PIGEON THE OUTLAW: HISTORY AS TEXTS

Stephen Muecke, Alan Rumsey and Banjo Wirrunmarra

INTRODUCTION¹

The substantive point of this article is to put into print some versions of the story of Jandamarra,² also called Pigeon, a famous Aboriginal 'outlaw' of the Kimberley district of Western Australia (see Map), who in the 1890s worked as a police tracker, then turned against the police, releasing all their prisoners and fleeing to the Kimberley ranges. He and his followers evaded search patrols for over two years, during which time he led several raids upon Kimberley cattle stations, capturing rifles and ammunition which he is said to have planned to use in an all-out campaign to oust European settlers from the area. He was finally shot down in 1897.

The story of Pigeon occupies a significantly central place in representations of the history of Aboriginal-European contact in the Kimberleys. Among Aboriginal communities in that area the story is a living part of local history, and while most Aboriginal people in the region will at least have heard of the story, the main rights to it are recognised as residing with the Bunuba people, especially with such key figures as Banjo Wirrunmarra. Accordingly, the Fitzroy Valley Bunuba community has recently been incorporated into a production company for the purpose of producing a feature film about Pigeon. European versions of the story include a novel by Ion Idriess (1952) and academic-historical accounts by Howard Pederson (1980, 1984). Aboriginal writer Colin Johnson has made significant use of the story in a novel (Johnson 1979).

While it is clear that in and through these rewritings of his story Pigeon's actions become the site of ideological contestation (e.g., his representations as 'tragic hero' or 'revolutionary

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Banjo Wirrunmarra comes from Ngalarra country in the northwestern part of Bunuba territory near Winjana Gorge. He has worked as a stockman at Fairfield and other Kimberley cattle stations, and was the founder of Pandanus Park, an Aboriginal market garden/settlement on the Fitzroy River. He is widely known as a senior custodian of Bunuba traditions, including the Pigeon story.

¹ This article is a joint effort in that it is the product of at least three distinct sets of dialogues: between Banjo and Stephen, Banjo and Alan, and finally between Stephen and Alan. Banjo is not to be held directly responsible for anything beyond what he says in texts 1 and 2, which were transcribed (and annotated) by Alan and Stephen respectively. As for the rest, Stephen is mainly responsible for the parts concerning the problem of 'history', and Alan for the parts concerning ways of transcribing oral texts. For their having prodded us into thinking more clearly about the latter, we gratefully acknowledge Bill McGregor's comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

² For other versions and details of this story, see Idriess 1952, Pederson 1980, 1984, Johnson 1979, Muecke 1982:149-88 and 1983, Thomas 1984:68-78.

Banjo Wurrummarra

The Kimberley District of Western Australia

hero'), our aim is not to provide an interpretation of the history of the texts to be reproduced here. Nor is our aim that of laying claim to finally reproducing the authentic and original accounts, even though Banjo Wurrummarra's name would tend to authorise the texts in this way, central as he is to the sites of Aboriginal (Bunuba) repetitions of the story.

Rather, our methodological aims are to make some general statements concerning 'history as texts' and to outline and justify a particular technique for transcribing oral traditions from tape recordings. These two aims are interrelated in that the method of transcription is one which we believe to be especially suitable for representing some important textual features of Aboriginal oral history in written versions. If we say more about transcription conventions than is necessary for enabling readers to follow the texts, this is because we also want to make the method available to people who might want to use it for transcribing other texts.

HISTORY AS TEXTS.

History for westerners exists in at least two dimensions. In one dimension it is a sequence of objects that precede the present — a positivism in which the universal ordering function of terms like 'precede' and 'present' is generally assumed without theoretical justification. In the other dimension, history is, as Morphy and Morphy (1984) have put it, 'the incorporation or conceptualisation of the past in the present and as such is part of human consciousness and provides a framework for future action' (loc. cit: 459; cf. Bloch 1977). This latter view allows, with the notion of 'incorporation', for an understanding of history as a process of constant reconstruction of its texts according to changing professional protocols. In this sense, there would be a third dimension for the existence of history, and that would be history defined as the activities of history departments, including their principles, professional codes, and politics ('framework for future action').

