin Andrews, a Koori from the Tharawal area in western Sydney, commented:

That's how much we've been corrupted, mate. Two hundred years of welfare systems. It's now part of the culture which we've got to fight (New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council 1986:11).

"Fighting it", however, is not easy—particularly, as I argue (see further below), it stems from traditional economic perspectives and has not just evolved, as Andrews suggests, from the relations which developed between Kooris and Europeans. Kooris have either resisted or not been able to develop enterprises and economic relations which provide them with alternatives. In addition, the Koori political rhetoric continues to reinforce the obligations of government as supplier. This thinking lies behind much of the ideology of "Aboriginality".

10.1.3: Aboriginality as the allocative ideology

Aboriginality is that process of becoming and of sanctifying distinctiveness in a world where the major oppositions—the definitional arenas—are no longer set in terms of young and old, male and female, clan or section, but black and white. It provides the new raison d'être, justifying the right of the have-nots to make demands on those who have. Aboriginality is, to use an expression of Bozeman (1976:64), the new language of culture emerging from historical consciousness. It has become the animating principle which symbolizes who a Koori is, what they have been and what they may become. It is the Koori perception of their way of being in relationship to those of Europeans. It is the reason why people are as they are, and also carries an
expectation that people will act out their lives in tune with its sufficiently ambiguous meanings. It is located in the past, as the history which has brought about the present, as that past which no white person can share; in the present as the rationales for action and a cohesive principle; and in the future as the potential for becoming. It is not designed to illustrate or explain what being a Koori is. Rather, it is a means of making sense of experience, past, and future (see also, discussion on Aboriginality in Thiele 1984, and Tatz 1984).

An increasing emphasis on "Aboriginality" by both Kooris and Europeans may be interpreted in part as a means of ensuring supply within a given economic framework. The force of Kooris' rights of appropriation lie in their status as indigenous and wrongfully or illegitimately conquered peoples. As dependence on government funding in one way or another has increased, so too has the ideology which asserts these rights and strives to ensure not only the stability and continuity of supply but also its increase. Kooris have a "mode of production" which could be described as an appropriation not of nature but of government resources.

The Koori means of subsistence is primarily government subsidy. Where this comes from, how and why are not often called into question: it is enough to know the fortnightly cheques will come. Through the Aboriginal Land Rights Act Kooris have perhaps their first significant opportunity to become involved in the market economy, the system of taxation and the like. However, it is evident that, except for a few with political or decision-making roles, the community as a whole still accepts that the money just comes - this time through different allocative channels. It is not based on either labour or their ownership in any productive processes. They do not work for this money - it is
received as 'gift', an allocation ideologically justified in various ways. It is theirs by right, not as a payment in exchange for any goods or services. All they need to do is maintain and project a sense of community cohesion and of distinctive "Aboriginality" to obtain grants, just as they need to conform to certain regulations in order to obtain social security money.

If there is a Koori technology it lies in the skills required to negotiate with whites in order to further exploit the extractive process. In the early days the principal skill required was competence in spoken English — one which Aboriginal people seem to have acquired quite rapidly — and a willingness to accommodate the presence of Europeans. Later this extended to general literacy skills and the ability to relate to whites in terms of an Anglo-Australian "cultural language" — having a job, playing sport, being able to "down a few beers", and so on.

Literacy or political skills are not widely held — especially when it is recognized that most Kooris deal with "white collar" Europeans. This leads to dependency relations within the Koori domain: there is a differentiation of exchange units which depend upon individual Kooris' ability to deal competently with the European domain and on what kinds of European sponsors individual Kooris are able to cultivate. Because skills of communication and negotiation — and thus appropriation — are not evenly nor randomly distributed throughout the community, key Aboriginal people have been able to develop relations — both local (especially pertinent in the past) and with government and now international sources — to ensure supply and supplementation. These Kooris also give education and training a high priority. They have kin-based networks who act as a supplementary resource and whose standing and allocative powers are thus also augmented within the Wiradjuri
domain. The reasons why these skills are associated with certain groups are common to those found in non-Aboriginal society: differential access to or value of formal education and training; personal networks, often expressed in terms of kinship (or, for instance, by Europeans in terms of the "old school tie" principle); and relations with sponsors which may be jealously protected and shared only with specific others.

10.2: The transformed economy

10.2.1: An economic model

There are no studies of nineteenth century Wiradjuri modes of production available but general references to their beliefs and lifestyle indicate that it would have been comparable with other parts of Australia even if details differed. I have drawn on a model developed from the work of Maddock to describe what I understand the main features of the Wiradjuri economic model to have been and compare this with Koori perspectives. Maddock (1974: 129) maintains that in the philosophy of the Dreaming Aborigines attribute the spirits with creative powers but not themselves; people are the "passive recipients of unmotivated gifts".

Today, Kooris are rarely involved in production. They generally have little knowledge of the Australian economic system and how it works, including where their own unmotivated welfare money comes from. This also is depicted in Maddock's (1974:109) description of the relationship Aborigines have with the totemic spirits. He says that although they are thought of as actors and as in relationship to people "little interest is evinced in their motives or personality, or in the overall scheme of their relations to one another". He continues:

It is in keeping with the doctrine of two kinds of existence - the extraordinary existence of the powers
and the ordinary existence of men and other creatures—that men should be unable ordinarily to experience the powers, even though they may have powers alongside or nearby or within, or may themselves be within powers. If men were able to experience powers in the ordinary ways in which they experience themselves and other creatures, there would not be two kinds of existence but one only, that of beings located finitely and tangibly in space and time.

Is this not also a way in which the relations between Aborigines and the government could be conceived today? Stockton (1976:34; 1972) in his Sydney study concluded that the economic outlook of Kooris is that of the hunter-gatherer in a changed environment:

He feels no compunction in 'culling what is readily available' in a modern welfare state, but he is not drawn to contributing to the productivity of that state, to hedging his future by normal storage strategies or to responding to the forms of economic motivation which prevail among whites.

Kooris are very much part of government bureaucracy as this pertains to Aboriginal affairs. They hold positions at every level but still conceive of it as a "we and them" relationship. The "overall scheme", the Australian political economy, the system of taxation, the dynamics of international capital and trade, is of little interest. Kooris are not located within the space and time of this larger domain. They do not work out an economic future for themselves so much as develop political strategies as responses to the environment in which they already find themselves. That current government policy keeps them dependent and vulnerable has seemed less significant than making sure that the government continues supply. The Land Rights Act may bring some significant changes, already evident in some communities, such as Cowra itself, where development projects are underway. Nevertheless, these are not yet widespread and amendments to the Act by the New South Wales Parliament in early 1986 have increased economic accountability to government, and thus dependence.
Maddock (1974:132) has referred to the Aboriginal rituals associated with production as "a theory of human action":

Each clan works to support part of nature; the result of the work of all the clans is that all nature is supported (or at least the parts of it in which Aborigines take special interest). Individual performances are thus displays of mutuality, notwithstanding that ostensibly their concern is with particular species (1974:135).

Each person had to do his or her part in maintaining the life and regularity of nature (Elkin 1932:133). It was up to each person "to ensure an increase of the natural species associated with the totem, and so ensure the future of the tribe" (Elkin 1932:131). It was the performance of ritual rather than the actual procuring of food and other material items which was defined as work and from which power was derived. Without the rituals there would be no hunting or gathering, no life.

Value, as the crystallization of social labour (Marx 1951:379), is, in this case, focussed on ritual, and thus on a constellation of social and political relationships rather than on the relations of production—manufacturing (hunting or gathering). The actual performance of these rituals, in terms of knowledge and skill, song and dance, was, of course, an expression of Aboriginal power — over other men and over women (von Sturmer 1984d). But relations with the totemic spirits were conceived as cooperative: the sustaining effects were reciprocal, "since if men attend as midwives, as it were, to the various species, natural plenty then nourishes men" (Maddock 1974:133). Stanner (1964:293) described the Aboriginal ecological principle in terms of the old phrase: "nature is not to be commanded except by obeying".

Certain people are conceptualized in this model as having access to certain spirits by virtue of inheritance, skills or kin links and they alone had the technology of performance which would
ensure that the spirits supplied (through knowledge of ritual), upon which the life of the whole group depended. The existence of the spirits depended upon peoples' performance of certain rites which ensured their survival and the spirits in turn were obligated as the producers to provide. This obligation seems to stem from the fact that the spirits brought nature and people into being and that people are the means through which the spirits themselves continue to live — they must continue to provide to ensure their own reproduction. This is the context of the current the Koori economy of debts, based on the obligation to provide.

The modern Koori rituals are of a different order and are undergirded by a different ideology of qualifying differentiation. Political pressures and protests have proved to be effective means of ensuring or increasing supply — bringing attention to their needs through petitions, rallies and tent embassies. They have developed what Beckett (1983:1) calls a "highly developed set of appeal strategies". They frequently use the:

... politics of embarrassment ... advertising their grievances before a national or even international audience in such a way as to bring their own government into disrepute" (Beckett 1983:3).

That these are political skills is obvious but they are also significant in an economic system almost entirely dependent upon resources obtained from sources external to the Wiradjuri domain and in which a primary skill is the ability to cultivate allocators as sponsors. Europeans have often encouraged this approach, probably impeding alternatives in doing so. The pressure points, those parts of the European domain which are most amenable to appropriation, have changed over time with changes in the Australian economy, in government policy concerning Aborigines and with changes in the Koori domain.
The skills and knowledge required of Kooris to ensure supply have changed over time, as have the allocators - from settler, to manager, local townspeople, State government, Commonwealth government, and more recently to the United Nations -, as have the negotiating arenas. Kooris now exploit a political rhetoric in which Europeans are assumed to have accepted responsibility for the state of the Aboriginal world. Changes in allocation sources have not resulted in change in the mode of articulation. The organizations being set up by Kooris, with government money, are predominantly concerned with service delivery - for which the client, as the one who lacks, rarely has to pay. There are still only a few Kooris interested in creative entrepreneurship, in the drive to found an economic base so as to become independent of the Great Benefactor. There is little evidence of "the competitive drive, the individualistic urge, the obligations to self and self-interests" which are deemed essential for survival in Australian society (Giles 1980:110). Wiradjuri Kooris, in fact, are quick to point to this as one of their virtues.

Aborigines in the past do not seem to have valued the precursor or the product of an act as much as the act itself. They did not see their role as generators - that was the role of the spirits - although their role was interactive with that of the spirits. The greatest status appertained to those perceived as interacting most effectively (gauged by results others experienced) with the spirits. The emphasis Kooris place on political rather than economic involvement suggests that the concept of work-as-ritual continues in transformed ways.

The difference between models of the past and that of the present is that the government has replaced the totemic spirits as the source of supply, representing Europeans as the 'haves' who
are obligated to share. The government is the new ancestor, or more strictly speaking originator, in the ideology of Aboriginality. It is regarded as having created or brought about, through its policies and impositions, the contemporary Aboriginal experience. It is thus responsible for it, much as the spirits were in the generation and maintenance of the world in the past. As the spirits could be benevolent, malevolent or irrelevant (Maddock 1974:112) and so too can individual Europeans and their governments: not all are regarded by Kooris in the same terms.

The government - or Europeans generally - has appropriated the natural resources, once the domain of the spirits, making Kooris dependent on government rather than on the spirits. The government has an obligation to provide for Kooris as the spirits and, through them, Aboriginal "bosses" once did. The existence of the government does not depend upon Kooris - although it is fair to say that its standing in the international arena has been put on the line from time to time because of policies towards Aboriginal people which Kooris have learned to exploit.

This relationship of obligation to Aborigines has been and still is recognized by non-Aborigines: from early days in the history of expansion in Australia there has been pressure from within Australia, from Britain and later from other nations to ensure the perpetuation of a sense of debt. In other words, the government was at least partly dependent, if not for its life, certainly for aspects of its status or reputation in the international forum, on its treatment of Aboriginal people.

The irony of the moves to get all Aborigines onto reserves was that they ensured that dependence on Europeans would continue, that Aborigines would continue to relate to them as to the totemic spirits - the people from whom all resources flowed and on whom
they were dependent. The mutual action required of Aborigines to ensure supply still depended upon them developing relations with Europeans as patrons – the reserve managers, or, when they proved too difficult, local whites in town. Today, the Federal and State Governments are still providing handouts. Change may come about as local Aboriginal land councils develop enterprises.

It is difficult to determine the extent to which dependency relations represent a transformed but known economic model which impedes the development of alternative ways of economic being. It will be some time before the significance of local Aboriginal land council activity is able to be assessed for its effects on intra- and inter-domain relations. It is already evident that government departments are adopting the policy of working through these councils, thus concentrating decision-making and resources in the hands of those who ostensibly control them. Whilst not apparently intended by legislators, intra-Koori differentiations are becoming hierarchized, leading to conflicts and power struggles in some communities. The Koori notion of authority, derived from shared history, skills, and access to knowledge and allocations, is not understood or is disregarded by European definers in favour of an egalitarian ideology which admits of no privileges, no history and no special status for people within Koori domains.

The question in State-wide intra-Koori affairs is increasingly becoming who is boss for whom – with no-one willing to concede boss-ship for others, many trying to attain it, and no-one admitting to being a European-style boss – only to having a "looking after" role. The processes of legitimacy which are part of the traditional, more intimate social environment, have yet to be adequately transposed from the localized to the wider political scene. Independent access to resources lessened the competitive
dimensions of Koori interaction and enabled the host/guest pattern to re-emerge in a different guise: in the setting up of Aboriginal organizations there was opportunity to build up independent avenues of status as well as providing services which are required by non-organization members – a role which is reversed when members require the services of another organization. It is not yet clear whether Aborigines in New South Wales will transform the host/guest system of mutual stratification in new ways or whether they will assimilate European modes of political interaction. Whilst the Land Rights Act seems to promote local-level conflict because of the ambiguities which exist in some areas in relation to defining of hosts, on the State level it is designed to maintain local community autonomy. It does mean, however, that competition is likely to emerge at a Regional level as the new arena of allocative decisions. Whether bosses will also emerge at this level remains to be seen. In the event that they do the process by which they acquire legitimation will lead to a much wider and transformed Aboriginal polity.

10.2.2: Work in the present context

Some of the perspectives I am describing can be illustrated by moving to a more local Wiradjuri context. I have been impressed, for instance, at the knowledge of Kooris who go to Young each year for the cherry picking. One man has a team he gathers together each year and has worked for the same orchardist for many seasons. Although he is only involved at harvesting time, he has a detailed knowledge of the whole process and early in the year (picking usually starts in November) he will be concerned about the weather and the effects it will have. If driving in the area he and others will check out the blossom and make predictions
concerning the quality and quantity of fruit. When I spent a short time on the team he was careful to teach me the correct method of picking so that I did not damage the branches and thus next year's crop. He approaches the task as if the orchard was his own. The orchardist depends on him, as is evidenced by the orchardist's concern each year to make sure he and his team are coming to Young. However, he tells me he has no desire to run an orchard: "That lidja (boss) is OK, why would I want to do all his work?" What he wants is a good boss - "which that one is" - and the assurance that his job is always open to him - and he will work hard and long hours to make sure that orchard does as well as others, often advising his boss. Obviously he also gets paid, and by the bucket, so there is something in his effort for himself.

