

UNDER THE EYE OF THE LAW

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In this essay, I argue that the aspects of postmodernist criticism which have focused anthropological interest on the politics of ethnographic texts contain both a radicalising and a conservatising potential. This means that in the act of turning the ethnographic gaze upon the anthropological 'self' in order to explore the politics of texts, there lies also the possibility of a slippage away from critique and into a narcissism which subverts the original thrust of postmodernist critique.

In order to make these points, I draw a distinction between the internal politics of the ethnographic text, and the political conditions governing the production of those texts. Indeed, it seems to me impossible to discover the internal politics of a text without an analysis of the kind which I shall set out here. The data I use to illustrate the importance of this distinction and its place within the deployment of anthropological knowledges, are drawn from research in central Australia. I shall argue that the state has the power to produce both Aboriginal and anthropological selves and the texts through which each shall be known. I bring this power and its necessary violence into view in order to indicate its scale and intent. Moreover, I believe that the omission of any mention of the racist nature of the Australian state in Australian ethnography is itself a product of that state power. It follows from this, that the politics of ethnographic texts need not be subverted, transcended, displaced or even just significantly altered, by explorations of the interaction of the anthropological self with the production of that text--something more is required.

One of the alternatives to an analysis which results in a loss of focus upon the workings of power is provided through the exploration of the factors controlling the production of ethnographic texts. This is to say that the advantages of internal textual analysis and the insights provided through the language of literary criticism, can only be retained through providing an analysis of the ways in which the state produces the chaos, disorder and disordered sexuality of the dominated, racialized, others who are scrutinized through ethnography. Indeed, the politics of a text can only be determined by taking the conditions of production into account, whether in producing a text or in reading and deconstructing it. The distinction I draw here, that between the internal and external politics of a text, is one that, in other contexts, would be denied.

Textual politics themselves are the product of both sets of factors and structures and are often read in this way. However the absence of an account or consideration of the forces governing the production of texts from some aspects of postmodernism within anthropology, provides for a de-politicised ethnography rather than for one which is politically aware and active. Let me begin, therefore, with the conditions which produce the ethnographic text and a discussion of the ways in which those conditions might be taken into account when discussing the place of biography and autobiography within anthropology.

Shor (1987:110) notes the conditions of the ethnographic gaze in her analysis of Zola's novel, *The Conquest*. She drew attention to the simultaneous 'births' of the asylum, the prison and the clinic during the nineteenth century, and the way in which a new disciplinary system, one which utilized surveillance and the deployment of the detail as the instruments of knowledge and power, replaced the earlier deployment of power directly onto the individual body. The nineteenth century is held to be that of a movement from the production of public terror to the production of disciplined bodies, from physical violence to the deployment of the gaze, but I shall shortly argue that, in certain important ways, such a move was limited. However, in his novel, Zola imagines the ways in which the gaze of the state produces a particular person, a specific self – in this case, a mad one. Once suspected of madness, Zola's character, Mouret, is observed to a degree which, in the end, results in his becoming mad. The observation which should have guaranteed objectivity and thus Mouret's sanity cannot do so. In fact, that 'objective' gaze is an exercise in power (Shor 1987:114), one which constitutes a particular kind of marginalised person or group through the act of objectification. It is an example of the constituting gaze of power and policing.

The constitutive power of the gaze rests upon its pervasiveness, its attention to the detail of life, and the control of the terms of interpretation. Zola gives a nice example of Mr Mouret's midnight search for the slugs eating his lettuces, and the way in which his actions--his creeping around the lettuces, his midnight appearance in the garden, his use of a small torch, and his regular stamping upon the ground--are interpreted as unsavoury to the degree that his watchers suspect him of murder. These three elements then--the surveillance, the reliance on the detail, and the power to impose the interpretation--constitute the gaze, while the sheer constancy of the gaze produces the detail that allows its interpretation to be sustained.

