
FRANCES DEVLIN-Glass
Deakin University
with Senior and Middle-Generation Yanyuwa People

The author wishes to acknowledge the collaboration and support of Yanyuwa elders, in particular Annie Karrakayn, Dinah Norman, Thelma Douglas, Rosie Noble, Jemima Miller, Leanne and Leonard Norman, Roddy Friday, Billie Miller, and Graeme Friday. They have requested that dead people are named in this text because of the historical importance of their work for cultural maintenance. I also thank John Bradley for his generous assistance and for agreeing to be reinterviewed in extenso for this article.

WHAT CAN HOME MEAN WHEN IT IS NO LONGER home (because people were persuaded and chose, reluctantly and for a variety of complex reasons, to leave their sacred Country to settle in town)? When home and the sacred, through the act of colonization, become unfamiliar, unhomely, or worse, proximate and longed for but threatened with loss through lack of interaction? When kujika, sacred narratives that bring the land into being, lose their intimate connection with it? When the practice of rituals on country, which constitute the sacred, must be modified and curtailed, even abandoned? When hard-won land claims do not yield the homelands ceded under an alien legal system because the rights of “squatters” (those of the throw-up-a-beach-shack variety) take precedence? This essay attempts to answer these questions by first describing and analyzing a new hybrid mapping of Yanyuwa kujika (dreaming narratives) in a limited edition cultural atlas, "Forget About Flinders": A Yanyuwa Atlas of the South West Gulf of Carpentaria (Yanyuwa Families). In its critical treatment of the atlas and its methodologies, it aims to demonstrate how innovative this artifact is in relation to previous representations of Aboriginal mythology. Thirdly, it asks questions about its uses for Yanyuwa people as a mapping of the sacred, as cultural affirmation and a form of resistance to imperial mapping, and how it might be used by non-Yanyuwa people as a tool for understanding the sacred, and simultaneously the incommensurability between western forms of representation of the sacred and Yanyuwa ones. Such an artifact also has implications for non-Yanyuwa readers. Yanyuwa stories, by contrast with European mythological narratives, offer a rich, multilayered understanding of the country they are designed to animate, but make limited sense disassociated from it. To read such stories, and the atlas is a useful education in reading, requires an opening up of paradigms, a radical remapping of understandings of how land, story, sacredness and homeliness intersect and manifest themselves. It is a difficult accommodation for non-indigenous readers who have rarely been offered more than scraps and fragments of indigenous knowledge systems. Most existing treatments of myths are of this kind. Or if they have been offered systems of mythology, it is in forms radically disarticulated from the country to which they are tethered and they typically enact a spurious undifferentiated pan-Aboriginalism (Berndt; Reed; Aboriginal Myths, Legends and Fables; Reed, Aboriginal Tales of Australia; Robinson).

What is valuable about the Yanyuwa atlas project as a hybrid text is its specificity, its confinement to just Yanyuwa country, and to demonstrating knowledge in Yanyuwa ways rather than imposing Western narrative templates over the material, as for example Strehlow (1971) did in his (flawed) attempt to convey the literary richness of the songs of the Arrernte people (Hill 453–71).

To put the atlas in context, it is necessary to make some brief and preliminary comments about Yanyuwa history. The Yanyuwa people live remotely (and alongside three other language groups) in the Northern Territory township of Borroloola, on the south-west corner of the Gulf of Carpentaria, having “come-in” to town progressively since the 1880s but only finally in 1969, in response to complex colonializing forces: frontier violence (Roberts), loss (and despoliation) of country to cattle and graziers, disease, and police and “welfare” regimes which encouraged dependence on rations in return for seasonal work in the pastoral industry (Baker). Western-style education has systematically devalued Yanyuwa language and culture (depending on school principals, it is more often than not off the radar-screen altogether) and has proven less than empowering for anything other than low-level work (as mine-workers, “work-for-the-dole” or part-time workers for the Aboriginal culture industries)—though there are spectacular examples of Yanyuwa leaders in the media and bureaucracy. Outside the “protected” areas, Yanyuwa culture and history did not begin to be recorded until the early 1980s by Kirton, Bradley, and Avery. Despite the deeply asymmetrical
power relations that existed in the colonial regime, Yanyuwa people initiated (and took control of) a series of films and TV programs, a 600-page encyclopedic dictionary (published on the Internet, but not yet in print), and an impressive oral history of contact of their culture (Baker), not to mention a series of (on paper) successful land-claims, often the first in their categories under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act (1976). By 2000, they were working to ensure a web presence and the history and protocols used for that collaborative venture were reported in this journal (Devlin-Glass, "Politics of the Sacred"). This present essay, a textual study augmented by interviews and focus groups conducted with Yanyuwa elders and middle-generation users of the atlas, examines the most recent and highly innovative attempt to map dreaming narratives, a limited edition Yanyuwa atlas (at present available in only 14 copies but reprinting), entitled *Forget About Flinders* (Yanyuwa Families) to map culture, and to address a politics of misrecognition (Taylor 25–73), not to say ethnocide. Through the atlas, Yanyuwa people intend to generate a politics of recognition and recuperate their homelands for the coming generations.

The atlas is a response to multiple imperatives:

- the need on anthropologist John Bradley's part to collate, organize, return and make useful to the community the idiosyncratic field notes of 30 years, gathered under a range of different modalities—as a teacher in the school, as language and songlines learner and dictionary-compiler, as sacred-sites authority employee, as land-claims anthropologist, and as a scholar in the discipline of anthropology;

- senior elders' acute (and long-held) fears of loss of culture as the result of language decline, settlement in town, reduction of ritual activity and mobility around Country;

- the need for a medium of instruction capable of being used by multiple, often mixed-age viewers in the camp (where there are no computers)—in this case A3 text with dreaming maps in a visually rich form;

- the need to supplement the inbuilt limitations of the short picture-book, short film and internet as media of instruction and archiving; and

- the need to speak in Yanyuwa-inflected Kriol, rather than anthropological and technicist language.

The atlas strategically attempts to meet the different generational needs of Yanyuwa people, to bring together a range of users:

- those for whom the space of day-to-day operations is divided into European and Yanyuwa spheres; and

- those for whom Europeanization is the most insistent reality of their lives, but for whom there may be (at this stage a fragile) potential for building Yanyuwa identity.