Nevertheless, although I was given good advice concerning the packing and transportation of cherries, there was little evidence that anyone appreciated what happened to them after they left Young, nor how they played their part, for instance, in the European economy of prestige. The significance of the early picking - with the exorbitant prices it commands in Sydney ($100 per kilo in 1985) - was lost. The profit motives or status of the orchardist was of no interest. It was enough to know that the picking had gone well, the cherries were packed and sent away and the boss was pleased - so there would be work next year.

The use of the term "lidja" is interesting in the context of this discussion. It is the Wiradjuri term for a person of importance in ritual ceremonies and Howitt (1904:303) describes the lidja-lidja as the people who gave orders to others. He maintains that they were always medicine men. Reay (1949:93) noted that it was used in the 1940s to refer to persons of significance in the economic realm. Although it is now translated as boss, I
have in fact only ever heard European bosses described in this way. Europeans become the "looking after" people (see also, Anderson 1983; Thiele 1982; von Sturmer 1984c).

The few Kooris who have been employed in the town have had long and excellent work records of which they are proud. They explain this in terms of the good relationships they have with their employers and the fair ways in which they have been treated. Kooris respect the ideal of loyalty to their employers but they explain that they will not work for someone they do not respect. Several Kooris have told me they did not "stick at a job" because they did not find a congenial working environment and it is this rather than financial considerations which are uppermost. One woman described her years as a domestic on a station as work that she really enjoyed and she spoke with respect for her employer. However, the woman she worked for would not let her attend an Aboriginal dance being held in the nearby town at which she would see some of her relatives. In deference to her employer she did not attend the dance but left the station the next day, feeling that after her years of hard work her employer should have been more considerate: "I wasn't going to stay there if she was that kind of person".

Whilst lack of consideration on the part of employers is given as the main reason for not sticking at a job, it is an inadequate explanation of Koori attitudes to work. The Koori work ethic is based on "getting on in life", as is the European one, but with a significant difference (see also Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry 1977:226). Whether or not one works, and in what ways, has to do with the way in which one defines oneself in the intra-Koori world. Employment for subsistence is not really an issue. Social service payments, pensions and short-term work, such
as fruit picking, suffice in providing for the purchase of desired items such as a vehicle or Christmas presents. Long-term employment is valued for the extent to which it enhances one's life chances - which are politically rather than economically defined. Some people feel no encouragement to work because it will bring them no rewards in political or social terms: it will make no difference to the way in which they are located within the Koori domain. Those who currently have full-time employment with long-term prospects are usually either part of the political "core" or have located themselves socially and geographically outside the Koori community. Having a greater income does not necessarily enhance one's life chances. Work is frequently assessed by Europeans only in terms of rewards such as economic and status enhancement. It can, however, have disadvantages for Kooris in terms of its impact on social relations, including the consequences of failure to achieve certain expectations.

10.2.3: Money in the present context

There is an interesting distinction made by Kooris between welfare money and wages. I have noticed that welfare money is expected to be shared by kin to a much greater extent than wages: some receipts are seen as part of the redistributive process, others are not. Money that comes to an individual through effort or initiative he or she has taken, and without which there would have been no money, is shared in limited ways and subject to greater discretionary privilege on the part of the owner. This not only applies to wages but also to windfalls, such as winnings from the TAB, lotteries and local card games. Money won at cards, for instance, may be used to buy drinks for those who formed part of the card game and thus have played a part in the winner's gain.
Others would have no claims, even close kin or those owed money.

Money that is expected to be shared with a wider range of people is that for which one has not had to expend one's own money or labour to obtain. There is therefore a difference between welfare money and wages. The former is money that kin, for instance, feel they can lay claim to to a greater extent than wages. The same applies to government grants for community purposes. These grants set up a competitive arena in which all feel they should gain — and yet they seldom can, except in rare cases such as donations of presents which are distributed to all children at the annual Christmas party. The source of allocations, and whether specified for an individual or several (as in the case of child endowment on which children themselves may make demands) determines the range of people who may demand redistribution. The argument justifying redistribution however remains much the same: you have what you have because of the part I/we played — by providing board for someone who is unemployed, by joining in a card game in which someone won, or by simply by virtue of being a member of the community which applied for funding.

Sansom (1980:245) has also noted the difference between the wage and welfare dollar, claiming that the wage dollar amongst Aborigines dependent upon a rural market is subject to seasonal work and thus is unstable. In contrast, the welfare dollar is wholly predictable:

The welfare dollar has a wide and general significance: welfare payments are not monopolized by those who receive them but are treated as a communal asset.

He also noted that the rules of exchange differ accordingly. I do not think this is entirely because the wage dollar is unstable. Among Kooris, the wage dollar represents the fruit of one's own labour — the result of individual action and therefore ownership
of that action. The welfare dollar in terms of individual pensions is gratuitous, irrespective of persons and transmits no special status to its recipients (except in so far as this is occasionally negative). Sansom (1980:250) maintains that it is control of the welfare dollar, as secure income, which contributes to the power of "Masterful Men who emerge as camp comptrollers" (suggesting that it is also the case that, in the north of Australia, work may be disadvantageous to one's social status). However, in Cowra the situation is rather different. The most influential people are almost all wage earners with stable employment. They are not expected by virtue of their social position to share their wages. The receipt of more money through wages is not the source of their authority - it is more often their community status which opens up employment opportunities. Nor do such people have access to, or control over, money flowing to other people as individuals. What they do share in common with Sansom's study, however, is their looking after role. This is not acquired through protection money (Sansom 1980:251) or wage levels but through their roles as administrators of the public money, the government grants for community use: in other words, to the money upon which the greatest number of people may make competitive demands.

Thus it is not work per se, or income levels, which determine whether people gain authority as decision-makers and definers in the community but access to resources which flow on to the whole community. Maddock (1974:70-71) also notes that little is known of traditional Aboriginal economic conceptions. However:

... all men are caught up in the same patterns of exchange, none can become superior merely from disparities in the value of objects exchanged, assuming such disparities exist.

In the present, the effective negotiator with government or the
effective orator at meetings may still be unemployed, receiving a "pension" or engaged in employment which Europeans might consider to be demeaning. Work in itself is not seen as a route to power because money as wages does not build up into power. Nor is work seen as a stepping stone to bigger and better things. There are a few jobs available which do both – provide an income, and contribute to authority because of the nature of the work.

10.2.4: Shaping the Wiradjuri domain

From this study of economic perspectives it is now possible to identify constraints which shape the way of being within the Wiradjuri domain. These constraints demonstrate that social life in the Wiradjuri domain is integrated and not a chaotic, ad hoc mixture of old and new – vestiges from the past plus European influence. There is an underlying logic which gives form and content to social relations which is, as Godelier (1977) has illustrated in his study of the Mbuti, discerned through the identification of social and material constraints.

The first constraint which can be identified is the limitation on accumulation or exploitation of resources. This was as true of the Wiradjuri past as it is now. The material environment did not provide scope for accumulation and thus for the long-term control of certain groups or individuals over others. Resources were owned and distributed at a local level. At this level there was a stratification based on sex, age and certain skills, but rules of distribution ensured the responsibility of those in favoured environments, or those with ritual power, for others. This did not lead to a fixed stratification or the centralization of political or economic control across groups.
In the present situation a similar constraint still operates as a result of the way in which Kooris have been located in Australian society. Restricted access to education and employment opportunities, and a high dependence upon welfare and government funding has not given rise to a situation in which Kooris as individuals or groups have accumulated or established centralized political control by virtue of resource control. The potential for individuals to control others continues to be based on localized and restricted allocative powers, defined for the most part by Europeans. This also implies a constraint on co-operative ventures or collectivization. The domain within which one is obligated to share is kept small. Each person and each community guards the right to what they do own and respects the rights of others to own, exclude (as long as it is not oneself) and share in their own ways. The autonomy of people and communities is valued and stratification based on differentials in resource extraction and allocation is played down – which is possible because the benefactors are external to the domain. Cross-cutting kin ties help to counteract attempts by any one kin unit to dominate others but kin links also ensure that people can maximize channels of resource access and distribution.

All people own something of value to the community, over which they exercise rights. This may be money, local or historical knowledge, particular skills, jokes or stories or significant links to others inside or outside the community. This also means that everyone has something to share or to distribute. The extent to which resources may be used to exercise control is limited to their significance. Rarely does it allow a person to dominate all or even most spheres of the lives of others but it does not preclude a person becoming dominant for specific contexts.
There are Wiradjuri Kooris who maintain the right to initiate events and define the Wiradjuri world. It is particular Kooris who are remembered for achievements during the mission era, their kin who own the stories about them which are recalled as part of on-going Koori identity formation. An action field is in the control of individuals - whether reaping positive or negative results. There are always people - not forces - to herald or blame within and beyond the domain. Kooris have a strong sense of themselves as actors, but also perceive themselves as acted upon - as the unwilling victims of the decisions or actions of others which account for failures or shortcomings.

The Australian capitalist system is not so encompassing of social relations that it does not enable groups to reproduce forms of relationships which are outside of or irrespective of the relations of capital - such as family relations and the relations which Kooris develop amongst themselves. Its spheres of influence are limited. Kooris have been excluded from relations of capital in many instances. European indifference has relegated Kooris to the lowest social rung in European terms. The appropriation by Europeans of components of the Wiradjuri environment has effectively denied Kooris control of resources whereby they might have had something of value upon which to base relations with Europeans (other than expendable labour). Europeans have thus imposed a constraint on the ability of Kooris to negotiate their relations with those of other domains.

The location of Kooris within the welfare sector of the Australian capitalist economy has not obliged them to participate in the labour relations of capital - although they have been periodically significant and involved - nor has it impeded them from developing alternative modes of relating. It is quite
feasible for Kooris to devise and maintain modes which are different from those found amongst Europeans generally and inconsistent with the label "black poor white people" as an assessment of the assumed inevitability of absorption.

The establishment of the reserves and the fringe camps constrained Kooris to maintain their localized structures. Obligations to others have continued to be based on limited resources distributed locally amongst kin units according to principles of closeness and seniority. This constrains any tendency to merge units: others are distinguished by virtue of being not related or only distantly so, or by virtue of the fact that they come from elsewhere and do not have locally-defined rights. The identification of Kooris with specific localities maintains the social differentiation of groups.

Counteracting any tendency for groups to become inward looking or to restrict their involvement is the requirement that Kooris marry outside of their kin network, thus encouraging the mobility of people between communities which links people in networks without submerging their distinctiveness vis-à-vis each other. The distinct identity of locally-defined communities is maintained over time but not their composition; likewise, household units can be identified in a community but their composition in terms of personnel is fluid. This also operates as a constraint on the development of hierarchized power. Kin networks are not tied to a locality (there is no concept of lineage) and people can move around within the beat provided by their network. It is not possible to build up a power hierarchy within a local community if it is flexible in composition - people who do not want to accept the authority of others need only move away. Thus, those who do exercise authority can only do so if they
gain the respect and acceptance of those they would influence: they must look after others not lord it over them. There is no constraint within the Wiradjuri domain which encourages the acceptance of the standing over of one person by another.

The need to work with others so as to present a united front to government does encourage people to work together but, at least at present, this is restricted by the use to which allocations have to be put (defined by European allocators). This augments local involvement but also local autonomy as allocations for community use impedes co-operative ventures on a wider scale. Kooris have expressed concern that amendments to the Land Rights Act threaten to re-structure the allocative process in such a way as to give greater control to regional and State land councils or to the government. There is an implicit recognition that the power structures which may emerge as a result would not only increase inter-group conflict and competitiveness but also disturb the autonomy/egalitarian balance in possibly traumatic ways.

The constraints of the past were logically similar, giving rise to structurally comparable modes of relating. Transformation in the structure and content of social relations has been possible and their reproduction over time has not necessitated radical changes in the underlying logic. However, whilst I argue that Koori economic perspectives are similar to those employed in the Aboriginal past, this does not imply that these are merely vestiges of traditional modes of thought. Europeans have actually introduced a structurally similar system of constraints, enabling the transformation but persistence of distinctive Koori modes of social reproduction. The vagaries and inconsistencies of the weather have become those of non-Aboriginal Australians' actions and attitudes, giving rise to government policies which have
governed Wiradjuri lives and shaped their economic dependence.

There is an unvoiced assumption in much literature concerning Aborigines that the specific religious and economic forms of pre-European Aboriginal life held their societies together in some essential way with the result that, if these were destroyed, everything else would be lost also. Godelier (1977:7-8) aptly refers to this thinking as an inversion of cause and effect. Referring to the Mbuti he maintains that:

What is both revealed and concealed in this [the religious] mode of representation, what is presented to their positive and illusory actions, is nothing other than the articulation, the invisible suture of their social relations, their inner foundation and for, in the guise and attributes of an omnipresent Subject, omnipotent and benevolent, The Forest ... the phantasm is itself part of the content of these social relations and not just the derisory and aberrant reflection of a reality which might have an existence apart (1977:9, emphasis in original).

The invisible suture, the inner foundation of Koori social life today is not based on the way in which social relations are organized, beliefs held in common, or in particular activities. In these there is variability and flexibility - which have given rise to an assumption that no ordered system exists. The Koori system is integrated at a different level, in the patterned interaction which stems from constraints on accumulation, hierarchization, collectivization and social mobility.

Wiradjuri Kooris were able to respond to the re-shaped environment in terms of their own styles of relating to a much greater extent than has been appreciated. This way of being, of perceiving the world of social relationships, has not continued in a static and unchanged state but can be discerned when Koori activities are examined in terms of both their social content and their broader interactive context.

These constraints also suggest that distinctive Koori social
relations are reproduced because they remain outside of relations of capital. Their persistence might seem to imply a continuance of welfare dependency. However, alternatives have yet to be explored. The challenge is whether Kooris can attain a greater degree of economic and political independence - as expressed in their aspirations for self-determination - without losing the effects of those constraints (such as on accumulation or centralized control) which now enhance the particular modes of relating which they value. However, the Wiradjuri domain is continually influenced by those of Europeans and future trends are not predictable given the complex interactions between Wiradjuri and Europeans domains as well as others overseas.
CHAPTER 11: A WAY OF BEING IN CONFLICT

11.1: The impact of change

11.1.1: Colonization and stress

The question I want to pursue in this chapter is whether Koori fighting activity is destructive or constitutive of social relations. A disintegration approach posits the former. The latter suggests that fighting may be a form of adjustment — of reconciliation of the conflicts, contradictions and ambiguities which arise in social life. These different approaches to assessing the role and significance of fighting amongst Aboriginal people can be described by looking at the polar views as exemplified by Wilson (1982) in Weipa South, Queensland, and Burbank (1980) among the Nunggubuyu at Numbulwar.