As producers of knowledge about a dominated and marginalised population, Australian anthropologists are also part of that gaze. They are part of the

moving eye of the gaze as it extends across the frontier of settler society. They are the producers of the detail and the texts through which Aboriginal culture, customs, and individuals are created and brought within the view of the state; and through their gaze and their texts they, too, produce Aboriginal, cultural, selves. The gaze of the state successfully subsumes anthropological texts to produce authorized and legitimated texts of its own in which Aboriginal Australians are produced in certain predictable ways. For the gaze of the state does not, of course, only produce Aboriginals, it also produces anthropologists. In this process, the universities are crucial reproducers of the patriarchal, colonizing, knowledges which we know today. The battle is for the control of the processes of interpretation and the production of selfhood. Whose knowledge of the self will prevail and how will dominated individuals come to know themselves? The embeddedness of anthropological writing within these deployments of knowledge and power has led to the scrutiny of anthropological texts and writing practices which is now under way. A concern with the narration and construction of biographies and autobiographies within the ethnography, is an important aspect of this scrutiny.

In this essay, I discuss the ways in which the state produces texts on Aboriginal Australians which constitute Aboriginal society as a domain of chaos and a culture of disorder, and how the surveillance and 'redemptive' violence applied to Aboriginal individuals forces them to represent themselves in particular ways. Two understandings of text are utilised in this essay. The first is that in which specific texts produced by anthropologists are placed within the broader context of the political forces of their cultural production. Anthropological texts, which produce the 'truth' about marginalised groups from a range of positions supposedly beyond the reaches of the state, are nevertheless subject to political conditions of production imposed through the state. The second is the ways in which a much broader range of texts concerning Aboriginal Australians, their lives and nature are produced and enforced through the operations of the institutions of the state directly onto Aboriginal selves. This understanding is essential background for considering the forces which produce anthropological texts about individuals. Moore's recent discussion of the way in which the assumptions underlying ethnocentrism operate to obliterate the effects of race from ethnography (Moore 1988:7-10) is very perceptive and important, especially in considering the Australian material. For within Australian society, racism is a crucial element of daily life, one which is deployed constantly through the media, the arms of the state administration, the practices of individuals and within the knowledge-producing institutions. At the same time, racism is conceptually located beyond the structure and nature of Australian culture and society.

Racism is centred within the argument of this essay in order to focus on the ways in which the state produces a variety of texts on Aborigines--biography and autobiography, ethnography, legal texts, media reports and so on. As I noted earlier however, in Australia the gaze of the state is a racist one. I shall argue that theories of the gaze best fit the society and culture of settler Australia, for outside that society, because it is institutionally incomplete, surveillance constantly fails and is therefore bolstered by a level of overt violence which is unknown among settlers, even those of the disorderly classes among them. Besides the productive power of surveillance then, Aboriginal Australians remain subject to a degree of violence which, I shall argue, constitutes a regime of terror. The state bolsters its gaze by a violence so severe that it produces both the violence within Aboriginal society which is sometimes documented in the detail of anthropological and other texts, and sometimes ignored; and it also produces the violence which turns inward, against the self, in an orgy of self-destruction. Through the simultaneous application of 'the observation' and of violence, individual bodies and selves are produced for the state in such a way that the Aboriginal self is obliterated in order that new selves can be constituted within the fictional spaces of the state and the texts it writes into them, hammered out through terror and violence upon the body and the mind. I shall shortly describe how this is so.

The state, which produces texts on Aboriginal Australians with such violence, also provides the context of power which produces ethnographic texts. The complicity of anthropology in the production of texts which ultimately become racist, is no more overt than other aspects of racism. Those anthropologists who work to expose the operation of racism within anthropology have not been readily tolerated by their colleagues. Those who write it into their research risk marginalisation and exclusion. The processes of marginalisation, together with the way in which critical texts are produced and erased, can be seen at work through a brief examination of the life of Olive M. Pink, an anthropologist who carried out her research in central Australia during the 1930's.