For all its agonistic potential as a tool for culture building or consolidation and because of it, the atlas raises a number of complex issues about not only representation and the limits of Western media for mediating this kind of complex, sacred, multidisciplinary cultural knowledge, but also troubling questions about the future of Yanyuwa culture and the directions for such enterprises in that future. In this analysis, which involved consultations with Wirdwalangu Li-Yanyuwa, the Yanyuwa elders who concern themselves to preserve Yanyuwa culture, and middle-generation Yanyuwa people who concern themselves with cultural preservation and maintenance, how the atlas addresses the incommensurability of Yanyuwa meaning-making and Western media will be explored, with a view to better understanding the nuances of Yanyuwa hybridizing cultural practice, or "two-way" (not either/or but Yanyuwa and mainstream, Yanyuwa and English) education, as Yanyuwa refer to it.

The dominating topos of the atlas is the map, a re-territorialized map, as the title, *Forget About Flinders*, suggests. It reclaims and recuperates space colonized in 1802 by the imperial map-making of Flinders who circumnavigated Australia, mapping in detail the Gulf of Carpentaria and the Sir Edward Pellew islands, the Yanyuwa homelands, which he named after a hero of empire. Although the title of the atlas suggests a certain ironic bravado and insolence about colonialist alienation of Yanyuwa land by explorers, the actual representation of the maps and the discussion of their symbolic and sacred significance is far from parodic or ironic in intent, unlike the more typical Western postcolonial literary uses (Huggan). The Yanyuwa-centric atlas mobilizes a European visual form, essentially colonial and annexing in nature, but one which has been progressively assimilated by Yanyuwa people in order to enact that other imperative towards mapping and reclaiming culture, the process by which land is claimed under the Northern Territory Land Acts, after 1976. These maps, quite self-consciously and politically, set out to articulate space, to make it, and the act of mapping itself, speak in new ways.

The atlas is divided into the following sections, each of which uses different media and methodologies:

1. General introductory apparatus;
2. Place names maps, restoring Yanyuwa names to maps;
3. Illustrated dreaming maps, which demonstrate the dynamic nature of songlines;
4. Print versions of dreaming stories, with associated stories in Kriol (Yanyuwa inflected English) which
function as commentary or dissenting views;
5. Photographs of people and country, and people in
country; and

1. General introductory apparatus of the atlas

The introductory apparatus provides an overview, generally
not available to individuals within Yanyuwa culture
(whose responsibilities would be defined by their role as
jangkyai (guardians) or ngamarrngi (owners) of particular
defined parts of the territory—about half of it. As Muecke
points out: "... cultures are not lived as totalities; they are
better conceived of as partially acquired skills and
attributes" (18), and this is especially true of indigenous
knowledge with its clan-based specialties and closely
defined spaces. So, the atlas breaks new ground in a way
that ruptures tradition in that it approximates the
(European-style) condition of the encyclopedic. This
counter-traditional overview was possible because anthro-
pologist John Bradley has worked closely over almost thirty
years on both recording sites for both the Aboriginal
Sacred Sites Protection Authority (now Aboriginal Areas
Protection Authority) and the Northern Land Council,
and he also did intensive work on an encyclopedic, il-
ustrated, thesaurus-style dictionary of Yanyuwa/English and
English/Yanyuwa. When Yanyuwa users were questioned
about whether the atlas could usefully be rendered in smaller
units (for example, as individual picture-books for chil-
dren’s use), the responses differed according to the users.
Translator/educator Leanne Norman believed such works
would be useful while others, including her brother
Leonard Norman and uncle (mother’s brother) Craeme
Friday, men educated in ceremony, suggested that a signif-
ificant virtue of the work is its demonstration of the links
between stories, and the need it satisfies for jangkyai and
ngamarrngi to work collaboratively on the ceremony ground
and to know how to enact and support one another’s kujik-
a.

In being encyclopedic, it is nonetheless culturally sensi-
tive and frank about the gaps in knowledge. Not only does
it maintain a strict silence about secret and sacred restrict-
ed knowledge, the “inside sacred” (Yanyuwa Families 7),
but it notes where the knowledge-base has already been
irretrievably fractured by the death of key owners and
where succession has not been successful. This is most spec-
tacularly in evidence in the missing section of the kujika
which is probably the most important and public one for
Manankurra and Vanderlin Island, that of the Tiger Shark
Dreaming. In interview, Bradley explained the community and
scholarly dilemma thus:

the song cycle ... that goes from Vanderlin Rocks and
ends up in Lake Eames isn’t complete, we know that.
But that was a wish of Johnson Timothy that he wanted
to record as much of it as he could remember. And
he did. And he did that not long after his father died,

and I think he partly did that to come to terms with his
father’s death. So it’s not complete, and I’ve got the
tape where he sings and he says “I can’t remember how
it goes here.” So it’s not all there, but it’s a representa-
tion. This is what people are prepared to do. They
want to demonstrate knowledge. They want to show
that there are things still there, and do it to the best of
what time has given us to do it in. . . .

The Wurdiya group who own the Ngabaya song [part
of the Tiger Shark kujika], all the men are nearly dead,
have remained in town, or gone to other places. Not
even Pyro or Isaac [Isaac] or Dinny [McDinny] [all
senior men who died—Isaac and Dinny in 2003, Pyro
in 2003], who are Jungkai for that song, remember it
in its entirety. I’d recorded a lot of verses with old Tim
Timothy who was also Jungkai for it. Dinny remembered
quite a lot, so I had verses from him. Isaac remembered
some, so I had verses from him. Pyro wouldn’t contribute, he just said “look, it’s gone.” But
the important part was that it was an important text for
the Wurdiya people. They wanted to reclaim it some-
how because the Wurdiya people now use mostly the
Mara song cycle which is far, far away from Yanyuwa
country, and for me didn’t make sense to incorporate,
even though they use it, because it didn’t fit into this
idea of the atlas. So I wanted to work on it. And I
worked on it with old Dinny. (Devlin-Glass, 2003)

Another feature that marks this as a hybrid text and
which bears on the question of its encyclopedic nature is
the means by which the prohibition against drawing
dreamings that are not one’s right to draw was circumven-
ted. Nona Cameron, wife of John Bradley, was the person
given responsibility for drawing the maps and the dream-
ings. She consulted about the fine points of representation
with each of the relevant families/owners. This creative
side-stepping of traditional ways in order to achieve new
objectives is one of the many ways in which this document
proclaims itself as hybrid, and post-colonial.