Wilson's study focusses on the reasons for and the consequences of violent fights and assaults. It stemmed from his involvement in the trial of Alwin Peter in which the defence took the line that Peter's killing of his *de facto* wife, and Aboriginal fighting and violent activity generally, were a consequence of the demoralizing effects of colonization. He maintains that such violence is anti-social both from an Aboriginal as well as a European point of view.

Burbank's study is a descriptive account of various types of fighting and the reasons people give for fighting. She set out to discover how aggressive acts are conceptualized, structured and interpreted by the Nunggubuyu (1980:20). She maintains that fighting is distinguished by these people as a distinct sub-set of activities which are generally associated with aggressive behaviour (1980:38). Fights are accepted and structured activities: they are "not examples of cultural disintegration but
rather examples of culture at work" (1980:124).

Koori fights drew my attention for several reasons. If fighting was a product of social disintegration, why were there not more signs of trauma and unease among witnesses? Why, if this was a disorderly event, were the referees and venues established? This led to me question the equation frequently made by social scientists in western societies between fighting as a physically violent activity and social disintegration. In a detailed analysis of Koori fighting activity (Macdonald 1985, 1986) I found that Kooris perceive, manage and express conflict in ways which differ from those of Europeans. Koori expressions and controls are, however, subject to constraints imposed by Europeans who believe their ways of being ought to prevail, not only in the European domain but also in the Koori domain. However, in reviewing literature from various parts of the world, it became clear to me that institutionalized fighting was a socially legitimate and honourable activity in many societies. In fact, contemporary western nations were amongst the few who restricted legitimate physical fighting to war or sport (see Macdonald 1985).

Catherine Berndt (1978:146,159n) has pointed out that references to aggression (including fighting) are so numerous in Australian Aboriginal anthropology as to cover virtually the entire range of published literature on most traditional Aboriginal topics:

Almost every volume and article that deals with Australian Aboriginal life contains some material that bears either directly or obliquely on the subject of aggression. Interpersonal fights and quarrels, injuries and deaths, sorcery accusations and charges, sharp dealing in the economic sphere, bear witness to the range of actualities as well as possibilities in this direction (1978:146).

However, it is also true that there is little theoretical debate,
either in the Aboriginal literature or in that dealing with other people, which directly addresses fighting as an activity. It is often subsumed under topics which deal with aggression or conflict more generally. As a result, descriptions of fights are plentiful but analysis is sparse (see further, Macdonald 1985). Cross-cultural comparison is not easy or perhaps appropriate, if only because the activity of fighting cannot be assumed to have the same meaning everywhere, despite apparent similarities in form. There are domains in which particular forms of fighting are regarded as legitimate social activities, and others where they are not. The critical variables appear to be the extent to which there is competitive access to valued resources, the demands that technologies of production make upon people, and whether the aggregation under study is economically dependent upon another.

Below I examine the view that Aboriginal fighting is a consequence of social and personal stress generated by experiences of colonization. I focus on Wilson's view that Aboriginal society has been destroyed and Aboriginal people are unable to exercise social and personal control: he assumes violence to be the common response to the problems and difficulties Aboriginal people have had forced upon them by Europeans in their everyday life (Wilson 1982:15). This approach is frequent where tensions and hostilities are reputedly set up because one group suppresses another. Crain and Weisman (1972:44-46), for instance, claim that "in the case of blacks [in the United States of America], we are witnessing an excessive inhibition" and that "every black sees himself as a victim of white people's prejudice, discrimination, and violence". The assumption, like that of Wilson's, is that blacks cannot tolerate "the sort of frustrations most people must put up with" (Crain and Weisman 1972:40). Fights, and other forms of
activity defined as anti-social or violent, are the responses of frustrated, helpless people enmeshed in the problems that colonization or dependency brings.

To Wilson, the causes of Queensland Aboriginal violence are:

... embedded in history, in the destruction of traditional Aboriginal society which occurred with the advent of the first whites. This process of Europeanisation led to the forced removal from one area to another, to the aimless mobility and marriage patterns found in so many Aborigines, and to the eradication of most of the traditional ways of relating to each other. These factors, combined with poor employment, health and housing conditions on white-owned and white-controlled Aboriginal communities, produce community disintegration, purposelessness and feelings of personal worthlessness. Such a condition has an inevitable result: people become violent towards others and themselves (1980:20-21).

He goes on to assert that the dynamic structure on Aboriginal reserves is non-functioning. In Weipa South it has been so distorted by stifling white control and intertribal mixing that few traditional features remain:

When the dreamtime disintegrated, when whites broke, possibly forever, the link between past, present and future, hopelessness and desperation became endemic in Aboriginal community life (1982:34).

There are several arguments presented by Wilson which I have already demonstrated do not apply in the Wiradjuri situation. In contrast to his observation that fighting was not accepted by the community, amongst Kooris there is acceptance of fighting as a category of social action, even though there may be criticism or regret of the manner in which particular fights are conducted. Mobility and marriage patterns are not aimless: it is difficult to ascertain what an aimless marriage pattern would refer to, unless one is to assume the traditional modes to be the only ones possible. Wiradjuri Kooris do not describe relationships within their domain as disintegrating and few people describe themselves as purposeless or worthless. Perhaps it is more pertinent to ask
who defines the criteria for distinguishing what is purposeless or worthless.

Although Wilson does recognize that Aboriginal people fought amongst themselves prior to any impact Europeans brought to bear on their social life, he maintains that present day fighting does not reflect traditional practices because "randomness and spontaneity characterise the attacks" (1982:32). This is rarely the case among Kooris, although it may seem to be so to a casual observer with no knowledge of the persons involved and their histories. Wilson's description of traditional violence is that it was a symbolic act "with sacramental qualities". Koori fighting also has its ritualized and symbolic aspects. It cannot be reduced simply to factors such as poverty, low self-esteem and a sense of futility in life (Wilson 1982:32).

It is also clear from early Wiradjuri data and other literature from all over Australia that forms of fighting activity were and are common in the Aboriginal world. Wilson's highly romanticized depiction of the dreamtime and traditional Aboriginal conflict expression shows a poor grasp of what has been written about conflicts, antagonisms and their management in the past (see, for example, Warner 1937, Meggitt 1962, Hiatt 1965; and Graham 1863, McGuire 1902 and Musgrave 1926 on nineteenth century Wiradjuri fights and battles). The literature generally suggests a high level of domestic assault and homicide, punitive night raidings in retaliation for wrongs as well as the more ritualized spearings and ceremonial battles. Nevertheless, there are contradictions in early accounts which, on the one hand, stress the mildness and good-naturedness of Aborigines and, on the other, their aggressiveness. Catherine Berndt (1978:158) pointed out:
Statements about Australian Aborigines as mild, unaggressive people are often misunderstood, because they are relative statements. ... It was not that, traditionally, Aborigines never fought, never wounded or killed one another in the heat of the moment or in planned revenge, and so on. But such statements do mean that, as far as we know, they did not delight in violence for its own sake, or in inflicting harm and injury on others. They were on the whole humane people (emphasis in original).

A recognition that traditional features have been distorted is insufficient evidence upon which to assert that a presently constituted community is distorted, or that current patterns of fighting are. The validity of sociological and anthropological assessments of social life does not rest on notions of an ideal state which existed only in the historical past — except in colonial studies. This is a violent and evaluative form of synchronic analysis, a justification for the negative ascriptions of people in a process of colonization: put simply, they cannot cope. Baxter and Almagor's (1978:3) words come to mind when they asserted that:

Colonial obsessions with primitive unruliness and the supposed propensity to raiding and warfare of many African peoples, especially pastoral zones, [were] used to justify their colonisation.

Wilson's approach perpetuates the "culture vacuum" myth. He has achieved the very thing which he criticizes in the colonial process — the insertion of white values and beliefs into his analysis of Aboriginal social interaction. The perpetuation of this myth encourages a view of Aborigines, indeed any people in situations of relative powerlessness, which admits of no autonomous way of being. Many of the traits Wilson describes in perjorative terms, such as aimless marriage and mobility, and indeed fighting itself, have their own logic when freed from the values of the European domain.
11.1.2: Europeans as models for Aborigines

A related approach argues that Aborigines styled themselves on models derived from European activity, but assimilated these in a distorted manner. Thus, it also interprets Aboriginal activity as an inability to respond adequately to the process of colonization. Rankin (1971:15), for instance, found it hardly surprising that Aboriginal people without a traditional control system to draw upon would copy whites:

Alcohol beverages were introduced to them by European settlers and generally used for trading, seduction and deception, i.e. the early history of alcohol misuse by Australian aboriginals was a consequence of European attempts to encourage them to drink excessively ... It is not surprising that those Aboriginals who are becoming assimilated, copy the pattern of their Western associates (see also, Albrecht 1974:36; Bain 1974:49).

The modelling thesis has been posited for fighting as well as drinking (Wilson 1982). There were certainly sufficient models for both behaviours available. Early colonial Australia was noted for high levels of violence (see, for example, Saint 1971). On the gold fields there was constant brawling in the many saloons which had sprung up over night. Pugilism was a popular past-time which attracted as spectators and participants people from all echelons of society and there was a great deal of money invested in it. Interest in it was not confined to the "colonially depraved", nor for that matter was heavy periodic alcohol consumption (Saint 1971:5). Fights brought about alliances and communication between different domains in ways which have not been achieved to the same extent by any other form of sport or activity. Indeed, fighting sports seem to have a universal fascination which transcends social barriers.

Travelling shows have been a part of the Australian tradition and especially the boxing tents. Show men would taunt the locals,
urging them to fight to prove themselves a champion or to defend the honour of their town. There were plenty of people who were prepared to put their money down to do so. Many Kooris fought in the boxing tents. They describe it as one arena in which they were able to stand up for themselves, to beat the white man and achieve some measure of esteem. The sport of boxing allowed them to use skills they excelled in and also contained a code which they could respect. London prize rules may have been called "no rules at all" but were still far removed from the violence of the frontier and the gold fields (see Roberts 1963). The rules Kooris observe in their fighting today reflect boxing's Marquis of Queensberry code, introduced by Europeans to control pugilism in the European domain. It also proved readily adaptable by Kooris to interpersonal fighting within Koori domains.

Wilson (1982:10) suggests that, more recently, Aborigines on Queensland reserves have emulated white working class models of brawling. In New South Wales, at least in country areas, the extent of exposure Kooris have had to white "working class counterparts" is difficult to gauge, although Beckett (1965:37) argued that heavy use of alcohol among Aborigines in the late nineteenth century in western New South Wales was no doubt modelled on the pastoral workers' "alcoholic debauch" each time they got their pay. Oral histories suggest that Kooris in Cowra saw themselves as highly selective in terms of acquiring skills, behaviours or attitudes generally from Europeans. In the present they are very critical of the manner in which whites behave in various contexts, including the manner in which whites fight. They often state that their own approach is superior because they do not see their fighting activity as indiscriminate or purposeless brawling.

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Whilst European fighting activity in the past probably did provide models, the more so as Aborigines themselves became involved in the boxing troupes, there is no evidence that it either initiated or determined Koori fighting. What various white models of violence are more likely to have done is encourage the maintenance of levels and expressions of Wiradjuri fighting rather than instigate them. Boxing codes may have represented an attractive means of introducing alternate styles and controls in fighting which were acceptable to Europeans, thus enabling the Wiradjuri to continue a meaningful social activity. Early European fighting activity would have legitimated or facilitated a transformation at the level of content but not necessarily meaning: preferred Koori modes of dealing with conflicts are retained.

11.1.3: Fighting and alcohol

I now turn to fighting activity in relation to another commonly given index of disintegration: a high rate of alcohol consumption. Stress and maladaptive responses to disintegrated community life are said to produce high rates of alcohol abuse amongst Aborigines which then leads to violence (Kamien 1978:145). Wilson maintains that an Aboriginal "alcohol culture" has emerged to restore autonomy, pride and self-esteem after generations of white domination. This culture "promotes drinking and fighting as positive virtues" and gives "Aboriginal life a distinctive quality, one which emphasises the present and not the future" (Wilson 1982:57-58). The inference is that alcohol determines not only the fact that Aboriginal people fight but also shapes the totality of their contemporary social experience.

Many Kooris as well as non-Aboriginal people do see
drunkenness, or "the grog", as a major cause of fights today. Although systematic reporting of intoxication levels among Kooris has not been done in cases of arrest/conviction for street offences, including assault, a very high percentage are estimated as having been influenced by alcohol (New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board 1982:43, 81-82). Alcohol has produced major problems for Aboriginal people (Kamien 1978:145) but the still prevalent belief amongst Europeans that Aborigines have more trouble with alcohol than other racially-defined groups has never been substantiated by research (Rankin 1971:15). This is not the place to discuss the reasons for this: Aborigines are only too well aware of the health problems alcohol creates. In the words of one Koori, it is "the white man's poison". What is of interest here is the general argument one encounters frequently that Kooris fight because they drink.

Being drunk can sometimes be used by Kooris as an excuse for having got into an argument but it does not always carry much weight as being drunk does not enable a person to claim non-responsibility. An exception may be made when someone goes "into the horrors" after very heavy drinking. In the horrors, people are likely to become very violent, causing damage to property around them. Such violence is not regarded as fighting. Kooris know which drinkers tend to get to this stage and how to spot the signs that a cheerful, involved drinking companion is about to get morose, angry and almost uncontrollable: to go off his or her head. It is regarded as a sickness rather than as anti-social behaviour and those around tend to be watchful and caring of such people, getting them calm enough to take home.

Although Kooris in an after-fight situation may claim that they only "got mad" because they were drunk (see also, Wilson
it is seldom the cause of any but casual flare-ups between drinking partners which are over as quickly as they start. More usually, people become angry or upset about an incident or remark and "sit on it" until the right opportunity arises to challenge the other person. This would frequently be when sitting around drinking with others – both the effects of the alcohol and the social environment being conducive to a challenge. Kooris often describe the effects of alcohol as an exacerbator of a situation which exists irrespective of drinking habits (see also, Stewart 1982:7). However, they do attribute certain consequences of fights to alcohol, such as unintended injury and fighting which becomes "dirty". 

Despite the high correlation between adult fighting and alcohol there are facts which suggest that even a heavily intoxicated person does not transgress fighting norms without reason. In the Wiradjuri cases studied, inter-generational fights between kin were extremely rare, as were inter-sex fights with the exception of spouses. Even very drunk people observed certain prohibitions on physical confrontations, such as between inter-generational kin or affines and authority figures. I have on occasion seen very drunk persons "rant and rave and carry on", destroy furniture or mutilate themselves but not attempt to lash out at persons in their fighting prohibition range. Conversely, people have also explained their unwillingness to fight as being due to their awareness that they were too drunk.