Race and Anthropology

Olive Pink's life was embedded within a politics of race and gender which raised issues with which I am familiar from my own work in central Australian anthropology and the universities. Those politics led Olive Pink to a point from which she could only resign from the profession which she had loved and from which she had hoped for so much. My interest in her biography therefore comes partly from the attempt to find a way of pursuing her politics while avoiding her fate, and partly from my own experiences of the violent practices of racism in central Australia, fifty years after hers.

All her life, Olive Pink sought to alleviate the conditions of poverty and hardship under which Aboriginal Australians lived; her desire to gather authentic information at first hand led her to leave the safety of the city and a secure job to travel alone through Australia's arid and remote regions. What she saw there led directly to her beginning the study of anthropology, to her resignation from her government job and income, and to her research work among the *Wailbri* and *Arrernte* people who live to the north-west of Alice Springs. She studied anthropology with Firth and Elkin at the University of Sydney and found it both exciting and depressing. Her major fieldwork was carried out during the nineteen thirties and concerned *Arrernte* religious beliefs and landownership.

While anthropologists are familiar with the work of other women who went into the field in remote Australia at about the same time, women like Phyllis Kaberry (Kimberleys) and Ursula McConnel (northern Queensland), they are often surprised to learn of the existence of Olive Pink. How has it come about that a competent anthropologist, one who carried out substantial quantities of research in central Australia with persistence and success, one who published two substantial papers, has been lost from history, lost also to her profession?

Was it that Olive Pink was simply too eccentric to succeed even within a profession which has always claimed it extended a warm welcome to eccentrics? I do not think so. Rather, her 'eccentricity' derived first from her vigorous and unrelenting politics of race. Her desire to subordinate anthropological knowledge to political action was a radical act which was perceived as such by the state, and led to her coming to the attention of ASIO during the 'cold war' years. Conservative in her morality, committed to a view of social justice, an Edwardian to the end in a world that had moved on, she was an ambiguous and restless figure. Like all ambiguous people, she made the insecure and pedestrian vulnerable and nervous. Her anti-racist politics created the problems, both in central Australia and in the universities, which caused her to be labelled as eccentric in order that she could be legitimately ignored. Her activities were perceived by anthropologists as destroying the amicable relations with locals on which field research in central Australia depended, and as bringing a 'scientific', and thus non-political, anthropology into disrepute. To expose the relations of power between settler and Aboriginal Australians in central Australia was in itself a radical and unwelcome act, and despite advice to keep a low profile, Olive Pink persisted in publicly and privately campaigning against the exploitation of Aboriginal Australians.

She sought to have administrators of all kinds--missionaries, police and government officials--entirely excluded from the reserves. She considered missionaries to be the great destroyers of Aboriginal culture, and morally fallible as well. She sought to remove Aboriginal Australians from the official supervision under which they had fallen, to give them room of their own in which they could do as they pleased. Despite the Edwardian language which she used, her campaign to remove the Aborigines from the gaze of settler power and all that went with it, gives her politics a curiously contemporary feel. In her commitment to providing Aborigines with a space outside and beyond the gaze of the state (an ambition never realized), she sought a utopian solution, but one which took into account the real politics and violence of the frontier racism of her day.

Race and Text

Olive Pink saw that the constant supervision of every facet of everyday Aboriginal life, imperfect as it was at that time, created the chaos so crucial in the representation of dominated populations as moral failures in need of even more 'help'. The connection between the moral failings of another 'race', (Aborigines), and those of the 'unemployable part of our white population', that segment which is 'less fit' than the rest, has long been realized and not simply among academics. The connection has often been made not so much to denigrate Aboriginal Australians, as to raise them to the same level as 'ourselves', or at least aspects of ourselves. Yet the role of supervision in creating the disorder and chaos through which Aboriginals could be constituted as primordial problem-children, in need of civilizing assistance, was clear to Olive Pink in a way that it was not to many of her colleagues. The difference in perception arose from the place of racialised politics within anthropological knowledge and from the personal politics of those who created that knowledge. Olive Pink saw the results of racial domination and she sought to place her professional work as an anthropologist at the service of the Aboriginal people among whom she worked and lived.