A further function of the Introductory apparatus (which
is also available in the online dictionary) (Yanyuwa Wuka)
is its detailed demonstration of the Yanyuwa knowledge
system. What a Yanyuwa person can take for granted, if
s/he has sufficient Yanyuwa language is an aspect of the
atlas that is revelatory for both Europeanized younger
Yanyuwa people, but more so for European outsiders: the
minutely categorized aspects of land-ownership, climate,
ethno-botanical and topographical knowledge that are
encoded in language but also part of the experiential reali-
ty of those resident in the homelands. More importantly,
the links between kinship and land that underpin all
Yanyuwa knowledge are insistently underlined in ways that
implicitly question European distinctions, for example,
between human and animal, between animate and ani-
mate. How it is possible to be kin to a spirit-man or a cycad
tree or a particular effect of the weather (e.g., heavy sea
frog) is explained via that sine qua non, that literal ground
mak[ing] the place they clothe with a word habitable and believable . . . recall[ing] or evoke[ing] the phantoms (dead and supposedly gone) that still stir—and as they alter functionalist identity by breaking off from it, they create in the site itself this erosion or non-site carved out by the law of the other. (de Certeau 141)

Restoring the meaning of place-names is a form of resistance to the “law of the other” as they sometimes have a meaningful etymology, often related to kuyka or wuka (Devlin-Glass, 2003). Kandambarrawuji a place associated with the dreaming of the White-bellied Sea Eagle Spirit Ancestor (a-Wurrwulhi) translates literally her eggs fell down, palpable to a viewer of the site in the egg-like stones that dot the beach. Similarly, Yumbynuma translates leaving the shredded feathers, an allusion to the paper-bark bundle containing ochred feathers left by the Dugong Hunter Dreaming. However, often the literal meaning is not recognized or has been subsumed into the place-name, or, Bradley suspects, constitutes a lost etymology, as for example Ningklardawakangka at Goat Point on the southern end of Vanderlin Island is an ablative form of the place of her back, but the little wallaby of the Tiger Shark Dreaming did not go there, so the meaning of this place-name appears to be either lost or irrelevant to that story. Like Brian Friel’s play, Translations, where the Imperial inscription rewrites and erases an older Irish-language and cultural palimpsest and the stories that animate and give meaning to that culture, there is some significant political and symbolic mileage to be gained by the reverse process, and often a bilingual version (English names in pencil rather than ink). For all the restoration of Yanyuwa place names to the island maps, sadly, the names of the larger land units, especially the major islands remain as Flinders named them. The original Yanyuwa place-names for larger land-units do not appear on the maps because of space limitations: Wurrwarrnwar (South-west Island), Barranyi (Centre and North Islands, Skurl, Watson and Black and White Craggy), Wurralhihi (Northern Vanderlin), Warungu (North-West Island), Wardawara (South-West Island) Mangkimangki (Central, on east), Lhukannguwarra (Kangaroo Island down to the delta). This alone justifies the plainer place-name maps, and the more significant revitalization and re-identification of the pre-colonial names for country, but it is also important to note that this process is not one of erasure of the English place-names but a highly significant ideological strategy—a “two-way” and bilingual process of recording both.

2. Place names maps

For traditional users of the atlas, the most important knowledge that the atlas offers are the innocuous-looking place-names maps, of which there are 22, the first 7 being for the Islands and the remainder for the mainland. Because country is no longer routinely traveled, these names run the risk of dropping out of currency. Indeed, observing how older and middle-generations people use the atlas confirmed the anxiety created by place-name loss and the importance of the atlas as an aide-memoire. Bradley explained this in interview:

That’s a really important issue because a name is more than a name. A name brings forward a whole sensual experience; it’s about spirituality, history, and humanness. (Devlin-Glass, 2003)

De Certeau, speaking of city-spaces and street names in Paris and New York, talks of place-names of being, territorialized land itself and its inevitable implicit yoking with kinship.

3. Illustrated Dreamings Maps

The most innovative features of this publication, and the way in which it constitutes a major breakthrough compared with the text with which it is most comparable, Strehlow's
monumental documentation of Arrente Songs (1971), are the complex ways in which the atlas maps dreaming narratives by means of cartoons-in-action in Parts I and II, and song verses in Part III. The dreaming maps have their own legends of dreaming story actors, usually animals or marine creatures, but sometimes effects of the weather (e.g., waramu, the flood waters or a-Kutakeekwak, the legendary sorcery-stone bird responsible for hailstones, among other phenomena), of ancestors or spirit-men.

In Parts I and II, the mobility of these creatures is signified by repetition by variation of the images (working rather like a frame-by-frame animation operational in space rather than time), together with insistant reminders of the tracks such moving creatures might make: waves made by flipper action for the mobile sea-turtles, or footprints, or the journey may be held together by an appropriate symbol, e.g., the handmade dugong hunters’ rope, which is thought to be the reef which is the sign of their passage. The aerial perspective/moving pathways visually are not in themselves innovative: the post-Papunya-Tula art movement and publications like Tjarans/Roughtail (Greene) have made familiar such motifs and a range of symbols, and the notions of mapping sacred narratives in space. What is revelatory about how Yanyuwa territory is mapped in this artifact is how intensively the lines of force interact over a small territory (30 by 18 kilometers in the case of Map 1, Vanderlin Island) and how the different parts of the islands and the mainland are mutually linked by jostling ancestors. They meet, converse, argue (often over land ownership and relative power), are forced to give one another precedence and insistently name places. Thirteen stories in Vanderlin alone are told in the text boxes reserved for major dreaming narratives, and this, of course, represents only some of the available narratives. Many more are restricted. By representing individual stories that approximate European aesthetics, most previous representations of Aboriginal myth-systems have tended to erase the sense of the dynamic quality of overlapping narratives, the multivalent ways in which stories create country and identity, and the sheer number of the intersecting stories.

What the maps enact, interviews confirm. They suggest a measure of reluctant resignation that kajika that have lost their owners and guardians will be allowed to die. Interestingly, however, the active women-for-culture have allowed some of their restricted material to be archived, though with strict caveats on its appropriate use. Whether this gendered difference is a measure of relative (cultural) confidence of the women (it is said respectfully to be “their time”), the leisure to pursue cultural agendas, or the existence of a critical mass of female participants in culture-maintenance, or all of these or other reasons, is not clear to me. Certainly, the loss of senior men in recent decades has been serious: first to the pastoral industry since the 1920s (which disrupted ability to move on country and engage in ritual, as well as patterns of language use) and subsequently to work, to drink, and more recently, to death, and even despair about the future of culture.