When alcohol is given as the reason for the lack of control which leads to fights (see Wilson 1982:61), there are two assumptions operating. First, that drinking itself is not controlled and, second, that fights are not controlled. The rationale that alcohol causes people not to be responsible for
their actions has been common in Australia generally. It is not always held to be an acceptable defense among Kooris, especially if severe harm has been inflicted upon someone whilst the attacker was drunk. Drunks are generally seen to have as much control over their actions as they choose to have. There is a difference between someone who is drunk but still accountable and someone who is not responsible for their actions. The latter may be "silly in the head", implying that they are a bit crazy, backward or inconsistent at the best of times, with or without alcohol and that is "just the way they are". They may also be "bad drinkers" who either always seem to get to the stage of falling asleep or "go into the horrors". For the most part, in the known community, people are aware of the risks and take precautions accordingly.

There are nine hotels and four bottle shops in Cowra and the closest are less than two kilometres from Erambie. Alcohol is as readily available, if not more so, in Cowra as in the Queensland reserves in which Wilson (1982) attributed high levels of violence to the availability of alcohol (see also Trigger et al 1983). Cowra has its fair share of very heavy drinkers of beer, port ("wine") and methylated spirits ("groom"). Wilson's study, however, suggests that the levels of violence in Queensland are very much higher than in Cowra and that what would be defined in Cowra as dirty fighting is much more prevalent. The availability of alcohol is an insufficient explanation: other precipitators of fights, including dirty fighting, should be sought.

11.1.4: Marital violence

There is one other major arena in which a stress argument is encountered in explanations of fighting and it is a more problematic one to discuss: this is fighting between married
couples. The following remarks apply specifically to spouses: physical violence is not common on an inter-generational level, as between parents and children, with the occasional exception of a fight between parents and adult offspring (Macdonald 1985).

I have already indicated that the incidence of fighting is high amongst Wiradjuri spouses and have pointed out contradictions within the kinship system which place stress on marital relations. However, the incidence of marital violence is increasing in Australia generally and it may be that this is also affecting Wiradjuri action. Nearly four in every five homicides in the general New South Wales population are attributed to domestic disputes over such things as money, sex and alcohol, and involve relatives or close acquaintances as victims (Johnson, Ross and Vinson 1975:1). High rates of domestic violence in Australia generally have commonly been attributed to couples living in economically and socially disadvantaged groups. A 1975 study by Johnson, Ross and Vinson (1975:8) challenges this interpretation:

One of the commonest stereotypes of the man who assaults his wife is that of the working class bully who makes up for his verbal inadequacy with physical aggression. They found that there was "no evidence that wife-battering is confined largely, much less exclusively to the lower social class" (see also, Croucher, Eggar and Bacon 1981).

Fighting between spouses does not conform to the ground rules of proper fighting but is regarded by Kooris as more problematic than casual fighting. Yet Kooris do not refer to it as assault and their attitudes to spouse violence differ from those held about assaults. Of those women who do get floggings from their husbands, a significant number assert that it indicates the extent to which their husbands care for them. Other Kooris also express concern about bashings but often with comments such as "Well, she must
love him if she keeps coming back for more". While women tend to sustain more serious injuries in spouse fights this is by no means always the case.

What keeps spouses in a marital union even when one or both partners experience a high level of physical abuse? In two cases in Cowra, women have been urged by community members to leave violent husbands although neither have done so despite frequent bashings. Others do leave, or send husbands packing when they have had enough. Those who stay do not do so because they have nowhere else to go: community members will provide protection when requested. More often than not Kooris are at a loss themselves to explain why some spouses put up with all they do. Both women mentioned above say they love their husbands, that that is just the way they are, and that they know their husbands love them. It would seem that a jealous spouse is concerned about his or her rights and there is some measure of pride in knowing that one is loved to that extent. The element of choice or of voluntary association does not seem a sufficient explanation of people's tolerance of such violence — for there is no question that in the case of spouses it is usually regretted. Although an occasional death is reported from intra-spouse violence in Koori communities, none has been described in Cowra itself.

Kooris are concerned about what appear as threats to their perception of self or to self-in-control. Hence the frequent reference Kooris themselves make to the fact that both men and women are very jealous, a characteristic observed among Wiradjuri people in the early nineteenth century (Graham 1863:114; see also Berndt and Berndt 1951:99). They are jealous not so much of their spouse as of their self-esteem. Just as there are obligations, rights and an order of precedence associated with the exchanges of
goods and services amongst kin, so too are there rights in the marital relationship, the transgression of which threatens the definition of the relationship or that of the threatened partner. A man whose wife is "running around" but who chooses to turn blind eye is presumed not to care either for his wife or for his own social standing.

Spouses do exhibit a great deal of possessive suspicion, particularly when there are ex-spouses or strangers in town. The presence of these people, especially that of an ex-spouse, frequently precipitate fighting: between the present and "ex", or between the husband and wife themselves. Here again, community members are aware of the history and will sometimes predict such fights as soon as they see the visiting ex-spouse arrive. Hence the need for the presence of close kin who, if they are supportive of the marriage, will help to protect a relationship from undue abuse. However, although extra-marital relations are not openly sanctioned, and jealousy, whether or not well-founded, is the most common reason given for spouse disputes, these are rarely given as reasons for separation.

There is a form of rivalry informally recognized between a previous husband and a current one, similar to the institutionalized Kadata rivalry relationship of the Gonja (Goody 1962:32). Amongst the Gonja, prior 'ownership' is distinguished from present rights of access to a woman. Recognition of parenthood and rights of access remain after a separation or divorce and are extended to kin of the non-resident ex-spouse. Thus usually there is no complete estrangement between the parents of the children. Among the Wiradjuri, fathers, for instance, have visiting rights and children will frequently spend holiday time or longer periods with their father or his kin, particularly paternal
grandparents. Men are criticized if they do not visit their children, whatever the nature of the relationship which prevails between them and their ex-wives.

11.2: Conflict among Kooris

11.2.1: Different attitudes towards physical violence

In contrast to the views put forward by Wilson, Burbank argues in her study that fighting is a legitimate activity amongst the Nunggubuya. She maintains that there are no random fighting opponents (1980:134), and that being drunk "is not seen as a justifiable reason for fight" (1980:150). The Nunggubuya also adhered to ground rules, including the requirements that the fight should be public (1980:204), and should not result in serious injury (1980:91). Intervention, except by close kin, is not acceptable (1980:104) although Burbank does note that "the perception that sides are uneven is a recognized cause for entering the fray". She attributes this to an Aboriginal preoccupation with balance in antagonistic encounters (1980:216). Nunggubuya fighting is "a structured activity patterned by and predicated by cultural rules" (1980:124).

Burbank points out that fighting is expected behaviour in certain circumstances. Relatives of a woman may tell her husband to hit her if she is silly or lazy, and a man or woman are "expected to fight with their faithless spouse and the intruder" (1980:97). Incest, vandalism, insults, theft and causing trouble generally are also reasons which provoke people into fights.

Burbank's study was conducted in at Numbulwar in "remote" Australia, where many Aboriginal people are seen by Europeans as still living a "traditionally oriented" lifestyle. Any significance of Koori fighting as a constructive and meaningful
part of Wiradjuri experience tends to be obscured by the fact that it takes place in "settled" Australia where Aboriginal lifeways are often not expected to prevail. It is expected by Europeans that Kooris will conform to the prevalent notion that fighting is an undesirable activity: in most circumstances, it is illegal. Kooris, like other Australians, are denied the right under Australian law to use physical violence as a means of sanctioning others — a right reserved by the state. Any fighting, other than that condoned in warfare or sport, is usually viewed by Europeans as a sign of instability and lack of control in social relations. Although Europeans may recognize that conflicts of different kinds, played out in various ways, are an integral and dynamic part of social relations, fighting is not included in the legitimate repertoire of conflict expression (but see Tilley 1978:179-188 on changes in conflict repertoires in the United States).

The preoccupation with the elimination of conflicts, and personal violence in particular, is claimed by Tiger and Fox (1974:242-3; see also Kolakowski 1981) to be of relatively modern origin in Western thinking, dating from the time of the Romantics, the Age of Enlightenment and its vision of social utopias. Bozeman (1976:4) sees Western theory and history as converging on a common fear of violence and points out that:

The strong stress on pacifism that is relayed by many modern Western interpretations of Christianity as the politically appropriate stance in international relations, is ... absent in present day Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and animism, as it was in earlier eras of organised Christendom (1976:18).

The shift in emphasis has not only been in Christian philosophy but in political and sociological theory and has made its impact on anthropological evaluations of conflict relations. Sorensen
(1978:29) goes so far as to claim that "even the word 'aggression' reflects the cognitive organization of our Western culture" and points to the epistemological problems this poses for cross-cultural studies. For instance, Crain and Weisman (1972), in studies of violent activity among black Americans, operate under the assumption that "inhibition of aggression is highly valued in most cultures and is certainly fundamental in an industrial society". Whilst the latter part of this statement is undoubtedly true if applied to inter-personal physical violence, anthropologists must question whether this is true of "most cultures". Crain and Weisman (1972:47) go on to "insist that the successful aggression-handler should be able to live his adult life without ever being in a fight or being arrested". However, in many cultures, the fight is the expression of courage, valour and honour, as of course warfare or street gang violence still are amongst sections of Western society.

Different attitudes towards physical and verbal aggression as a means of conflict expression and management lead to conflict between Kooris and Europeans. This affects the manner in which Kooris fight and exercise controls over fights. The Koori acceptance of conflict as a normal and constitutive part of social life might seem to imply an acceptance of a conflict view of society which is alien to a preoccupation with peace, harmony and conflict elimination. However, conflict in one form or another is an ever-present feature of social life (see, for instance, Epstein 1967:206). The issue is not how to eliminate conflict but to discover how different peoples channel it in socially acceptable forms, and whether those forms include physical confrontations.

That there are conflicts, which often lead to fights, cannot be taken as a index of anomie amongst Kooris. Although it has long
been recognized that conflict situations reveal social processes, it is common for them to be interpreted as the negative image of that which is held in high regard instead of an expression of a certain way of being. Many conflicts between individuals and groups are expressions of ever-present, even irreconcilable differences (see Bozeman 1976). In such cases, activities which can be characterized as expressions of conflict are strategic and valued modes of relating, consistent with the way in which social relations are constituted.

Wiradjuri Kooris are proud of their ability to fight, their physical capacity and their preparedness to do battle. In fighting one publicly re-affirms one's sense of self-respect, autonomy and ability to exercise control. Perhaps the best expression of the Wiradjuri ethos in regard to fighting is summed up in the oft-used expression "I wouldn't let no one stand over me". The ability to fight and stand up against another's threats or insults to self, kin or kind is greatly valued. It is a source of personal integrity.

The Koori way of perceiving and acting upon social relationships will inevitably give rise to tensions and these will result in overt conflict from time to time. The notion of value implies a ranking of choices and priorities in relation to irreducible contradictions in social life. All peoples make decisions about the value they place on self vis-à-vis others and the extent to which a social system will emphasise autonomy and control of self by self, or deference and control by others. Kooris operate on principles which emphasise autonomy, both of people as individuals and of groups in relations to other groups. These principles have to be constantly weighed up against the values placed on sharing, looking after and egalitarianism. In
continually trying to balance these demands it can be expected that expressions of conflict will be frequent and that means of managing these will tend to be as immediate as possible to avoid undue escalation.

11.2.2: Autonomy and control

Nevertheless, the strong value Kooris place on personal autonomy and integrity, which are irrespective of achievement orientations, provokes conflict whenever an "other" is perceived as threatening one's perceptions of self or of control over one's own life - threatening the domain of self. People resist the imposition of ideas or imperatives to act which conflict with their notions of self or self-in-control.

The negotiable character of many Koori relationships accentuates tensions which arise in all sorts of ways every day, occasioning abuse or insults. Most of the time, amongst people who know each other well, small annoying incidents are tolerated well. However, there are also times when people start "being a hassle", over-stepping their limits or denying others their rights. This may lead to abuse and fights, sometimes engaged in in a half-hearted or jocular fashion, other times more serious but, either way, the messages are similar: they are means of refuting or denying the right of another to impose a definition of self. An insulted or threatened person is compelled to act - to regain their right to their domain of self or to claim self-in-control.

Conflict is an inevitable part of a view that posits self-in-control. There is a contradiction in a view which states that an individual can "self-determine" which gives rise to a tension between this ideal and its impossible attainment. Failure cannot be countenanced. The threat of failure has to be averted and the
reasons for apparent failings have to be placed beyond the self—somewhere in the social environment (see Bateson 1973:293). It requires that certain risks be taken so that self-in-control can be asserted. Thus, the tension has to be confronted whenever a person deems themselves to be thwarted in their goals by another. That the relationship between them and that other person may be part of a wider social structure which impinges on their relationship is not only seen as irrelevant—it must be seen as irrelevant, for its recognition would deny one's measure of independence and control.

However, although Kooris frequently differentiate themselves from others, they are not disassociating themselves—the other is necessary in the whole process of self-definition. The paradox is that, in acting to re-assert one's autonomy or concept of self-in-control, one is at the same time confronting the social environment which is exercising a control over that self. Confrontation is therefore re-involving. Precipitators of arguments, fights or abusive language—such as insults—are impositions: they implicitly exclude people, forcing them from the arena of what is socially acceptable. In confrontation Kooris are re-involving themselves, recognizing their existence as part of a social whole upon which they are dependent. This applies as much to a minor dispute over a card game as it does to a fight that ends in bloodshed. In fighting to assert one's "right to be" one is also fighting for the right to be a member of the community rather than excluded on the basis of shame or failure. A fight leads to social involvement—the fighting individual is involving him or herself as part of the group rather than walking away.

The fact of fighting among Kooris acknowledges tensions and allows the resultant conflicts to be expressed and set aside, at
least temporarily. This constitutes it as a technique necessary for the continuance of sociality. Fights establish or maintain communication rather than impede it. They bring people together but, in doing so, distinguish them from each other. To avoid conflict completely may mean the discontinuing of a relationship or its redefinition in terms of inequality and deference on the part of one or other of the parties. Thus, a constructive relationship can be viewed not as one in which conflicts have been eliminated but one in which their expression is managed within tolerable levels.