Auto/biographies

My work in central Australia has had precisely the same result--I, too, have become increasingly concerned with the ways in which anthropological texts and knowledge can reproduce rather than undermine, the structures and practices of racism and sexism. I, too, have come to see the need to remove Aboriginal Australians from the continuing glare of the settler eye, and to see this as a prerequisite for the reduction of atrocities committed against them. But unlike Olive Pink, I have a newer language available to me in which to

describe the conditions which she could only refer to as 'culture clash' and 'camouflage'. I have available the concept of a 'culture of terror' through which the relations of domination are deployed into the culture and daily life of the other, dominated, group. And unlike Olive Pink, I have available to me the recent literary and feminist critiques of ethnographic writing which have drawn attention to the place of selves in the construction of texts about dominated 'others', together with a new language of criticism, one which speaks of voices, positions, silencing and erasure in ways which are very different from the meanings of those terms in the past.

This new language allows a new 'reading' of Olive Pink. Her voice was erased from history and from anthropology, and it was erased because she produced her 'scientific' anthropology within a personal politics of active anti-racism. Her eccentricity, like M. Mouret's madness, was manufactured from the surveillance to which she was subjected, and it was legitimated through the charge that her anthropology was not anthropology, but welfare work or politics. In the end, she lived out their fantastic dream of her self.

State Texts and Aboriginal Selves

In the course of her privately funded tour of central Australia (1930–31) in which she set out to see the reality of Aboriginal life for herself, Olive Pink found herself in the Darwin courts, watching the prosecution of Aborigines by the settlers. She was horrified at the injustice, brutality and cultural destruction which she saw dispensed through the legal system. Some years later, while carrying out her anthropological research in central Australia, she saw again the problems created by colonial justice for Aborigines and she attempted to have several cases investigated more fully. Fifty years later, the operation of the judicial system against Aboriginal Australians still raises serious concern.

Although the actual scale of violence against Aboriginal Australians is probably not known to the general public and is constantly denied, it has never really been hidden. The violence and brutality is admitted to have occurred in the past, can in fact be seen on the streets, is sometimes reported in the papers, and is known to all those settler-Australians who come into contact with Aborigines in the course of their work. Violence is very much a feature of everyday life for Aborigines, as are the attitudes that back it up. Violence against Aboriginal individuals is still rarely punished, and this too, is well documented and well-known among settlers.

The statistics of Aboriginal policing and the deaths of Aboriginals while in custody are indicators of the scale of the thing (see Cowlshaw, this volume). There is no state in Australia which has not had a long history of custodial deaths, few towns with large Aboriginal populations which have not known the deaths and violence associated with a living, racialised, frontier. The current inquiry into custodial deaths is working under a barrage of calls for its dissolution or its prompt winding up. It is seen as too expensive and a waste of money to go back over things that no-one really cares about. But even as the inquiry continues, so do Aboriginal deaths. Within the police and custodial systems, large numbers of Aborigines have died by different means. Some appear to have been murdered; some seem to have been mistreated and denied suitable medical, pharmaceutical or nursing care; others undoubtedly commit suicide, even though a number of murders are represented in this way.

The Muirhead Inquiry and the publicity surrounding it has highlighted the violence under which many Aboriginal Australians live, but this glare of publicity has not been able to stop the suicides. In January 1989, yet another Aboriginal man committed suicide in a Western Australian prison. The police revealed on television that this man had been arrested three times within twenty-four hours. He had, on the third occasion, been put in the new 'safe' cell designed to be suicide-proof, and there, had killed himself, allegedly using the bandage from an abdominal wound. Among other things, this case indicates the Mouret-like visibility of Aboriginal Australians to the police and their resulting vulnerability and hopelessness. There are claims, however, that some Aboriginals in prison are killed by prison officers or police and that these deaths are passed off as suicides. Let me give a single example of such an allegation from Adelaide, one in which the ramifications of the judicial system for the production of texts and selves are quite evident. Alice Dixon has led an effective campaign to have the death of her son, Kingsley, re-investigated, and the Muirhead Inquiry into custodial deaths is partly due to her concern. She alleged that her son did not commit suicide or die from drug abuse, but was killed in jail. Due to her activities, Mrs Dixon has become part of a group which seeks to help Aboriginal prisoners in Adelaide's prisons. In November 1988, it was reported to a conference of Aboriginal women, that on that day, another young Aboriginal man had attempted suicide in an Adelaide jail. In this case, the man had had his injured wrists bandaged, been given a sedative, stripped of all his clothing, and thrown into solitary confinement to sleep it off. This gives an indication of the way in which prison officials deal with such problems, but their attitudes are no different from those of the police. When the cousin of the most recent death in custody (Craig Karpeny, February 1989) was being taken by police to formally identify the body, on the police radio in the car, he heard the loud cheering in the radio room that followed the