Parts I and II of the atlas, with their assemblages of resources (cartoon maps, dreaming stories, and other stories that amplify them, sometimes sacred and sometimes historical, photographs of ancestors and places), are pitched at the generation that does not know country intimately. Little affect is expressed in the stories, though much affect inheres in them. The burden of carrying affect to the next generation therefore falls on the cartoon maps, on how the photos are used, and the enthusiasm with which the narratives are told with the atlas as the mediating resource. It is not surprising to learn from those who use the atlas with younger Yanyuwa people that the cartoon maps are the most popular. They enact much more in the way of meaning-making than can the plain print narratives, and they often do it with great vitality and humor, which is an important part of the experience of sociality in this community. For example, one of the busiest cartoons in the col-
lection is Map 8 with its Wurdaliya story of the Ngabaya people, the Spirit-Men. Another fragmentary kajika (the prose version, however, is intact), it documents the coming together of bands of Ngabaya men from all directions and their total extinction by way of a giant burning fart by the senior Ngabaya. The images vividly recreate the backwards and forwards journeying of the Ngabaya, their ceremonial responsibilities, their battles with mosquitoes and defensive activities in relation to crocodiles and potentially engulfing sand-dunes, their methods of fishing and cooking and associated food-taboos. However, the images are dominated by the near-central placement of a cartoon figure, which encapsulates both the frenetic frustration of the wanderers and the dangerous caprice of the old man who nonetheless expects complete obedience: the catharsis of a giant burning Ngabaya fart delivered by the exaggeratedly large, disgruntled hermetic senior Old Ngabaya. Such an image graphically explodes with suppressed tension, at once comic and serious. The dunes of this territory, Murmurr, are dangerous, but they are rich in food (for Yanyuwa people—the amplifying stories remind us that three American airmen died here during the war) (Yanyuwa Families 167) and Ngabaya men are thought to be unreliable in their relations with people.

Because of the centrality of the map topos, the atlas replicates the immersion-learning conditions under which knowledge is imparted to Yanyuwa people. To be in a place is to be exposed to the range of narratives relevant to that place. Knowledge is imparted on site as it is needful. Often narratives begin or end elsewhere. There is no attempt at continuity of narrative in the European style in the atlas, as there was in Yanyuwa Country (Bradley). Placed in Murmurr country, as one is in Map 8, one has the sense of many intersecting lines of narrative, all of which tell stories about what one needs to know to survive and flourish in country. As an outsider used to European narrative conventions with strong narrative coherence and closure, this is a quite different discipline, but typical of the atlas’s methodologies. It constitutes a traditional space of enunciation for Yanyuwa readers of the atlas (except for the unfamiliar modality of the page substituting for Country), but it is a challenging, indeed destabilizing, hermeneutic space for those familiar with Western-style narratives.

Another advantage of these cartoon maps (and their associated stories) over traditional European mapping conventions is the wealth of information they offer about what to European eyes will be invisible. For example, subtle topographic features and micro-geographic environments, the availability of food supplies, the existence of hidden reefs, and deceptive dangers (of, for example, potentially engulfing dunes, dangers under the surface of the water, cyclones, crocodiles, and sharks). These advantages are magnified when the maps are read in conjunction with the dreaming narratives that encode in great detail environmental and ethnobotanical and ethno-zoological information. As well as encoding deep cultural knowledge, such maps would no doubt greatly enrich the science curricula of the schools within Yanyuwa country and simultaneously have the potential to build cultural self-esteem. This is not to valorize their pragmatic, materialist function over other functions, but it is to demonstrate one aspect of the multivalency of such artifacts and the sophistication of indige-
nous knowledge systems and their liberatory potential to inform impoverished European understandings of the complexity of the physical environments of Yanyuwa country.

One cannot underestimate, either, the intense affect, mainly pride and relief, expressed by the ten elders and middle-generation people I interviewed: to read the maps and the texts in the atlas that encode Yanyuwa understandings of space is for them to experience an ecstasy in reading that cosmos. Many of those interviewed claimed that the atlas was “as good as it gets” in its depiction of the public aspects of their culture (Devlin-Glass 2003–2004). They celebrate the sense that it is down “whole” and they hold a hope that it mitigates the loss of the texts (of country) held to this point comprehensively only in the memory of elders. The atlas provides a never-before-available vantage point, much broader than that available from a semi-moieties or skin-perspective, from which to view an entire cultural space, which has been over thousands of years invested with mythic and social significance. De Certeau, using the trope of a successfully airborne Icarus, talks of the difference of viewing between New York streets and then seeing the same “text” from the heights of the Twin Towers in 1985, capturing a sense of what this difference in perspective means:

It [reading the new text] changes an enchanting world into a text. It allows him [Icarus] to read it; to become a solar Eye, a god’s regard. The exaltation of a scopic or a Gnostic drive. Just to be this seeing point creates the fiction of knowledge. (123)

While a Yanyuwa reader of this might fundamentally disagree with the idea of country as being fictional because it is perceived to be an incontrovertible ground of being, they would understand that it is song (i.e., human relationality) that confers vitality/meaning onto the land (discussed at length below, in section 7). Land that is not sung is dead or dying. De Certeau’s final point is furthermore crucial in another sense: for this god’s-eye view to be effective, the text that created the knowledge in the new media will need to be read and re-read with meaning, which in turn may change the relationship between the real-life spatial referents and its Yanyuwa users.

4 & 5. Print Versions of Dreaming Stories, and associated Marginal Commentary and Photos

De Certeau’s use of the term gnostic (123) is revealing and helpful in thinking about the atlas. The most obviously hybrid moment in this text, after the choice of print medium, is the way in which dreaming stories are set out typographically. Yanyuwa people, some of whom are simultaneously Christian, often referred to the atlas as the “Yanyuwa Bible.” This shift from viewing Country as sacred to the representation as in some sense constituting a form of sacredness is significant. What they meant, usually, was that the atlas had the same status and prestige for them as the Bible does for Jews and Christians, but in fact the influence of the scholarly tradition represented by the Talmud on the atlas is more fundamental than that. John Bradley takes responsibility for this decision and describes the process of foregrounding the dreaming stories and surrounding them with commentary, thus:

What I wanted to do was to highlight the importance of the central narrative, the dreaming narrative. Because I equate that with the European sense of common law, and then that’s surrounded by commentary. I went back to my own tradition—Talmud. A page of Talmud is actually set up so that you have a central body of authoritative text surrounded by commentary. I would have loved to have made each page of text look like a page of Talmud but the computer people advised me it would have been very difficult to do. They would have had to construct a program to make it.