The exercise of control, through physical violence and other means, by people acting on their own behalf can be expected to be frequent when the autonomy of persons as individuals takes precedence over hierarchical social structures in which a monopoly on forms of violence, and on appropriate intervention/management criteria, are the preserve of specified rulers. In a situation in which it is essential to stress egalitarianism, sharing and commonality, centralized or hierarchical controls negate these values. Kooris have developed means of conflict expression and control which do not institute unequal power relations. The latter assume that relationships are defined in terms of deference, thus denying autonomy and egalitarianism. To deny people egalitarianism through the legitimation of unequal worth or unequal power (as through insults or standover tactics) would be not only to redefine the relationships in question but the values upon which Wiradjuri social life is presently founded. Whilst egalitarianism and sharing are highly valued within the Wiradjuri domain, what is perhaps not so readily recognizable is that these operate as controls on a competitive and negotiable environment even though, at the same time, they are a source of tension. Competitiveness
and egalitarianism go hand in hand, as do sharing and autonomy.

Dealing with conflicts on a one-to-one basis, as in a fight between protagonists as two individuals, also operates as a constraint on the diffusion or merging of groups as feuding parties. In a fight, the audience alignment temporarily reflects community differentiations. This may be one reason why Kooris do not dwell on the causes of fights: to do so may mean articulating divisions which are best left unstated.

Paradoxically, the emphasis on autonomy does not create divisiveness but ensures conflict control. The high value placed on egalitarianism may lead from time to time to competitive and tension-provoking situations because there are in fact differentials in allocative power and knowledge. Egalitarianism is not a fiction: it is a means of ensuring that individuals maintain the right to define their own place in the world and not be stood over by others. The value put on egalitarianism and autonomy is a means of ensuring that a person or group will not mobilize others and assume power. It provides for more strategic action and freedom of choice in any situation. Allegiances can be formed, dissolved and manipulated to a greater extent if one retains autonomy. People emphasise their differences and differentiation is assertive: it brings about a sense of self vis-à-vis others. Kooris will resist the imposition of sameness ("Don't you lump me in with that lot") or domineering, "stand-over" attitudes.

It is possible to understand attitudes towards spouse violence in this light. A couple are conceived as a single unit with the right to independence from the control of others. Although they may fight between themselves, they will stand together to fight anyone who tries to intervene in their relationship. Intervention in a marital dispute denies a couple
their status as an autonomous unit. The principle that to interfere in the relationship of others is to legitimate interference with one's "self" applies to Koori attitudes towards others more generally: other people can "do their own thing" as long as they, in turn, allow the same for others.

11.2.3: Conflict management

Kooris differ in their assessments of whether fighting has increased in incidence or consequence. Fights today are not necessarily seen as being as fair as in the past. One woman explained:

Nowadays they just king hit you, hitting one another with irons and that. The difference? - Well it's like this. When the old people were alive - I can't describe it, sort of - they were more interested in people, families and that. The new generation today don't care, and there are no old people to tell them right from wrong, they don't listen. When I was young my father wouldn't let us out at night. Now they just walk out.

But while some mourn the good old days, when fights were better controlled, others see today as better:

Now they (Erambie people) will stand up and have a fight, now and again someone might pelt something, but I think there's less violence now amongst 'em, you know, I used to live down there, and they used to go mad. You'd be frightened to walk outside (Cowra woman to Read 1984:81).

Such differences may reflect the respective involvement of the speakers in the community. It may also be that there have always been good and bad ingredients in fighting activities, and different ways of recalling the past.

It is lack of control over fights which Kooris see as contributing to certain situations getting out of hand. One woman highlighted the problems of control when alcohol is involved but also the fact that the old people are not able to intervene as they used to:
Groeg's got a lot to do with the fighting nowadays. In the old people's time they used to drink around, maybe one or two in a family, but not like today. There was more to do then, dances in the hall, something going on on Saturday and Sunday. Nothing to do on a mission now. On Saturdays we had sports - rounders and football, and on Sundays craft making and sewing. There's just drinking and fighting today. They ought to move the drunks - tell them they can't live there anymore. The old people used to tell them to go before, but I can't see how they could do it now.

Conflicts are managed by direct (but not necessarily immediate) confrontation of people in a spatial and social domain or sub-domain in which people are known and the consequences perceived as controllable. Koori control of fights is based on the accountability of persons to a small and known public. Each person is expected to take responsibility for themselves but there are senior kin or authority figures who can exercise controls when need be. Outside of the appropriate domain (defined in terms of those spaces and constellations of relationships revelant to the issues at hand) fights are generally avoided by means of avoidance or withdrawal: by making someone sufficiently unwelcome and unpopular that they leave the area, or by ignoring them.

Most Koori fighting employs a socially sanctioned and controlled conflict repertoire. There are, of course, particular fight situations which get out of hand from time to time: this is normal and encountered in all spheres of human activity. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some of the reasons why some fighting activity does overstep accepted ground rules. When the rule concerning limits on fighting conduct are transgressed there could be various factors operating: someone may be attempting to "stand over" others through the use of physical violence; a state of anomie or partial anomie may exist in the relationships in question; or community norms may have broken down to the extent that social life in general is anomic.
It cannot be assumed that dirty fighting is due to the non-working of social norms due to alcohol abuse, a European presence or a lack of authority. This may mask the complex network of social relationships of which the individuals are a part. Nor, of course, can it be assumed that such norms were never breached in the past. Individuals may decide to act outside the accepted conventions for a variety of reasons. The choice of a protagonist's approach reflects the value they place on both the relationship in question and their own perception of their place in the social system. The use or non-use of ground rules in fighting constitutes a relationship in a certain way at the time of the fight. The strategies employed communicate messages to a wide audience, not only to the fight opponent.

Thus, dirty fighting is strategic in itself. It is rarely the result of indiscriminate or random violence, whether or not the participants are aware of the implications of their choices or can anticipate all possible consequences. Loosely speaking, dirty fighting is about power and stand-over tactics, whilst proper fighting is about status and face-saving. Dirty fighters may have little authority or social status, and in fact their tendency to fight dirty will act against acquiring this. They do, however, have the power to stand over others, depending upon whether they can maintain a level of fear. People will tend to give them grudging respect, avoid taking issue with them or insulting them in any way. Some people who have acquired reputations as dirty fighters are often described as cowards who are not game to fight fairly. There is often a loss of community respect for such people. It generally becomes a social problem for Kooris only when people in authority resort to dirty fighting and there are no other sufficiently authoritative persons to counteract them.
As neither fighting nor wounding someone in a fight are considered to be anti-social behaviour, fighters are not condemned per se, nor are they expected to be punished or to feel any sense of guilt. When physical injury occurs beyond that intended it tends to cause feelings of remorse and sorrow on the part of the person inflicting the injury and other community members. Anger is expressed when gross injury is the result of dirty fighting and the person responsible will often leave the community until things calm down. More common is the expression of shame on the part of the injuring person's kin. The action has reflected upon valued relationships. In respect of dirty fighting, there may be a great deal of criticism of the person who inflicted undue pain or injury, sometimes remorse on the part of the injuring person and sympathy for the injured. The criticism is often very objectively expressed however. When Tim was very badly injured several women expressed to me their concern at the extent of his injury but nevertheless conceded that "he'd been asking for it" and thus "he'd had it coming to him".

11.2.4: Domains in the exercise of controls

The fact that many conflicts generated in the Wiradjuri domain are a consequence of particular constellations of values and principles of structuration does not mean there is something "wrong" in the Koori domain. It implies only that it differs from those of other Australians and demands different responses from its members. However, differences do constitute a problem in so far as Europeans have the power to disturb or devalue Koori modes of conflict expression, and thus their control.

There are particular impediments to the exercise of both controls on fighting and fighting as a means of control which have
been brought about by the desire of Europeans to eliminate fighting. Once an activity is defined as socially illegitimate it is not possible to legitimate control processes. In preventing Koori fights, or in attempting to do so, Europeans have encouraged a devaluation of long-standing Koori modes of control exercised within the Koori domain. European intervention in fight situations does not lessen tensions but provokes them. It means that fights which might once have been out in the open and conducted according to the rules now may take place in a "private" area, less subject to the scrutiny of Europeans but also often of other Kooris, and thus prone to violation of acceptable fight behaviour.

The physical and social separation of the Wiradjuri domain has enabled Kooris to exercise controls on fights in the past. However, perceptions of this domain change in the interaction with and influence of the European domain and this also affects fighting controls. An example of the way in which fight activity changes as a consequence of the redefining of a Koori domain occurred during my fieldwork in Cowra. This case highlights the significance of spatial domains in the control of social activities as well as the effects of change in the notion of public and private space within the Koori domain.

Over the two and a half years from March 1981 there was some increase in dirty fighting in Cowra with fewer proper fights. There was no significant difference in the consumption of alcohol nor in the composition of the community but there was an imposed change in the drinking environment which changed the constraints operating in certain places and amongst certain persons: from early 1983 Kooris were effectively barred, or at least distinctly unwelcome, in every hotel in Cowra.

Prior to this the most popular hotel was the Imperial, run at
the time by a European publican who has since died. It was regarded as the "black pub" or "Koori pub" as a part of the Koori domain by both Kooris and many local Europeans. Although some Kooris had their "run-ins" with the publican from time to time, he was regarded as being very fair and was well respected. There were several occasions when quarrels and fights broke out amongst drinkers in the Imperial. As soon as it looked likely that a fight was about to start the fighters would be ordered out into the backyard by onlookers or by the publican himself. The fight would take place with a referee, an audience and according to the rules and shortly after the participants would resume their drinking or go off home. Only when the violence was directed at the publican, his staff or property did he look for police intervention. His recognition that such fights could be controlled allowed them to be so. Intervention, such as trying to stop the fight or call in the police, exacerbates the situation, often leading to greater damage to persons and property as well as to costly legal actions and imprisonment.

The Imperial changed hands after this publican's death and was taken over by a man who was heard by a Koori to say before moving to Cowra that he was "going to clean the place up of blacks". Kooris maintain that he did this effectively in the same way as has occurred in other hotels: people were barred for trivial offences and told not to come back. Whilst publicans do not necessarily bar all Kooris indiscriminately there had been enough barred from various hotels during this time to make going out for a drink together as a group very difficult.

In Cowra, the Imperial provided a controlled environment with a larger and more diverse audience than is often the case elsewhere. Previously, this had applied to almost all fights on
the mission as well. However, changes in Koori perceptions of public and private space have influenced fight patterns. Koori homes, particularly since the erection of conventional European-style housing, have become defined as "private" domains similar to definitions employed by Europeans. Fencing now separates houses and results in the "private" domain beginning to extend to people's yards as well. People may have been excluded from activities or meanings over which they exercised no rights in the past, but the notion of private did not apply to space. *per se,* only to a domain constituted as space plus the people in it at a particular time. In the past, Kooris have not used the notion of private spatial domains to exclude others. Material changes in the domain thus influence perceptions and definitions — and thus social relations — within it.

This increases problems with regard to fight control. A person does not have the right to enter another's private domain at will and to do so in order to intervene in a fight one has not even seen the beginning of is likely to cause further strife. If a fight starts in a house where a group are drinking, there would need to be people present with sufficient sobriety to constitute a restraining audience, or someone with sufficient authority to control events. To ensure fair fighting, people may be sent out to fight in the street. In this case the fight becomes "public" and subject to constraints as others will gather round. Although people will respect a household head and leave a house or yard if told to, if the household head is involved in the fight there may be no-one else present who is able to intervene. Sometimes older kin are sent for by onlookers in such situations and now, on occasion, the police.

In other words, when Kooris have some control over their own
domain, and interference or intervention on the part of outsiders is or can be limited, they are able to institute controls. This applies whether we refer to the mission as a Koori domain or to a Koori's house as one person's domain. It is the existence of the wider Koori "community" domain, both spatially and socially, which has enabled the expression of social and personal tensions to be kept within manageable limits.

The tensions which provoke the kinds of conflict I have been describing are not a result of social or individual pathology but a consequence of the way people perceive their domains and interpret the actions of others as a threat to those domains. No domain, whether it be conceived in terms of self or an aggregation, is entire unto itself. It is defined in relation to other domains. Thus, actions which are perceived as potentially threatening will produce tension within a domain and in the relationship between members of one domain and another. The perception of threat is specific to that of domain: it is constituted as part of a domain and is not necessary perceived or understood in the same terms by people in other domains.

Within a Koori domain heavy drinking and fighting do not pose a threat to the Koori way of being. A "Gubba-luva" is likely to be more of a threat than a drinker or fighter—although the former is the very person members of the European domain see as being more conventional and acceptable. Fighting would only threaten Wiradjuri ways of being if a great deal of it was conducted outside of the Koori social norms. It is not possible to maintain that levels of violence are higher than in the past, nor that the consequences of fights in terms of physical injury are greater. Fighting is likely to get out of control if Kooris are unable or unwilling to exercise controls. They have been able to do so to
date because of the relative separateness of their spatial domains and the lack of private spaces within them. The contradiction in the perceptions of conflict expression and management between the Wiradjuri and European domain which lessen Koori control mechanisms are only part of the problem concerning fight control today. Other factors include the continuing process of domain redefinition as Kooris themselves incorporate more components of the European environment, such as ideas and housing.

Nevertheless, as Koori perceptions of their domain change, it can be expected that their approach to conflict expression and management will change. There is some evidence that the increasing focus on community decision-making is already changing the reasons for some fights and may be playing down the significance and meaning fights have had in the Koori repertoire. The focus on community is a result of increasing interaction with and accountability to the European domain. The source of tensions is increasingly to be found in contradictions arising from inter-domain interaction as Kooris attempt to reconcile the consequences of recolonization for their own ways of being, and to determine how to deal with intra-domain competition when avenues for autonomous action are reduced.

Thus Koori perceptions of appropriate conflict expression and management are inextricably linked to their perceptions of self and of a shared Koori domain of "us". As such, they are also linked to the complex of relationships with other domains. Patterns in fighting have changed but attitudes have remained more consistent. However, it can be anticipated that changes in Koori economic perspectives, with consequent changes in leadership styles, will also alter attitudes towards fighting as they will reconstitute Koori perceptions of their domains and themselves.
11.1 Planting a tree in Erambie's park
One of several trees planted in honour of Cowra Kooris at the opening and dedication of the park in November 1984

11.2 Enjoying the new property
Kooris relaxing on the first property purchased by the Cowra Aboriginal Land Council to extend the market garden.
PART V

TOWARDS A THEORY OF COLONIZATION
CHAPTER 12. THE PROCESS OF COLONIZATION

12.1: Domain as an analytical construct

12.1.1: The concept of domain

In previous chapters I have examined those Wiradjuri Koori practices which constitute their way of being within their own domain. I now want to return to the theory construction begun in Chapter 1 on the process of colonization. First I argue the limitations of that approach to the colonizing process which talks in terms of one society taking over another and, instead, argue the greater analytical power of the concept of domain. I then focus on the adaptations required by people engaged in a particular way of being as a result of colonization, on conflicts which emerge, and on the notions of control and legitimacy.