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announcement of another Aboriginal death. In an unrelated earlier incident, police were reported as waving football socks at Aborigines, football socks being regularly used for hanging.

But Mrs Dixon's allegations and her charitable activities among prison inmates have drawn her even more to the attention of Adelaide's police. She has several times been arrested, as have other members of her family, and on the ninth of January, 1989, she appeared in an Adelaide court, charged with hindering police and other matters. The police evidence, now reported in the newspapers in a way that was formerly unthinkable, makes interesting reading. I quote the newspaper report in full:

Mother Admits Hindering Police

The mother of a young Aborigine who died in custody pleaded guilty yesterday to hindering police, but not guilty to more serious charges of resisting arrest and assaulting police.

Alice Pearl Dixon, 49, ...was arrested on July 9 last year outside a function--at the Otherway Catholic Centre in Pirie Street, city--marking the anniversary of the death of her son, Kingsley.

Dixon's daughter...and niece...also were arrested outside the function and yesterday pleaded not guilty...Constable Bill Smith alleged that about 1 a.m. on July 9 a police patrol stopped near the Otherway Centre after an Aboriginal man walked in front of the patrol car. As the uniformed patrol was writing out a traffic infringement notice for the man, he ran away and was pursued by the patrol.

Shortly afterwards, the man was seen to enter St. Joseph's Church, which is part of the Otherway Centre, and the patrol followed him. About 15 to 20 Aborigines had then come out of the Church and confronted the patrol.

Giving evidence yesterday, Constable R. Hain, a member of the patrol, said he had been approached by Alice Dixon who had seemed very agitated and had shouted at him angrily: "What do you want here? You people are always harassing Aborigines".

Constable Hain said he had explained to Alice Dixon that he was looking for a man who had been seen running into the church and that she should allow him to enter the church or she would be charged with hindering police. He had then moved towards the church and Alice Dixon had jumped back and shouted at him: "You don't have to push me".

Constable Hain denied he had pushed Alice Dixon and said she had been pretending. He had radioed for assistance and another patrol had arrived within about 30 seconds.

Constable Hain had then started toward the church again to search for the man. Alice Dixon had stepped in his way but he had walked around her and she had accompanied him.

After a few steps she had again walked in front of him, stumbled intentionally toward him and shouted: "You don't have to...push me."

Constable Hain alleged she had then struck him with her right fist--"a roundhouse punch which struck me on the jaw with her elbow connecting with my throat", he said. "I stumbled backwards a bit and then righted myself and arrested her".

He took hold of Alice Dixon but she had struggled and kicked out at him but had not struck him.

Another police officer had come to his aid and as they were walking her toward a cage car another person, allegedly Susan Dixon, had grabbed Alice Dixon around the waist in a bear hug and had hindered their movement.

Susan Dixon had been separated from her mother by a third police officer and Constable Hain had again tried to move Alice Dixon into the cage car but somebody he had not seen had grabbed him by the collar of his jacket and pulled him backwards.

He had shrugged off the person's grip and the person--allegedly Helga Loughlan--had been arrested by another patrol. (*The Advertiser*, 10/1/89)

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Mrs Dixon's evidence, given ten days later, was also reported in the press:

....she had been outside the Otherway Centre on the night with her daughter and brother waiting for a taxi when she had noticed a 'large police presence – about four or five cars'. She had gone over to the policemen to find out why they were there and one of the policemen had become angry with her and shoved her away.