The commentary is the subsequent tradition, or the reasons why, and you’re never told dreaming stories in Yanyuwa without a reason why. A good storyteller will begin to tell the story, but will interject all the time with “and that name now belongs to so and so” or “that’s why people don’t go there” or “so-and-so died there” or “this is where that happened.” So the dreaming narrative is central but it is always interspersed with other events. Or you get older men who are very good at song cycles who would intersperse the whole telling of the story with the song cycle verses that relate. For me the commentary was critical because there is no story without commentary. The text occurs in square boxes and is surrounded by commentary. And it also helped to deal with issues of avoiding freezing tradition. One could also register the competing voices [and traditions] and that became a very important issue to allow people to read, if they could read them, that there were always dissenting voices. It’s the inoculation against being frozen. And that’s why in the atlas you read that there is dissension. There never was a pure form. (Devlin-Glass: 2003)

Certainly, the simple design device of enclosing the central sacred narratives in boxes makes clear their precedence and they almost always tell how a story continues or where it picks up, and to whom the dreaming belongs. The enlarged print font is a reminder that the text is intended for a community reading situation, which may involve older and younger readers working together on it, inevitably flipping between story and cartoon maps. The older users I worked with tended to use the print version only to refresh memory, and used their fingers over the cartoon maps to trace stories that were very familiar, but a middle-generation user reported learning much from the movement from dreaming story to other connected stories.

The marginalia that surround the main text boxes, in a smaller font, rely on the scholarly tradition shared by Judiasm, or the ubiquitous Western academic convention of footnoting and explication. Their content is as varied as
it typically would be in a Talmudic text: they venture into realms of medicine, dreams, science, and law. The marginalia are used to register gaps in knowledge; to discuss linguistic points; to deal with origins or resolutions outside the scope of Yanyuwa territory; to touch on important ritual practices not covered in the dreaming narrative or to register where ceremonies used to be held; to tell important historical stories that have happened in the place under discussion, often ones for which there was no satisfactory resolution, as in the case of Nora Jalirduma’s story of the old lady who disappeared (Yanyuwa Families 128) or the story of Old Steve Johnson’s burial of Lithi (85); and to tell post-contact stories like the complex history of Wyili (87). The point Bradley makes above about commentary being useful for not freeing tradition and allowing dissenting voices to be heard is a crucial one, especially given the contested ter-

ritory of tradition being unchangeable and the clear commitment to changes that make it workable under the radically changed circumstances enforced by colonialism and settler culture. The impulse to represent diversity and multiplicity within the tradition via the marginalia also has implications for unsettling the essentialist notions of “authenticity” and the dangers of binarisms of authentic/inauthentic voices (Griffiths 238). It also makes clear that this project is not one that seeks to reverse the colonizing project or fix Yanyuwa culture in “perpetual otherness” (Loomba 173) but is open to exposing and expressing its internal instabilities.

Another generator of strong affect is the hundreds of photos in this document. Organized by place and sometimes by clan groupings, these also break with tradition in interesting ways. Some photos were veted for inclusion because they extended beyond the political control of Yanyuwa information and trespassed on Garrwa and Mara knowledge. No photos of Wunbarruyi, the dugong place, or of the mainland site of the Stone Dreaming are shown for this reason, despite the fact that they would have been useful to demonstrate links into and out of Yanyuwa country (Devlin-Glass: 2003). It is noteworthy, though, that prohibitions on publishing photos of dead Yanyuwa people, usually a strict taboo in Aboriginal cultures, did not occur:

...I actually got those women to choose the people photos and work out how they should go in, and make sure all the names were correct. And there was no dissection at all amongst those women or even when we went back to Borroloola about using the images of the people. I went to Billy Miller—no problems. I even went to Mavis Timothy and said “I want to use images of your deceased sister and your mum and dad, and all your brothers,” and she said “you have to, because our kids have got to know.” So that was a very pragmatic view—this was going to be a text that spoke of where we’ve all come from. (Devlin-Glass: 2003)

Having watched how the photos are used with younger members of the community, I noted that they are used as more than aide-memoire for deceased relatives. The information about place can also be important, with children being chided for not recognizing a stone or stone ledge that they have experienced. It may be that they constitute a way of virtually returning to country. Photographs are certainly easily damaged in the tropical environment of Borroloola, so their preservation in a more substantial
format than individual scraps of photographic paper is important. Photography is a medium that many observers see being used for community-building purposes.

That the atlas as a political and symbolic recuperative enterprise is not merely an essentializing and romantic one is made clear in its positioning as a postcolonial enterprise, rather than one that attempts to recuperate some idealized pre-colonial realities. What has been lost as a result of settler culture and its policies of assimilation is a persistent theme of the margins: the commentators attempt to represent the many and complex voices of Yanyuwa people in the past and in the present, to reveal the reasons for the gaps and silences within the knowledge system.

6. Wandayarra a-yabala: Mapping Songlines in Relation to Landscape

Although the cartoon maps and the cross-section kuyika are the most innovative and pedagogically powerful features of this work, the print sections are intimately related to them. The images, like the land in a ritual situation, acquire meaning by being animated by the songs. By contrast, Streloew's monumental account of Arrernte prose and verse dreaming narratives, Songs of Central Australia (1971), was exclusively print-driven (Streloew's map, by comparison with the Yanyuwa atlas maps, is a conventional European one). His literary commentary is detailed and technical, and its motive is to exalt Arrernte myths, not for their intrinsic interest, but as an appropriation of the oral epic poetry in the Western tradition. Streloew's research was conducted in the premature and misguided belief that he was "the only rightful owner—last of the rightful black men" (Hill 747) and "under a heavy shroud of tragic prognostication" (Hill 501). This work is a heroic (if ethnocentric) tombstone enterprise, addressed not to Arrernte people but to Westerners, and conducted very much within the paradigms of archaic Western literatures:

The European parallels are designed to achieve a more sympathetic attitude in the mind of the white reader towards aboriginal verse and towards the aboriginal world of ideas. For once it can be shown that some of these apparently crude, cruel and strange ideas were once to be found also in ancient pagan Europe, then more thoughtful readers may hesitate to reject them as utterly valueless. (Streloew xl)

Although it is severely vitiated by its racism and pervasive disgust for the culture he is documenting, nonetheless his meticulous gathering of data about songlines and their operation is undoubtedly a rich resource and archive, and one currently in use by contemporary Arrernte people in pursuit of political and cultural agendas of many kinds. Songs of Central Australia is like the Yanyuwa atlas in one respect only: its focus on a single discrete culture. However, despite its learning and its immersion in the language of Arrernte, it is unlike the Yanyuwa atlas in an important respect: its cosmological perspective is European rather than Arrernte. Hill points to the influence of the Cambridge don, H. M. Chadwick, and in particular his literary histories of Ancient Greek, Icelandic and Norse, Celtic and Old English (Hill 453). Streloew foregrounds the ways in which dreaming narratives in prose and verse can be thought of as similar to ancient Western epic literature. He makes much of metrical and tonal features, archaic diction, parallelism and antithesis, poetic diction, and syntactical matters in his comparative typology of literatures project. He was intent on "putting Aranda song on the world map" (Hill 454).