In discussing Wiradjuri social experience as having its primary locus within a domain I have addressed the need to find an analytical device for studying particular sets of social relationships which does not present the problems which arise with notions of "society" or "community", whether or not these terms are used by those under study. Keesing (1981:74) provides an illustration of the problem when he defines a society as all the communities, as systems of identity relationships, that are connected economically and politically such that they comprise a "kind of total social system". One could only talk of the world as a society in this sense. Ronen (1979:9) has maintained that there are "only two basic human entities: individuals and all humanity": any other groupings, however labelled, are "arbitrary formulations created by our own perceptions of ourselves vis-à-vis others".

We require a notion which allows for the identification of "arbitrary formulations" as labelled aggregations which emerge in
social interaction from time to time. The starting point for an analysis of this identification is those perceptions which people have of themselves in relation to others and which they or others use as ways of making social differentiations in particular circumstances. It is this emic view, and the circumstances in which it emerges, which enables identification of aggregate-identities and interrelationships between these identity distillations at any point in time.

Although society and community are labels commonly used to identify particular aggregations, their polysemous character makes them of little value as analytical constructs. What is identified as a society in one context is part of a society in another — there is no means of conceptualizing the relationships between different meanings and orders of the term. The concept of domain provides for an analysis of social groupings on the basis of the way people perceive themselves vis-à-vis others. At the same time it avoids any inference that a domain is entire unto itself. A domain is by definition part of a wider interactive context: it is the perceptions persons, either as individuals or aggregations, have in relationship to other persons.

The first sense in which we can conceive of a domain is as one's sense of self versus others. It starts with the individual person — the domain of self. This can then be expanded to encompass wider domains with which an individual identifies. The domain of self can be shared: the self becomes "we/us", the space becomes "ours". The other may be one or many — "you/him/her" or "them".

People know when they are in their own domain, in another's or in a "public" domain. What does this "knowing" consist of? John von Sturmer (pers.comm 1986) has described it as the particular
experiences of "self" in relation to the "other" or "others": the contexts which constitute one's perceptions of oneself as able to determine one's own way of being and to activate this in self-defined ways. That determination is never entirely "willful": to start with self-as-domain means that the concept always implies a relationship and hence constraints. In G H Mead's words, self "is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience" (1962:140).

In their own domain people perceive themselves as the definers of the terms of their own ways of being - as able to define and determine (and, to some extent, control) what constitutes an acceptable way of being. Control implies the right to define the conditions of the domain's existence as a domain. It might be argued (contra Mead) that self-realization is only possible in an environment in which one can maintain the illusion of defining the conditions of one's own existence: to the extent that others are obviously controlling or shaping one's way of being one is not in one's own domain - or one is in a domain which is being taken over (colonized) or threatened by others. The identification of a domain depends on an individual's or aggregate's perceptions rather than legally defined entities, with which it may or may not correspond. It is also the recognition of "otherness" - that an experience, relationship, object or space belongs to a domain other than one's own, except insofar as those others constitute part of one's own domain.

I have used the concept of domain as a means of distinguishing characteristics of Wiradjuri interaction from that of interaction within European domains in order to avoid imputing to the Wiradjuri domain a concreteness, boundedness or independence which the notion of society often implies.
Preoccupations throughout this century with the legislative definition of Aborigines, and a recent New South Wales case in which a Local Aboriginal Land Council was taken to court because it refused to register people who defined themselves as Kooris, suggests that there is a very pervasive ideology of boundedness operating amongst Kooris which can be appealed to when circumstances warrant. What lies behind this? Perhaps it is not notions about being Koori which are the issue but notions of rights more generally. The ability to include or exclude people from certain relationships means their inclusion or exclusion in relation to certain resources. I have suggested, for instance, that it is a particular style of determining access to and exchange of resources which determines who is or is not to be included in a kin category for Kooris. Thus, there is a social domain of kin, distinguished from the wider domain of "community" and from that of Kooris versus Gabbas - all of which variously include or exclude others from exchange relations and social experiences. The ideology of boundedness is not merely a means of differentiation. It can also be used to legitimize or to resist colonization: the fact of "otherness" or claims to distinctiveness may be used to claim rights when differences with other domains are perceived as impositions and the result of inequalities; or it may be used to maintain rights when the other threatens to redefine one's domain.

Here I find myself concurring with Sider's (1980) idea of property rather than culture as a form which social relations take. The way in which people define components of the environment as resources, and their access to resources, thus shapes the constellations and the character of the social relations in which they are involved. People's experiences of property relations -
which I will here define more broadly than Sider as, for instance, material items, knowledge, land, people as resources - have common threads which they may use to differentiate, include or exclude others. Differentiations among people indicate differential access. These need not be fixed. They may be perceived differently in different situations. In other words, an aggregation may define itself as one people or as many different persons, as members of one domain or different sub-domains, depending upon the context at hand. Any analysis of social relations needs to be able to take this variability into account.

I do not want to suggest that material or other components are in themselves determinant of social life. Here I return to my earlier argument that people appropriate available components of the environment as resources in terms of their own way of being. Sometimes this introduces contradiction and conflict, sometimes not. If Kooris were to operate a shop on Erambie under the assumption that they could do so according to "Koori-way" styles of sharing, the shop will fail to achieve social and economic expectations, and, more than that, strain existing relations because the wider economic structures of which a shop is a part in the European domain make different demands of social relations. The shop represents an appropriation of a component of the European domain. In fact, its success will depend upon its continuing to be perceived by both Kooris and Europeans as part of the European domain at the same time that it becomes part of the Koori domain. However, if the strategy did succeed, the Koori domain itself would be redefined.

In the use of the notion of domain, I have aimed to make an analytical distinction between Koori and European (or any other) experience (which is not unitary, but themselves consist of a
multiplicity of experiences) whilst also acknowledging that the Wiradjuri do not constitute a world unto themselves. Their social constructions develop out of interrelationships between Wiradjuri sub-domains and with non-Wiradjuri domains. We could conceive, similarly, of a localized business enterprise as a domain in which people operated but beyond which there are political and economic systems, import/export requirements, and so on, all of which impinge on the local shop or factory, even if not directly perceived in this way by those involved.

Clearly, it will be necessary to complement the picture given here of Wiradjuri perspectives with those of other domains with whom Wiradjuri people interact, directly or indirectly. While I have glossed the "outside world" as the European domain, the reality is more complex: there are other Aboriginal domains, and various "European" sub-domains which are influenced by other sets of interrelationships. To these could be added, not just notionally but factually, domains extending beyond Australia: for example, those relating to indigenous peoples' movements and the United Nations forums in which Wiradjuri and other Aboriginal people are involved. The analysis of any aggregation involves taking into account a broad spectrum of relationships: the notion of domain allows us to develop models which enable a delimited study but which recognize these wider relationships.

12.1.2: The experience of domain

One's own domain is where, relatively speaking (for there are always external constraints to some extent), one feels more able to define one's own way of being and to establish the acceptable activities and attitudes which should prevail. It is where a person can say, "Get out of my kitchen", or "I'll behave how I
want in my own house". It is the experience which defines certain activities of non-members as illegitimate - intrusive, trespassing, an attempt to stand over members.

A family home may be perceived as the domain of an aggregation which labels itself as "family" and agrees that it participates in this domain. Membership of a domain is not fixed. New members are born, others die. Some leave to marry, others bring in a spouse. Those who leave may or may not retain membership rights over the domain or their particular sub-domains. Residence within the spatial confines of the domain is not a prerequisite of membership, although non-residence may alter rights as compared with those of residents. Sometimes the distinction between member and non-member is blurred. The kid next door may be seen as "part of the family" whilst with other people social distance is clearly recognized. This sense of "distance" as the experience of "other" is perceived both by domain participants and by visitors, though differently. Comments by domain members, such as "She sure makes herself at home!" may be made about a visitor who has taken too many liberties in the way she has defined herself; conversely, "Make yourself at home" may be an invitation to visitors to extent their appreciation of their own domain to this one. Their status as "other" is suspended.

Visitors to this family domain will be expected to observe conventions of behaviour as defined by members of the domain or sub-domains. The relationships between members and visitors will be varied. Visits by a boyfriend, a great aunt, a landlord, or a door-to-door salesperson will not only engage members with that visitor in different ways but will also have different implications for the relationships between members.

Taylor's (1971) notion of intersubjective meanings is useful
in this regard. Intersubjective meanings are those in which meanings and norms are not peculiar to individuals but are constitutive of the practices engaged in. They are shared by participants and are "essentially modes of social relation, of mutual action" (Taylor 1971:27). Intersubjective meanings can go along with profound cleavages because they imply understanding not agreement (1971:28). Social activities - meetings, card games, drinking parties, fights, arguments, story telling and so on - are played out within a system of shared intersubjective meanings.

To the extent that people are variously located within the family by age, sex, skills, knowledge, their perceptions of what family means to them will differ. Family is defined by members, and others, in terms of inter-subjective meanings shared by specified individuals according to variable criteria, in specific activities: family may mean residing in a particular house, eating Sunday dinner together, being loyal to other members, or going to Aunt Jane's place once a month. It does not mean that members of a family necessarily share values and beliefs about what "family" means. Whilst people may agree to share an aggregate-label, this does not imply that the meanings they give to the label will be the same.

Various people may operate together within a single domain despite any divergence in their perceptions because they are engaging in activities within a framework of intersubjective meanings. It is the way in which people involve themselves in relationships and activities which gives a distinctive character to their aggregate way of being - in things they do together and the ways in which they do them. Membership of a domain does not prevent people from entering into other sets of activities in other domains which are characterized by different styles and
meanings. An Australian businessman may conduct business quite differently with other Australians (as part of his business domain) than with, for instance, Japanese business associates (as part of an "other" domain).

The family domain is not under the exclusive control of the members. There are many external influences and constraints which impinge on the extent to which members can define this lifespace. There are many parts of the family domain which are subject to the control of others and which form part of other's domains. Laws may effect certain activities, such as when they may take place — putting out the garbage or mowing the lawn on days determined by the local council —; decisions about fixtures and fittings may depend upon requirements of landlords or statutory authorities; acceptable noise levels may depend on neighbours' presence or attitudes. A rented home has particular restrictions — on keeping pets, or hammering nails into the wall —, a telephone may remain the property of the telephone company. Even intra-family relations will be governed by laws relating, for instance, to assault, incest, compulsory education, and so on. Thus the domain is not, and cannot be, entire unto itself. The extent and limit of the way in which a domain may be defined are shaped within an interactive context. Even the domain of self develops in relation to others.

Within the family domain there may be sub-domains, bound into the same complex of interrelations within the overall domain as domains themselves are bound to wider realities. A family sub-domain may be a teenager's bedroom with a 'Keep Out' sign on the door; a member's study with restricted access for other members; perhaps the kitchen is regarded by the family cook as his or her sub-domain. Members may conceptualize the overall domain and its sub-domains differently whilst at the same time agreeing that the
domain as a whole is "ours". The differences between what is "ours" and what is "mine" may not be clear-cut. In fact, they may also be illusory. Thus they may often lead to conflict.

12.1.3: The domain as space and as social relations

Thus far, the domain seems to be spatially bounded. In one sense it always is, at least to the extent that any individual's physical presence is a use of space. To this extent one always has a sense of one's own domain which is not confined to being in particular places. The domain of self can be violated, shared or colonized — physically, emotionally and intellectually. One's domain is extended to the extent that there are spatial areas and social relations in which one can express a sense of self.

Spatial domains are those in which individuals or aggregations define spatial areas, and any social relations which are included in the definition of space, as being arenas of their way of being as distinct from other arenas in which they have or do not claim to have any definitional power, or as part of the domains of others. In a spatial domain one exercises the right to act in self-defined ways of appropriateness. A domain is often territorially defined but is not tied to particular territory. The family home as domain may move to another location, it can be spatially expanded or contracted in any direction (buying/selling parts of the land base, knocking off rooms or adding them).

A social domain defines one's way of being in relationship to persons irrespective of which places those people are in at any particular time. It refers to relationships in which people continue to relate according to the norms of appropriateness they define for themselves. It can be expected that socially-defined ways of being will be subject to constraints imposed by the
spatial or social domains of others. Activities appropriate in one's own spatial domain may not be appropriate in a public or another's domain and vice-versa.

The ways in which employees perceive a workplace will differ to the extent that they are subject to the definitions of appropriate behaviour and the control of others. The domain over which an employee has control may be restricted to the office, the desk or just the drawer in which they keep personal belongings. A decision by an employer to regulate office use or make checks of desk tidiness may be perceived as an infringement of an employee's personal domain. Conversely, the business may be subject to a takeover which will redefine domains in some contexts and not in others. Some employees may continue to work as they did previously, retaining the same patterns of interrelationships and sense of self vis-à-vis the workplace as if nothing had happened. For others, it may mean making more substantial adjustments.

Spatial domains are often differentiated as being either "public" or "private". A family home as a private family domain may also have public (lounge room) and private (bedroom) sub-domains as far as members are concerned. The fact that a spatial area is defined as "public" does not prevent people from defining it as part of their own domain - in other words, of imposing their own definitions on it. Nor does it prevent a definition from being negotiable. The family cook may define the kitchen as his or her private domain when the cooking is going on and as public when there is washing up to be done. The way in which space is conceived by one people will not necessarily accord with others' conceptions. Von Sturmer (1984b:220) has described sub-domains within the European domain as being either open (public places) or closed (private places). He distinguishes the Aboriginal domain as
having no clear distinctions of this kind. Aboriginal sub-domains:

... not only consist of places but also the people who have legitimate access to them and are known. The crucial distinction is not so much between public and private as between known and unknown.

As a domain is defined in terms of people's perceptions, it is not necessary that others who are not part of the domain agree with the way in which it is defined by members. However, discrepancies between a self-definition and an other-definition of the same domain may require explication in a particular analysis. Definitions may overlap - such as when both Kooris and a Shire Council define the same stretch of the river bank as being "ours", as part of their respective spatial domains over which they claim some definitional power. The strength of the claims can be tested of course - legal ownership established as being with the Shire Council, non-owners refused access, recognition of the rights of regular users, protest rallies - but perceptions of ownership may remain a valid part of experience whether or not they can be translated into action and there will normally be a connection of some kind. I shall later return to the gap between perceptions and realities in discussing conflict.

That people define certain spatial areas as being part of their domain does not imply that they own them, that they have exclusive use of them or that they can exercise full control within them. It implies that they have a way of perceiving particular spatial areas and social activities which differ from those held by people in different domains, and that they claim a right to live out their own way of being in those areas. There are many areas of conflict (actual or potential) in relation to domains, whether spatially or socially conceived. Whilst it is possible to identify those areas over which people claim a
definitional right, whether this right is conceded by others is a different issue.