She had walked toward the church to warn others of the police presence and to close the doors so no-one could emerge, but a policeman had grabbed her from behind and she had fallen to the ground.

The policeman had then grabbed her around the neck and arm and she was dragged by two policemen to a cage car.

She had been thrown roughly into the cage car and taken to the City Watch-house where she had again been roughly treated before being charged.

The report continues:

Constable Smith said in his final address that Dixon had 'lied, exaggerated and reconstructed' evidence and had been 'biased' against police.

Other Aboriginal witnesses had also been biased and inconsistent in their evidence and there was 'no thread of truth at all in the defence case'. (*The Advertiser*, 21/1/89)

There are several points of interest. The first, is the way in which the power of the state induces an Aboriginal person to plead guilty to a minor offense in order to evade the major ones. Had this ploy been successful, Mrs Dixon would have had a criminal record, even though my reading of the evidence against her suggests that the police were at fault. In other words, through the structures of a legal code and its public texts, Mrs Dixon is forced to produce herself to the state and to the general public as criminal and as disorderly. Second, the charge of hindering police is one which it is very hard to avoid under the conditions which Mrs Dixon describes—it is a convenient catch—all for use in just such situations of 'disorder' and through it, produces the disorder which it penalizes.

There is also the matter of the police presence outside the church. Police evidence claims that a patrol car arrived within 30 seconds, which is to say, it was there all the time. Dixon claimed that there were four or five police cars present, and the police do not deny it. Why were police cars outside the church and the Otherway Centre and its church on the night of the memorial service for Kingsley Dixon? Their presence is part of the regular pattern of surveillance of the Aboriginal community and an indicator of the particular level of surveillance to which Mrs Dixon is subjected. Then there is the police evidence itself. In that evidence, the magistrate was told that Mrs Dixon has tried to trick the police, to set them up in fact, so that she could then charge them with assault. The willingness of the police to say such things is a good indication of the freedom with which they are able to operate within the courts on matters concerning Aborigines. They are accustomed to having inconsistencies in accounts of reality resolved through the courts in their favour.

In connection with my argument concerning terror, the police presence outside the memorial service; their unrelenting pursuit of the man who jumped, they said, in front of their car; and the evidence given by the police officer concerned of Mrs. Dixon's various 'pretences' of being pushed about are fictions it produces, to which I have referred. Mrs. Dixon is, I note too, a small woman, though according to police evidence, obviously one with considerable clout. There is here an example of the way in which fantasy becomes the necessary concomitant of terror and its surveillances, and the police evidence indicates the ways in which the fantasies of the settler state are constructed. The victim becomes enmeshed in a fantasy which is disorienting and difficult to refute because of the relations of power at play, relations which make it necessary for the fantasy to be acted out for the benefit of a supposedly impartial onlooker. In this case, the onlooker is both the impartial arbiter of the patriarchal state, the judge, and the settler community which watches through the prism of the media.

These are the conditions of truth-making, the powers which create the fictional spaces in which a narrative of the phantasms of race can be produced. Those who, like Timerman, have experienced terror, know what the whiff of widespread suicide means, and I suspect that the Australian police do too, and are afraid. With that fear comes yet more violence as their fears focus on their Aboriginal victims. The fantasies worked out through violence within the judicial and penal systems need the backing of the professions concerned--the lawyers, the medical officers, the coroners, magistrates and the media. These are the racializing fantasies of the nation-state which require public acquiescence in order to legitimate the institutional truths so ruthlessly forged

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on the frontiers of a colonising settler society.