Hostage to modernist assumptions about the centrality of the aesthetic, Streloew valorized the Word (with all the Christian resonances of that Biblical term) at the expense of Country. He was aware of the "high geographical accuracy" of songlines (Streloew 147) but did not understand at a deep level the significance of this observation. What the Yanyuwa atlas eloquently demonstrates, by contrast, is that land itself is the central structuring force that gives meaning to a whole range of other cultural phenomena: kuyika, kinship, laws, dietary imperatives, ethnobotanical knowledge, in short, way of life (Muecke's preferred understanding of the term philosophy in an Aboriginal context, 11) and ways of being human.

The graphical methodology of cross-sectioning Country in order to tease out geographical subunits was first used by Bradley in compiling the Dictionary in 1991. This methodology is again deployed in the final part (Part 3) of the atlas and it accomplishes two purposes:

- it maps verse kujika (the most formal and ceremonial manifestation of songlines and completely different in purpose from wuka, the dreaming narratives of Parts 1 and 2 of the atlas) in its still lengthy shorthand version, Maybi; and

- it links a bilingual version of maybi in very precise numbered ways with landscape features, pictured, usually, in cross-section slices, also giving in a third textbox an indication of where the kujika moves.

Part 3 is the most specialized section of the atlas, especially useful for literate Yanyuwa men who can take part in kujika performance, and of interest to those who seek to understand the genre more closely. The women also value them: although they know kujika, they cannot sing it, but the atlas confirms for them the richness and value of both their country and their ancestors.

What does Part 3 of the atlas demonstrate about how Yanyuwa people think about their land and the "sacred" or supervalid forces that animate it? First, the links established between song verses and cross-sectional illustrations constitute a groundbreaking attempt to make very clear the minute particularities in which the Yanyuwa sense of being "at home" on country depends. Although one could talk of a poetics of country, one would need to qualify that immediately by pointing out that this render-
ing is not in any sense literary or logocentric, or even anthropocentric (Muecke 50), but rather land-centered and relationship-imbued. The well mentioned in verses 2–3 is precisely located by its proximity to the high eastern bank of the river (verses 12–13), its footpaths, and to be recognized by its relationship with crested pigeons and barred finches, just as verses 17, 18, 19, and 20 will inevitably evoke the Tiger Shark Dreaming Ancestor, though Yulungurri (the shark ancestor) does not (for Yanyuwa people) need to be mentioned by name. The sense of well-being saturates the visual imagery of food, water, leisure, playing children, and pride in in-made artifacts like the bark-canoe of verses 14–15. The archeic reference to bark canoes (which have not been in use since the 1920s, and long before European contact in the 1880s, had been replaced by sturdier dugout canoes introduced by the Macassans), functions implicitly as a celebration of Yanyuwa pride in workmanship and self-sufficiency, and reminds the performers and listeners that this culture has a long history of occupation, natural wealth, and specialized bush technology in this place. The kujika verses often do not tell narratives, though they draw in narratives often allusively, and to a Western reader may seem to be merely catalogues of animal or botanical or geographical details of landscape, but the cartoon-style maps demonstrate that their function is a much deeper one, that of “drawing in” other song-cycles, often of mythic and “sacred” significance. The creatures or phenomena referred to are both literal and super-vital: the two rocks exist in a landscape and are valued for themselves but are seen as proof positive of the ancestor-spirit dingo’s mating at that point. No rock, or even annoying insect, is insignificant if it is sung as part of kujika or wuka. Everything in the territory is potentially singable and sung, and the kujika, considered as a corpus, make this abundantly clear. The universe for Yanyuwa people is animate; power is manifest as much in the small and the large creature, animate as well as what passes in the West as inanimate; humans metamorphose as do animals, weather conditions, and landscapes.

The super-vitality of the kujika/wuka themselves, and of country itself, is worth comment and made clear in the atlas, especially in Part 3. A striking feature of kujika that is partially demonstrated in the cartoon-style maps, and more clearly in the lowest text box entitled “Country Names,” is the sense that the kujika move, are active, have agency, and are activated as a result of the interaction between song (and human singer) and country. This sense is built into Yanyuwa language, and in particular into the archeaic dialect (one of five separate dialects in that language) which is reserved for these most sacred of songs. The metaphor often used of kujika or country is of a road that moves and is capable of actively embracing other roads, or kujika, and it often goes underwater or underground:

When the old people sing the kujika they know exactly how the kujika is moving; they know when it is
climbing up river banks, they know when it is going down into the sea, they know when it is going around and around singing in one place, the kujika contains a lot of very detailed knowledge about movement through country.

When the Dreamings first sang the kujika, the kujika went into the ground and the song is said to be still there today, continually moving through the country, never stopping, they are always moving and people who know the kujika can join in and sing, and once they start singing it is like the country is singing through that person . . . they never describe them as being in the past, they always use a language that talks about the kujika being always present. (Yanyuwa Families 294)

The metaphors used here are instructive: kujika moves of its own accord, has agency; however, a Yanyuwa person's specific knowledge of the kujika and, importantly, the tunes for it, permit an engagement between land and human singers, "a joining in" with country that is transformative. Country is constructed as having agency in and of itself, but it is also given voice and vitality through active relationship with the singers of kujika. That the relationship is thought of as reciprocal is evidenced by a Yanyuwa speaker who claimed that if you have the songs, they can have the effect of "shrinking the country," making the journey seem less long and arduous. The continuous present Bradley refers to above is significant because these paths are thought to have been laid down in the past by ancestor spirits, but are continually activated in the present. To travel in places made sacred by kujika is to "put their bodies in the locus of creation and of continuity, and thus the power that resides there not only recognizes them but also inspires them to act" (Muecke 22). The atlas also illustrates the extent to which the words of the kujika cannot meaningfully stand independently of country: they depend on the notion of the singer being in country, moving with the aid of songs across it. In this they more closely approach to the condition of ritual drama than poetry. The "set" is nothing less than the land itself, and tracts of it specific to a particular kujika, and this giant "set" is itself and not negotiable, and conceived of as an active player in the unfolding drama. The drama is not translatable onto a new "set." This is to highlight a significant incommensurability between the performative experience of Yanyuwa songlines, as the atlas attempts to represent them, and Western narratives, especially as Yanyuwa ceremonies involve the whole community and have no place for the notion of a Western-style "audience." The songs cannot be detached meaningfully from the land that gives rise to them, as they occur in a culture in which a connection to place has not yet been displaced by a commitment to linear time (Fabian):

Being and belonging have not yet been prized loose from country in such a way that would both permit those sorts of appropriations of country, in representation, for example, and allow for survival of individuals' identity where homelands are lost. (Muecke 17)

Following Swain and Deborah Bird Rose, Muecke suggests that relationality via the kinship system to place create an "intensifying onto the present moment down through concentric circles of forces and meanings" (Muecke 17). Place defines being and belonging, kinship structures, relatedness to ancestor spirits, and relates animate and inanimate powers, gives the songs and receives them back.