There are difficulties with the concept of domain and its use in the analysis of particular situations which have yet to be addressed. Domain is a relational concept: it is constituted in an interactive context. Yet it is never separate from the environment of which it is a part and cannot be understood as an entity with an existence apart. The same applies to the notion of self-as-domain. The "self" is constituted in relation to "other".

The perceptions of "self" as different to "other", or one domain as different to another domain, are projected onto the whole environment. They give meaning and value to certain sets of experiences with which they are associated and, in doing so, distinguish and differentiate. The "other" or the "other domain" are "outside" this consciousness or experience. But the idea of separateness or difference is illusory, as is the idea of one's ability to control or own a domain. The self or the domain are part of a context from which they cannot be separated: they are not intrinsically different in any concrete sense. The question of how consciousness is constituted may be a necessary and prior question to that of how a domain is constituted. These issues are also pertinent to a consideration of relations established in a process of colonization.

12.2: Conceptualizing relationships in a process of colonization
12.2.1: The phenomenon of colonization

It is one thing to describe activities as evidence that colonization is taking place; it is yet another to ask why it occurs. I can neither completely answer nor completely avoid this question. I will start by setting out a series of propositions
upon which I am working in developing a theory.

Colonization is the process of developing or maximizing potential in the available environment through the extension of one's existing resource base. Land, material items, ideas and relationship sets can all be colonized. The potential to colonize is available to all people at all times and will be activated unless constraints exist to impede it. It is individuals who colonize, not groups, societies or nations, except in so far as a label becomes a convenient way of identifying the colonizing activities of some people vis-à-vis those of others (as in the "British" or "Chinese" colonization of Australia). When colonization involves an appropriation of components of an environment which are "necessary" components of another's way of being, the potential exists for contradictions and conflicts to arise. As a domain is defined in terms of perceived definitional power and control, colonization will alter definitions and people's perceptions of their power over those definitions, both in the case of colonizers and those whose environment is being colonized. Changes made, and modes of adjustment, may prove advantageous or disadvantageous, unproblematic or problematic by any of those persons involved.

The environment is the total of potential resources and constraints, whether or not all of its components are activated in the definition of a domain. A domain includes only those components which have been appropriated to a particular way of being. If there are changes in an environment, domain definitions will be reconstituted. Colonization thus involves renegotiations or negations of definition and control of domains. Analysis needs to start where effects are experienced - at the level of domain where the process intrudes on the lifespace and lifeways of others.
and demands change in the ways they define and control their ways of being. The colonization of components of an environment will affect domains in different ways and it is not possible to generalize about its consequences.

It is not necessary that an exploitative process be viewed as detrimental. As a utilization of new resources by an "other", it does not imply that those people whose domains are affected by the colonizing acts of others will suffer negative results, or that colonizers will be the only ones to gain. People may encourage the colonization of parts of their environment, perceiving it as a mutual process in which they gain from the sharing or giving up of parts of their domain. Mutual colonization implies that both parties perceive an advantage in the act of one party appropriating the domain of the other. If a younger sister moves into teenage sister's room, the older sister's perception of the room as her domain will change. However, the move may free another room in the house to be redefined as a shared sitting room. The older sister's domain has thus been contracted at one level and expanded at another: the loss of "my" domain is offset by the redefinition of an expanded domain as "ours".

Nevertheless, mutual colonization, in which both parties perceive advantages which will accrue to them in a colonization process, does not negate the conditions for potential conflict or crisis. Sharpe (1964a), for instance, describes the appropriation by Aboriginal people of steel axes, made available by European colonizers in a neighbouring area. The steel axes were appropriated by Aboriginal individuals who did not normally have ownership rights over stone axes (women, young men). As an act of mutual colonization, taking advantage of one party's colonizing to extend one's own resources, it nevertheless set in train a series
of disturbing consequences throughout the Aboriginal domain: in male/female relations; inter-group relations; age and status relations. The appropriation of the steel axes was not the action of the Aboriginal community as a whole but of individuals within it. It is not difficult to conceive of similar repercussions in Wiradjuri country as Wiradjuri people appropriated tobacco, flour and other foods, tomahawks and other artifacts. Likewise today the extension of Wiradjuri spatial domains through the acquisition of land (additional to the formal recognition of reserve land) under the Land Rights Act can be expected to have repercussions within Wiradjuri domains and between these and European domains - members of some European sub-domains perceive land acquisition as mutual colonization, others see it as illegitimate recolonization.

I will use the term recolonization to refer to the activity of prior owners in appropriating components of the environment which have been redefined as comprising part of the colonizer's domain or have been introduced by the colonizer, whether or not there is agreement that this take place. It does not imply the negotiated agreement implicit in mutual colonization and the process of recolonization may or may not be legitimated by those who have redefined the environment. As with colonization, it refers to the use of components of the environment such that their use represents an expansion of a resource base in terms of one's own way of being. It differs only in that it is a colonization of a redefined environment which has become part of the domain of others. It is a move to define domains in the interests of prior owners as recolonizers. It does not imply that the acquisition of new resources will accord with the expectations of the original colonizers. The adjustments made necessary by the colonization processes of others or by one's own recolonizing cannot be made in
terms of the "other". They can only be made in terms of one's own way of being. Europeans cannot, for instance, assume that because Wiradjuri people adopt components of the environment which comprise part of the European resource base, that they will thereby adopt European ways of being associated with certain resources. All that can be said is that the adoption will alter the ways in which Wiradjuri people define their way of being: the direction cannot be predicted.

That people can recolonize suggests that, as prior agents, they have remained independent in some respects of the way of being of the colonizers. They continue to conceptualize their resource base differently and to perceive their domain as distinct. The conditions for recolonization are independent of the resource base of the colonizers, although may have been derived from it. Ideas, for instance, which may have been generated by European historians, may be brought to bear on the colonizers to impel or encourage the relinquishing of aspects of the environment. This may mean that the recolonizers wish to expand their material resource base, that they wish to regained definitional control over existing domains, or that they wish to reconstitute their way of being in some way. Recolonization may mean that moves on the part of recolonizers will infringe the domains of colonizers. Alternatively, it may represent a move to disassociate from the colonizers way of being.

Another question arises now: what forces impel people to colonize? What conditions need to exist to assist or impede this process? We could start by stating that it is possible, empirically or historically, to observe processes of colonization in almost if not all parts of the world at most if not all times (see, for example, Wolf 1982). The more useful question may be:
Why do people not colonize, given the opportunity? Non-involvement in colonizing may indicate only that people lack the opportunity: that the resources in their existing base do not allow for expansion. This could include the lack of ocean-going vessels, lack of military power, an insufficient population, physical or mental handicaps, insufficient skills, and so on. Will colonization take place in some form or another unless constraints prevent this? Or, does a move to colonize imply the existence of an identifiable force as an impetus which puts a process in motion and without which it would not take place? It is not possible to give an answer here, although I lean towards the view that it is non-colonization which needs to be explained, not the reverse.

Once we begin to study aggregates at a micro-rather than macro-level, we can begin to analyze the variety of responses to the change in an environment. If we can assume that responses are first those of individuals, we can also assume that such responses will not be uniform. People who perceive themselves as having relatively common responses (giving rise to a commonality in ways of being, a convergence of inter-subjective meanings) may choose to redefine themselves *vis-à-vis* other emerging aggregates as "we" rather than "them", progressive rather than conservative; Australian rather than British, or Italian or Greek; Koori rather than Aborigine.

There are many possibilities in the labelling of aggregates, depending upon social, political and economic circumstances: a person's primary aggregate-identity could be Aboriginal at one time, female or spouse or Australian at others. The question is then: what circumstances prevail which make a particular aggregate-identity significant at a particular time? We could ask, for instance, why some early British colonizers chose to define
the prior occupants of Australia as vermin whilst others saw them as fellow travellers in the world of human beings? Why did skin colour and racial/cultural origin become a preoccupation in Australia? What notions of being in the world operated among colonists, with what differences and what implications? Was it important, and if so why, to early colonists of Australia to encourage notions of boundedness? And what did this have to do with competition between prospective colonizers of this environment - for instance, British, French and Chinese?

It is apparent that Wiradjuri experiences of colonization have not destroyed the utility of the Wiradjuri aggregate-identity - whatever that is from moment to moment - in defining sets of relations vis-à-vis others. It is still a means of distinguishing one Aboriginal domain from others. However, Wiradjuri people are often more preoccupied with the label "Koori" as a means of distinguishing themselves from Europeans and not from other Aborigines. In the study of fighting, however, it can be recognized that the domain of self is of great importance to Kooris, as is the differentiation of one mob from another, for instance, as "way back" Kooris and "visitors". The Wiradjuri label - perhaps no more than a linguistic differentiation emphasized in the past by European writers - apparently declined in usage in the face of Aboriginal encounters with Europeans. It has assumed greater significance as competition between Aboriginal groups - for the writing of history, for the allocation of money and land, for prestige - becomes more important than in the past. Likewise, Kooris may take pains to repudiate differentiations which are useful and appropriate between themselves when communicating with outsiders amongst whom they wish to be seen as "we". The shifting of labels can be read as the shifting of perceptions of domain as
people variously calculate their life chances at any given time.

12.2.2: Adjustment, conflict and crisis

If colonization is part of the human condition and part of the way in which people as individuals or groups realize their potential, it could be argued that the ability of people "to cope" with a process of colonization which affects their environment and changes their resource base depends upon the extent to which they in turn are able or willing to transform or adapt their way of being, including the way in which they define and control their domains, so as to exploit resources offered by the newly defined environment. There seem to be four alternative responses possible for those who lose or give up part of their resource base:

(a) to fight to retain or to regain access to the environment such that the original resource base may be re-established;

(b) to give up hope of social reproduction in any form in the face of adverse conditions;

(c) to assimilate into one's way of being the colonizers and the redefined resource base in the same terms as applied by the colonizers, so that one's way of being becomes the same as that of the colonizers;

(d) to perceive the redefinition of components of the environment as providing the potential for recolonizing.

Of these possible responses (a) is the most conservative position and also the most difficult. It depends first on whether it is possible to return the environment to its former state. In real terms this is probably never possible as it implies a constellation of people, ideas and materials, the re-establishment of which would depend upon a total commitment of all those involved in previous relations, the removal of the colonizers, and
the capacity to undo any changes wrought in the environment (including the ideas and expectations generated by colonization). In other words, this approach assumes, unrealistically, that history can be reversed or denied.

Alternative (b) is perhaps the least often attempted but the fact that it has been an alternative at times is perhaps the reason why, as an extreme case, it often lends credence to models positing social destruction as an inevitable result of colonization. It is most evident when a population ceases to reproduce physically, as was observed in Tasmania (Ellis 1981:130, citing J S Dandridge, Report on Oyster Cove Station from January 1857 to May 1859).

Alternative (c) is the response frequently assumed by Europeans to be the case for Aboriginal people in New South Wales and other parts of "settled" Australia. It assumes that a particular environment will be perceived by people in similar terms. It is a form of material determinism. Indeed, a change in material aspects of a resource base will affect people and ideas but not necessarily unidirectionally or in the direction of the colonizers. A component of the environment is not valued as a resource until it is perceived as such in terms of a particular way of being. To the extent that different ways exist, components can be variously interpreted. This also implies that components perceived as resources in different ways will acquire different values vis-à-vis other resource-components. What is a prestige item for some may have mere functional utility for others. While there is no necessary reason why components cannot come to assume the same resource-value for people with different ways of being, there is no necessary reason that they should or will do so either. Perhaps it is not the process which is of interest here so
much as the assumption of material determinism, linked as it so often is to inequalities of power. Ironically, it is the inequalities of power which would prevent the emergence of a common consciousness anyway.

Before discussing alternative (d) I should state that the four I am presenting are not exclusive categories. It is possible, indeed likely, that all will be operating in some form or another, sometimes conflicting, within an individual or a group. Alternative (d) does not, however, arise from any combination of (a), (b) and (c). It is distinguished by its recognition of the gains to be made as a result of colonization. This is not to negate the loss factor, only to recognize that loss is experienced either as a result of a situation over which people have no control (such as population loss through disease or military action, forced property take-overs or imposed constraints on activities), or as a situation in which prior owners have calculated their life chances in terms of restrictions in one area but gain in another (as in the inability to continue food gathering techniques and the social relations involved but acquisition of packaged foods). Either way, it is people's capacity to interpret newly introduced features - whether introduced by force or choice - as resources in terms of their own way of being, and to devise means of making the re-defined environment work for them. This indicates a capacity to adjust, in other words, "to cope". Difficulties will be experienced to the extent that access to the re-defined environment is limited or that there is resistance to using its potential because of, for instance, ramifications in other areas of social life. The direction in which adjustment are made will depend upon the ways in which people calculate their life chances.
It is not necessary that both parties understand and agree on the means/end of the colonizing process for it to achieve the desired or anticipated results for one or other, or both parties. However, the extent to which perceptions differ will increase the potential for crisis and conflict. If the older sister assumes that she will retain definitional control of the bedroom, a crisis will occur to the extent that the younger sister begins to impose her own definitions of self on that space. Fighting is one means whereby an individual defends the right to exercise control over self-as-domain in order to counteract the infringements or intrusions of others, as occurs because of another's attempts to control through stand-over tactics, insults, appropriation of material possessions or relationships perceived as "mine".

It is not possible to predict all the possible consequences of a colonizing act. Nevertheless, a clearer appreciation of the constraints which influence the way in which a domain is shaped and perceived will assist to some extent. If a family member decides to turn the bushland at the end of the backyard into a vegetable patch, there may be an appreciation that this will affect the young son who had defined it as a secret hideout. The colonization of his domain may affect his relations with other family members and also friends accustomed to sharing this bush domain. He may agree to the change, eager to participate and earn pocket money in the new gardening venture, without realizing costs it may have in terms of his neighbourhood status as his friends lose part of their play domain in the process. Alternatively he may involve his friends in the venture, thus reconstituting their domain but in different terms.

Identification of a domain depends upon an appreciation of individuals' perceptions and not on a legal context. We cannot,
for instance, equate legal ownership with domain ownership. It is possible to test how real the perception of ownership is: Do others exercise controls over a person's domain? Can they appropriate by right? If so, how does the domain member reconcile the contradictions which arise between control by others and their perception of self-in-control? If mother says teenage daughter's room cannot be painted black, or her hair cannot be dyed green, the daughter is confronted with limits to her definitional power which may be confronted in various ways. She may accommodate her mother's edicts; she may proceed regardless; she may be able to negotiate a compromise of some kind. The potential for conflict exists irrespective of the type of response. The response in terms of action may not accord with that in terms of attitude. Acceding to mother's demands may keep the family peace at one level whilst producing resentments and rifts with long-term consequences not perceived or only vaguely glimpsed by either party at the time.