The embeddedness of Australian Aborigines in a culture of racist terrorization differs from that described by Taussig (1984) in Columbia in degree rather than in kind. Australian floggings and beatings are not always carried out in the streets, but they are known to occur there; there, the fear that constructed the Columbian Indian into a monster for the rubber planters is also at work among Australian settlers. The 'compliance' of victim and violator in the production of public truths, texts and selves, is also evident. This is a harsh diagnosis, one that many would at once reject as an exaggeration. However, it is, I argue, terrorization through direct physical violence that produces the chaos that justifies the need for constant supervision and the withholding of basic rights of access to the material processes and practices of settler society; it is the immorality and irrationality of chaos that justifies the exclusion of Aboriginal Australians from it; and it is the place of Aborigines as exemplars of chaos that provides the disorderly 'other' against which settler Australians define themselves as civilized, rational, orderly and, above all, white. It is as if the limits of the gaze of the state are marked out in physical violence; as if the gaze itself can be extended through violence into the crevices of society that would otherwise be closed to it. I have noted elsewhere that one of the Aboriginal suicides was arrested for drunkenness on his own front lawn. Cowlshaw (1988) gives an example from the nineteenth century in which an Aboriginal man was taken from his bed in order to be charged with drunkenness. Here then, there are no limits, and the identity of the gaze with its otherwise hidden aspect of force is revealed. At the margins of culture, there is no civilization; power can be made manifest as unfettered, undisguised force.

There is little to be gained from repeating the evidence for the constant policing of Aboriginal individuals and families, as this information has been set before the community and the academy over and over again. This level of supervision and scrutiny, the colonising, dominating gaze which follows Aboriginal Australians around the streets, into their homes, their marriages, their child-bearing and rearing, and out again into the schools, the parks and the streets, will of itself provide 'the detail' which Shor (1987) referred to, to support the dominating interpretation of Aborigines as chaotic and disorderly by nature. It will also create the conditions of terror that sap the will as well as creating the resentment that produces sometimes resistance, sometimes withdrawal--the fury and riots, the terrifying suicides and the frustration that injects violence into the private and personal relations of individuals with each other to create what might indeed be called, a domestic and specifically Aboriginal 'space of death'. This situation needs to be recognized and labelled

more accurately within anthropological discourse; there is a need to get away from a language which sanitizes the horror of the structures and practices of racism. Terror is the appropriate term for this form of social organization, and it is one which cannot be limited geographically to central Australia.

It seems to me that the findings of the present inquiry into the deaths of Aboriginals in custody can only be explained if the terrorization of Aboriginal people through the combination of surveillance with violence is taken into account. Aboriginal men and women are only too well aware of what faces them inside and outside the prisons, of the surveillance, arrests, interrogations, beatings and derision waiting for them at every step of the judicial process. They are aware of the fantasies in which they are obliged to participate, and they are aware of the destruction and constituting of the self which those processes imply. It is the cyclical violence that some can no longer face, the fantastic manufacturing of the self, and the impossibility of seeing a way out of it, that leads to suicide for those who survive the beatings, whether they are inside the prisons or out. However, as I mentioned in the introduction to this essay, despite its intensity, the surveillance is forever incomplete because of the cultural difference that is constructed through it. No matter how much detail is provided through surveillance, no matter how strictly interpretations are created through judicial and ethnographic texts, the selves produced within these texts are essentially false. The reality of the other culture constantly slips away, precisely because it is defined as other, precisely because of the differences being hammered out on bodies and through texts, precisely because the fantasies produced will not be sustained once the gaze is removed. It is the failure of the settler gaze to produce the real truth about the Aboriginal self, that causes the continuation of violence at the textual, political, frontier and its representations.

There is, then, a reality to racism which cannot be entirely reconstructed or obliterated through the production of texts, and it is a reality capable of shocking and horrifying. The reality of racism is observable not only through courts and police action and media reports, it is observable on the streets and in the language of daily life, and it is particularly observable to anthropologists working among Aboriginal Australians. The reality of racism is almost entirely obliterated from the traditional ethnography of Aboriginal Australians, and the anthropological silence on this matter is intensely worrying. The powerful forces of the state do not only produce Aboriginal Australians, they produce anthropologists and their scientific, anthropological, texts as well. Not only does the visible violence of racism slip out of texts, but the essential violence of representation itself, is allowed to elude consciousness.

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