The atlas thus enact an uncompromising cultural politics and a complex, contested knowledge system. It also powerfully demonstrates how Yanyuwa people have hused resources and a knowledge of place, of which the colonists and mainstream culture are largely unaware. It raises challenging questions:

about the hybridization of Yanyuwa cultural knowledge as it manifests within the discursive formations of European knowledge systems and media;

whether such a hybrid artifact represents a violation of authenticity, or a creative attempt to meet new needs;

what "authenticity" might mean in the face of imminent language loss and loss of knowledge of the land from which the narratives derive their meaning, and rapidly hybridizing knowledge systems;

the urgent need for new ways of discussing incommensurability in epistemological systems of secular Australia and Yanyuwa culture;

the challenge that a non-anthropocentric and land-centered epistemology represents for non-indigenous people; and

new constructions of what it is to be Yanyuwa.

The most hybrid textual version of Yanyuwa sacred narratives produced to date, and the most protractive of a long line of artifacts devoted to cultural self-exposition, the atlas is a self-consciously liminal document. It occupies an in-between territory in the contact zone, but even as it lays emphasis on survival in the face of potential annihilation, its status as the basis for future transformations is uncertain. The imperative that drove its production (and that of earlier artifacts) was the sense expressed by Roddy Friday: "[. . . ] time's running out. The people who have the kujika, already, and the knowledge and the song to it are going so quickly" (Devlin-Glass: 2004). Tragically, this impressive young advocate for Yanyuwa culture died three weeks after recording the interview. Monitored, controlled, and collaborated on by traditional culture-owners of the Yanyuwa community, it (currently) takes the form of a large-format book (A3 with double-page foldouts for maps), designed to speak cross-generationally but principally to those younger generations for whom maps, cartoons, and print are legible. That
it is successful in doing this is strongly attested by the families that use it:

There are two houses—Mum's house and my house. Together. And that book goes from there, jumps over here and goes back there. It's well used.

I always read it at night and looking at it, when I have spare time, I refer back to it. It's real educational material for us. I'd go into meetings and go and query that to my grandfather, Old Pyro... This is really ideal for referring back to, to see if that was correct, so I'll use this to question Granpa or my Mum. I'll say, "Whose area?" Questions in regard to land, or language, or kuji-kaka. I'll question them for my personal knowledge... Mum uses it a lot. She'll sit under the tree, and she'll talk to the younger ones. About 4-year-olds. And they identify "shark" and things. And then Mum starts talking in language... and the kids identify it. (Devlin-Glass, 2004)

Although the benefits of this kind of cross-generational exchange are palpable, the risks and problems are also immense for both the Yanyuwa community and those outside who seek to understand it. Do its practices, for instance, merely inhere those engaged in by the "othering" maneuvers of colonial/ist anthropology? Does it risk rigidifying passness? Does it essentialize "authenticity"? Does it commit a modernizing culture to forms of cultural purity that are becoming irrelevant? Does it enact unbridgeable differences between indigenous and colonizer epistemologies, or does it actively create a bridge between tradition and newly emerging hybrid, two-way Yanyuwa identities? Does it supply a vocabulary in which cross-cultural dialogue becomes possible? In a very real sense these are impertinent and premature questions for an outsider to ask, and ones for which the community itself will find answers in the generations to come, and so they are raised tentatively and in a spirit of cross-cultural dialogue. However, the issues concern and implicate not only Yanyuwa people, but also non-Yanyuwa, especially in the light of Yanyuwa attempts to achieve emancipation and autonomy by educating those outside their community, and their explicit commitment to "two-way," essentially relational forms of identity.

A further and related issue for outsiders that the atlas powerfully addresses is the incommensurability that exists between Aboriginal sacred narratives and European narrative assumptions and conventions, a matter of two fundamentally different epistemological systems. The most difficult of these incommensurabilities to negotiate cross-culturally is the fact that authority comes not from any textual version of songlines, as it would in a European epistemology, but from the country traversed (Benterrak, Muecke, and Roe 22) Such incommensurability, and this paper has raised many, imply the need for "new vocabularies of comparison by which we can articulate these contrasts" (Taylor 67).

The atlas makes clear how different the assumptions of Yanyuwa storying are from literary European storying. For Western stories, stories to be stories have to have a narrative and/or aesthetic shape, be detachable from context, and they are normally required to travel cross-culturally with minimal (or explicable) difficulty. While there are some dreaming narratives in the Yanyuwa corpus that have the shape and legibility of a Western narrative (some uukka, prose narratives, in particular myths of origin like those of the Tiger Shark, Chickenhawk and Crow, Rainbow Serpent and the Two Initiates), many do not. Some kujaka exist as catalogues of place-names, or serve other functions such as explications of power relations (perhaps in relation to Law or kinship relationships, or they constitute guides to safely crossing country, or recipes for dealing with potentially carcinogenic and nutritious foods). To mention country is to encode implicitly a latenlily organized, non-hierarchical (Benterrak, Muecke, and Roe 22) web of kinship functions that is not just human-to-human but also human-to-animal and -plant life. It can operate at "other levels of, [for example], why the bones used for pointing are related to the tanwy frogmouth that may be related to the man who not so long ago used to use that type of sorcery and how living people still talk about him, the objects and the bones and what else that may relate to, and how the singing of one kujaka verse can distill all that to knowledgeable listeners" (personal communication, John Bradley, 17 Nov. 2004). Thus, uukka and kujaka are always multivalent.