To the extent that the environment cannot be shared in terms of two competing views of domain, competition will ensue for definitional power and the exercise of controls. Conflict involves the testing of the degree of control people can exercise over the way their domains are defined. Conflicts can arise for several reasons. They may occur when a person perceived as being part of one's own domain is not acting according to an acceptable way of being. This may be when a domain member attempts to redefine the domain or themselves as part of it, thus threatening the controls over the domain others perceive themselves as having. We could think, for instance, of a child given various opportunities to develop a resource base of ideas, significant people and possessions who then chooses not to live the lifestyle his or her parents had envisaged.

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Conflict may occur when involvement in mutual colonization does not produce anticipated results; or when colonization and recolonization reduce the capacity of members of a domain to define and control the conditions of that domain. The exploitative process creates a conflict of interests which will demand either that some accommodation be made on both sides, or result in one party winning out at the expense of the other. The conflict of interests may persist until both parties are satisfied that they are able to reconstitute their domains in ways acceptable to themselves. If relations remain unequal, or accommodation is not negotiated, conflicts in domain interaction may become a semi-permanent state of affairs. People within a domain may not identify the source of tensions and conflicts between them as stemming from interdomain interaction: they may see constraints on their preferred activities as brought about by members of their own domain or by their own incapacity to act. Conversely, constraints operating within a domain may promote conflict in interdomain interactions but not in the domain itself. The differences in sources of conflict become significant when conscious adjustments are made by any party to alleviate undesirable tension-provoking situations.

There are elements of the adaptation process required of all parties in a colonizing situation which can be likened to Piaget's theory of development in children. The learning process implies an ability to acquire and develop a resource base. Human beings are constantly having to adapt to change as they develop from infancy to old age. Changes in physical and intellectual capacities require adjustments in one's perceptions of self and others and in styles of relating, as do changes in the external environment. Lefrancois (1972:233) highlights the twin processes of
adaptation in the individual's adaptation to changing circumstances:

Adaptation involves the interaction of the functional invariants, assimilation and accommodation. These are called invariants because as ways of interacting with the environment they do not change from childhood to adulthood. Accommodation involves a modification of some activity of the organism in the face of environmental demands. Assimilation is the use of some aspect of the environment for an activity which is already part of the organism's repertoire.

Each assimilation process implies a change in consciousness, in the schema or intellectual structure of individuals and thus by extension of groups of individuals. This may be in terms of a transformation. Lefranois points out the difference between the consequences of assimilation and those of accommodation:

Object in the environment are assimilated to structure ... Accommodation, on the other hand, will involve a change in structure (1972:237).

Accommodation will be necessary to the extent that changes are not able to be assimilated or that it is not desired that they should be.

I argued in the discussion of Wiradjuri fighting that Kooris may have adopted boxing codes as a means of continuing a valued activity in a manner deemed acceptable, at the time, to Europeans. Boxing codes, appropriated from the European domain, may have been assimilated into the Wiradjuri way of being after a period of accommodation when these provided a means of making Koori fighting more acceptable to Europeans. The definition by Europeans of fighting in European-defined public places as illegal has necessitated accommodation on the part of Kooris and leads to interdomain tensions when Kooris do not accommodate European values and continue to fight in public places.

An activity should not be understood or evaluated in terms of the way of being of another domain. Nor can an activity such as
Koori fighting, deemed undesirable by Europeans, be viewed as an inability to cope with colonization. Whatever consequences there were or still are in terms of physical injury or death, the activity itself can still be valued and controls developed to help avert some of the more negative consequences. A similar approach is applied, for instance, to driving cars in Australia. Rather, I would maintain that fighting is an example of a particular adaptative response to colonization: it is, in fact, an act of recolonization. Kooris have expanded their social repertoire by appropriating activities and ideas introduced by Europeans. Kooris have thus embarked on a colonization process themselves. It is this ability to perceive the introduced materials, people and ideas as a potential or actual resource base and to then act on them for themselves which can be described as recolonization.

Is it possible to conceive of adaptation as dysfunctional? Alcoholism, poverty, violence, hopelessness and powerlessness have often been regarded by social scientists as products of the ravaging effects of the colonization of one people by another. Several writers have recently published articles attempting to highlight problems arising from colonizing processes in Aboriginal domains and the need for anthropologists to come to terms with them in some way. Von Sturmer (1982:104) has described communities in the Alligator Rivers region as being "in crisis". More recently, Rose (1986) has talked about the "distress" Aboriginal communities experience and Sullivan (1986) about "cultural trauma". What is meant by such terms - and by what criteria do we judge a social situation to be in such a state?

In a state of crisis discrepancies exist between desired ends and the means adopted to reach them. Contradictions then arise which are not amenable to resolution. This definition suggests (a)
that members of a domain will experience social problems or crises to the extent that the way in which they perceive their way of being, or the ways in which they aspire to see it, is not realized or realizable in real terms; and (b) that the contradictions this discrepancy gives rise to are inadequately perceived or understood or are not able to be changed. There is, therefore, a gap between the social reality and the anticipated results of social action which is not apparent to those involved.

Crisis arise to the extent that adaptation is unsuccessful. Successful adaptation can be gauged to the extent that people are able to reconstitute their way of being, to re-establish acceptable definitions and an acceptable measure of control over their domains as defined by themselves. Adjustment is not only required of those being colonized or recolonized but also of those colonizing. It will be required of members within a domain and also in the case of domain interactions. The definition of domains, and thus of domain interaction, will change in all circumstances of colonization.

An act of colonizing, as the appropriation of new resources, implies that the new environment offering potential is readable and able to be assimilated, accommodated or exploited. The anticipated results of colonizing components of the environment should bear a relationship to the reality of constraints operating on the process. A person colonizes what they perceive as a resource, expecting it to produce tangible rewards. If this expectation is based on a mistaken perception of the way in which others have utilized the same components as resources or of their own capacity to translate the components into resources, the colonizing act may present them with great problems, if not crises. They may not have the skills, relationship sets or
knowledge required to take advantage of the components as resources. The acquisition may disturb that person's way of being or the way in which they desired to change or modify it. It is this disparity between the reality and the desires or expectations which creates "crisis". The crisis will arise within a domain, whether of individuals or aggregates, and will affect aspects of interacting domains. People can, of course, adapt to on-going states of crises. The adaptation may camouflage the crisis or accentuate it.

Alleviating problems may require an identification of the constraints in their own resource base or in the environment and their acceptance of change. Any course of action presumes that the colonizers have a view of what it means to be in the world. This will influence the ways in which they act on the environment, respond to constraints imposed by the environment or by their own resources, and evaluate the outcomes of their actions prior to taking further action. This will also apply to people who want to recolonize. In either case, a realistic assessment of the relationship between one's own resources, the environment offering new potential, an awareness of the dynamics of one's own way of being, and the ramifications of colonizing will be necessary to avert actions which precipitate crises, or to assess how to handle such crises when they do occur.

Values and meanings are not only generated as components of the environment are translated into material resources: they are also generated out of social relations. If Kooris in Cowra acquire land to use for a market garden, this does not imply that Europeans will include them in the social relations that pertain to market gardeners in the area - or that Kooris would wish to be incorporated in such relations. The acquisition of the land may
thus represent a "loss" to Europeans in that it does not complement such relations as might normally be anticipated. One could likewise conceive of an Aboriginal doctor, who chose not to be involved in, or who was excluded from, the social networks normally available to doctors, as representing a social loss for Europeans. The crises in such cases would be in the European domain, where members made land available for sale or provided medical training in the expectation of generalized social gain.

Europeans thus also experience crises when Aboriginal people recolonizing the European domain do not, will not or cannot participate in conventional ways. An example referred to earlier in the Cowra context is the European perception of public versus private space. Koori drinking and fighting in public places (as defined by Europeans) is a European crisis not a Koori one. If Kooris fight in European-defined public domains when European definitions of the use of public places prohibits fighting, the reality will not accord with the definition of acceptable behaviour. Europeans would have lost control of the power to impose their definitions. This may be regained, as it often is, through legislative measures designed to impede Aboriginal people from drinking and fighting in public. Such an option is not available to Kooris in reverse situations. The ability to require acceptable behaviour of Europeans in the Koori domain (or even to demand this of Kooris) according to Koori definitions is not a form of control which Kooris can exercise as a right: customary law is not recognized, and European law overrides Koori desires to exercise control according to their own definitions.

If people are consistently acting on the basis of ill-defined or erroneous ideas of the meanings attached by others to activities and concepts such as status, time and space, actions
are likely to produce frequent contradictions. The contradictions may emerge in the articulation between domains or within a domain. Thus, there is a sense in which Kooris are right when they say "The Aboriginal problem" is a European problem. Phrased as "What do we do with Aborigines?", it becomes a recognition of a lack of definitional control over Kooris on the part of Europeans. When Kooris say the only "problem" they have are Europeans they are saying the same thing from their own perspective: they lack the power to define and control their domains as they might wish.

12.2.3: Colonization and legitimacy

I want now to develop this notion of definitional control in the context of colonization. I have suggested that colonization, in one form or another, should be understood as part of the human condition - a means whereby individuals or aggregates extend their resource potential through appropriation. As I am focussing on colonization in situations in which there are prior owners, the process always sets up a relationship. Prior owners may see the relationship, which intrudes into their domains, as constructive or destructive. Responses depend upon the way in which individuals calculate their life chances when faced with changes to their domain, and thus to their way of being. Any particular action defined as a colonizing of another's domain may be interpreted both negatively and positively by different individuals, whether colonizers or colonized. A response in a negative direction is not a result of change per se but of the extent to which, as a result of change, a person perceives themselves as having lost control of the power to define their own domains.

What is often at issue in discussing colonization is not its fact but its legitimacy. There are, for instance, many local,
national and international laws designed to prevent or control colonizing processes where it is deemed to disadvantage those who will lose control over part of their resource base as a result. Such legislation usually aims to ensure that all parties to a negotiation are protected. It may assume a sufficient degree of negotiating power or knowledge on both sides which enables a negotiation to be recognized as an agreement between equal parties. Sometimes it is the express purpose of the legislation to accord more power to those who might otherwise not have the knowledge, skills or resources to control the terms of the relationship.

Legislation relating to copyright, patents, migration, land ownership, business take-overs, trespass, rape, and states of war are just a few of the ways in which the issue of colonizing has been addressed. This is legislation which acknowledges the continuing fact of colonization and is often specifically designed to protect the interests of those whose ideas, materials (including land), technologies or selves are being appropriated. Such protection may be necessary even when there is agreement among colonizers and colonized that colonization take place in ways which guard the interests of parties perceived as being unequal in some respects.

Colonization implies that the colonizer has access to a resource base which makes colonization and exploitation possible in the first place. A designer with a patent but no money is thus legislatively protected from the entrepreneur with money but no designs who may be tempted to appropriate illegally or illegitimately those of others. A transaction based on adequate compensation to the designer for the sale of the design may be acceptable to all involved. If the designer is in a relationship
of unequal power for some reason, the transaction could be disadvantageous. Royalty payments, as negotiated mutual colonization, are one means whereby the continuing rights of the prior owner are recognized and recompensed and through which the prior owner shares a stake in an enterprise he or she contributed to, directly or indirectly, but which may not have been realizable within constraints operating prior to the colonization. The royalty payment system depends, however, on payments having the same cultural value for both parties.

The selling of Manhattan Island, according to legend, by Native Americans to British colonizers for US$24.00 in cash and trinkets 350 years ago is now regarded as having been an exploitation of the Native Americans' lack of awareness of land values and the long-term consequences of selling. The issue of adequate compensation now centres on the extent to which the colonizers' actions were illegal or exploitative by the standard of the day as well as by today's standards and what the basis for compensation should be (Carlson 1985:99). It is the fact of the inequality which existed between the negotiating groups at the time which makes the claim for compensation or reparation an issue now. However, also at stake, at least implicitly, is the extent to which Native Americans have been denied access to or control over the potential of that environment as made available by them but realized by the colonizers as a result of colonization.

However effectively or however well-controlled legislative requirements are, the consequences of colonization are to some extent unforeseeable. No doubt neither the Native Americans nor the colonizers were able to conceive of Manhattan Island becoming part of New York. Parties who are content with negotiations and agreements at one time may feel cheated when they later acquire
information which suggests, in retrospect, that they have been paid too little or have paid too much in a particular transaction.

It is not necessarily a relationship always to be perceived in terms of loss without gain. To have one's business taken over may be advantageous in certain circumstances. The problems associated with colonization would seem to arise when those colonized are unable to control the terms of the colonization through, for instance, an inequality - a lack of knowledge, of military power or of ability to call the colonizers to account. Alternatively, if they have acquiesced in the colonization in the expectation of, in turn, expanding their own resource potential, there may be frustration or anger if it has negative consequences which were not foreseen or could not have been. Legitimizing colonization also implies that, at any point in time, one is able to define and assess notions of value and meaning.

These issues are complex and I cannot pretend to have come to terms with them all. One thing that does occur to me is that colonization may be acceptable to the extent that it advances the interests of those colonized as defined by them. We could then say that colonization was unacceptable and to the disadvantage of those colonized to the extent that this potential did not exist or was impeded. The economic and political issues involved in real terms are complicated since colonization will always imply a loss of some kind which has to be weighed against potential gains. It also occurs as a process, as a series of acts in many cases, thus compounding the problems of forecasting consequences. Whilst I have provided a simple one-to-one model here, it should also be recognized that numbers of different colonizers, with different aims and different ways of being, may influence a single domain or several interacting domains simultaneously. It is the ability to
make colonizing gains as a result of the redefining of an environment by others that represents recolonization, whether or not it is perceived as a right of those colonized to do so or is conceived as being a mutual process, agreed to by both parties. Then we need to ask: is recolonization any more or less problematic than original acts of colonization? Probably not, unless mutual agreements to this effect are made part of original transactions between relatively equal and assenting parties.

The legitimacy of recolonization, as well as colonization, is a debate which requires further attention but which is beyond the scope of this present work. I have suggested only that its legitimacy could be seen as built into the issue of the legitimizing of colonization in the first place. If colonization can be accepted to the extent that it provides opportunities for gain — as perceived by those colonized — in exchange for loss, this then poses a dilemma if recolonization then threatens the resource base of the colonizers. The issues are compounded if original transactions are regarded as inadequate or illegal, or if they did not occur. It is a debate which entails fundamental questions about individual rights, notions of society, of nationhood, of sovereignty; the management of conflicts of interests, the legitimate exercise of different kinds of power; and the right to use or to not use information or other resources.

The colonization of the "New World" by Europeans, begun in the fifteenth century, led to a world economy and a consciousness of a world community as never before. The simple act of buying a loaf of wrapped, sliced bread in a supermarket becomes an involvement in industries and trade relations throughout the world. The ramifications of our actions become increasingly difficult to calculate because of their complexity. A world community does not
imply an end to colonization, only that the issue of rights— for individuals and whole populations—are brought into a much wider debate, and will influence people who are not directly involved in any particular process of colonization.
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