Questioned about whether the atlas has the potential for revival ceremonies that have lapsed, middle-generatiion men trained for ceremony in their youths expressed qualified hope but saw the assembling of requisite numbers of dancers and performers as a potential obstacle. Asked whether kujaka could be performed in English, they and senior elders were uncompromising in their negations. It seems likely that there may be few voices to sing them or perform rituals that are related to them because of the essentially social nature of such events and the need for a critical mass of performers. By contrast, uukka (what Streichow ethnocentrically refers to as the prose version) are uncontroversially translatable and can be told in a variety of different ways, and for a range of audiences.

The atlas has limitations, which its auspices readily admit: even with the large-scale (A3 x 2) fold-out maps, information is necessarily limited by what can put onto the page and still be legible. If a second edition is contemplated, larger scale maps and more of them might be needed for the busiest territories. Some kujaka are given bilingual treatment, but not all. Perhaps the dreaming stories could also in the future be available in Yanyuwa versions. An index is sorely needed so that names, place-names, themes, and dreaming narratives can be more easily searched, and internal cross-referencing between maps needs to be refined. The major limitation is the cost of production and the small print run (14 first edition and 20 second edition copies to date). The question of the use of print to archive sensitive cultural material continues to be a point of (understated) tension in the community. Despite its few
and minor) shortcomings, there is no doubt that the atlas is a much-desired resource, valued for its pedagogical usefulness, for its harnessing of super-vital information about Yanyuwa land.

Conclusion

The atlas is an attempt, unique in the history of representations of Aboriginal traditional narratives in Australia, to bridge the gap between Western and Aboriginal narrative styles by focusing on a single coherent culture (while not eclipsing its relationships with neighboring cultures, Garawa and Marra, which share some of the narratives). It documents and reimagines a sacred narrative and performance tradition for a particular Aboriginal “nation” more comprehensively than any previous iteration of an Aboriginal mythological tradition. Nonetheless, the incommensurabilities between Yanyuwa and European narrative formations remain problematic.

With all its strengths and acknowledged limitations, the atlas attempts to represent the complexity and multidimensionality of Aboriginal narratives for a generation of Yanyuwa users who have not lived them in any full sense. It charts a new direction by asserting in uncompromising ways, not just Yanyuwa protest at the loss of opportunity to experience the sacred/super-vital forces of the homelands, but more systematically and positively, the ways in which the territory continues to pulsate with its sacralizing fields of force, even though some parts of the songs may be broken and missing. En route, it demonstrates how pragmatic the community is in addressing these lacunae. The complex, multi-layered text with its rich systems of cultural identification implicitly contests the notion of “historylessness,” of “non-achievement” in European eyes, thereby avoiding “the negativity of pure protest” (Dash 200) by making available a literary and performance tradition that mainstream culture does not know and rarely appreciates (Clunies-Ross). Furthermore, it does not set up indigenous and non-indigenous worldviews contrastively. It constitutes a body of systematic knowledge that demands respect on its own terms, not on comparative terms, as Strehlow’s does (1971). It makes a claim to exist alongside the mainstream culture on equal terms and in its own right.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that, however significant the achievement of the atlas for Yanyuwa people, its very existence, the need that produced it, signifies a lost terrain, alienated homelands. The atlas exists because of fears of loss. Its impulse is that of preservation, of nostalgia, of giving coherent and renewing shape in alien media to the traditional. It can be read for what Punter calls its “very evasions”:

the problems [it] address[es] are . . . allowed to be addressed precisely because while we are spending our time examining the “post,” the world has, probably malignly, certainly secretly, moved on . . . while we spend time celebrating the success of native, indigenous, or simply national literatures, perhaps we ought also to spend time wondering about what these temporary, “postcolonial” successes really amount to in the wider terms of economic, linguistic, cultural power. (Punter 28)

The sense of loss may have motivated the production of the atlas, but a second and critical creative impulse is the strong sense the atlas evinces, on the part of the elders who auspiced it and those younger Yanyuwa people who use it, that what distinguishes Yanyuwa culture is worth expressing in English, and the sense that its difference needs to be documented in that language. But does it also make possible transformative use in the future, revisions of Yanyuwa identity that will prove liberatory and enter into dialogue with the hegemonic culture? However, it is not yet envisioned as a work designed to explicate the culture to outsiders.

The loss of language threatens the very poetic by which in traditional understandings of Yanyuwa culture the land is given life. From an outsider’s perspective, the key question arising from the existence of the Yanyuwa atlas is this: if the Yanyuwa language is threatened, can Yanyuwa people re-vision viable cultural formations in English/Kriol and at the same time draw sustenance from documents like the atlas and dictionary? Are they tombstones, or core texts for new cultural formations? For the latter to happen, existing certainties about the unchanging nature of Aboriginal culture may need to be reframed: there is evidence in this text of that happening in powerful ways. The atlas by its very existence gives eloquent voice to the notion that a society can flourish only to the extent that it is recognized and is successful in building a regime of “reciprocal recognition” (Taylor 50) between, in the first place, the older and middle and younger generations of Yanyuwa, and also, in a longer timeframe, with the wider hegemonic culture. The atlas implicitly demonstrates in its very hybrid form how it is a culture which has not been simply destroyed by the colonial experience, but is a culture that interacts with the hegemonic culture, appropriating its forms and technology, recoding its own culture in terms that enunciate Yanyuwa identity desires in tandem with gestures towards “two-way” forms of identity. “[P]alimpsestual inscription and re-inscription” (Young 173–4) is the dynamic of the two texts examined here.

Benedict Anderson highlights the relative newness of the concept of an “indigenous minority,” claiming it as a twentieth-century invention. It is even more recent in Northern Australia and especially for Yanyuwa people living outside Arnhem Land and outside the so-called protectorates. Although he analyzes larger units, the nation, his warnings about the risk of “museumification” that he sees as occurring only when the hollowing out of the culture so museum-ified has already occurred are pertinent to Yanyuwa political and sacred identity. Survival, which has been a remarkable achievement under the conditions in which it has happened, “cannot be enough” (Anderson 50). Yanyuwa people, while honoring their past in the atlas, do not expect that they will continue in that past or even
in their present. The atlas is constructed for a future, and in the expectation that Yanyuwa people have a future in which Yanyuwa identity, firmly based in a sense of place, a circumscribed homeland, rather than time (Muecke 3–15), is an important component of "two-way" polity, a politics of "equal dignity" (Taylor 51), "recognition" and an acknowledgment of the goal of cultural survival as legitimate.

Notes
1 See http://www.deakin.edu.au/arts/diwwurrwurr/www/resources for a comprehensive list of works on Yanyuwa culture, including artefacts they have generated.

Works Cited