As linguists, we propose to adopt the second of these points of view in conjunction with what has been called the 'text of history', for two main reasons (cf. Barthes 1982). The first is that we feel that in one important sense the construction of history — whether spoken or written — is a textual activity. What historians do is construct accounts: they form the raw material of events into textual shapes — forms which do not stand in any privileged or transparent relation to the events in question. The second reason concerns the relocation of the spoken word and the development of 'oral history' in Australia and elsewhere.

Until recently, Aboriginal people have generally not been represented as speaking subjects in the literature of Aboriginal history, anthropology, or even biography.³ This situation has changed considerably during the last decade. Aboriginal History has flourished as an academic field, partly due to changes in the political position of Aboriginal people, and partly because 'oral history' has now become respectable among the world community of academic historians. Since the founding of this journal in 1977, articles have regularly been published in which Aboriginal people, as authors, co-authors, or collaborators, speak in the first person about history as they have experienced it, both as actors in the narrated events and as interlocutors in earlier oral text productions.

³ For example, even Stanner 1960 — which was one of the first published works in this genre, and is still one of the most sensitive — includes only a handful of quoted utterances by the man whose life story is being told.

Strictly speaking, no such publication is itself an *instance* of oral history, since the medium is print rather than talk. To the extent that we are willing to call such productions oral history, this is presumably because they start from spoken accounts as their 'primary sources'.⁴ These spoken accounts are generally recorded on tape, transcribed, and – if in some distinctively Aboriginal form of English – subjected to various lexico-grammatical transformations and other editing procedures before being reproduced in print. For instance, Bruce Shaw says of his collaboration with Jack Sullivan that 'Editing, transforming the narratives from the spoken to the written word, was relatively extensive', so as to place them into 'standard colloquial English' (Shaw and Sullivan 1979:97, cf. Shaw 1984).

It is obvious that a similar editing procedure has been followed in, e.g., Bell (1978), Shaw and McDonald (1978), Shaw and Sullivan (1983), Morphy and Morphy (1984).

Generally, it is only when reproducing 'traditional' Aboriginal-language accounts that authors present verbatim (phonemic) transcripts of what was said. These are usually accompanied by inter-linear glosses, and often by 'free translations' too – the latter in standard or colloquial English (see, e.g., Merlan 1978, Heath 1980).

The effect of these transformations is that, although Aboriginal people are represented in the edited English 'translations' as speaking in the first person, they are made to do so in a voice which is not their own, and much of the meaning of the original oral performance is lost or altered.⁵ We believe this situation may be improved upon by using a system of transcription something like the one which has been developed by Dennis Tedlock and his Amerindianist colleagues over the past fifteen years, as expounded in Tedlock (1983). A similar system was developed independently⁶ by Stephen Muecke for the representation of Australian Aboriginal English narratives (Muecke 1982; cf. Roe and Muecke 1983, Benterrak et al 1984). The scheme which we propose here draws upon both systems, incorporating what we see as the most useful features of each for publishing Aboriginal oral accounts.

A METHOD OF TRANSCRIPTION.

In common with Tedlock, our aim is to render the oral text in such a way that it can easily be re-presented or *performed* in something like its original oral-dramatic form. The conventions which we (and Tedlock) propose for this are – in the main – ones which have

⁴ This phrase has been put in quotation marks here because the canons of standard historiographic practice would seem to require written or otherwise 'objectified' speech as 'sources', which are 'primary' because they are understood to provide a kind of 'hard evidence' against which the 'secondary' productions of any particular historian may be 'tested' in order to assess their validity. It is of course possible to treat *particular* transcripts (or electronic recordings) of *particular* oral performances in this way, but that sort of objectification has no basis in Aboriginal tradition.

⁵ This is not to gainsay the considerable strengths of the works cited in the previous two paragraphs. Shaw and Sullivan (1983) in particular goes a long way toward the enfranchisement of Jack Sullivan as a speaking subject, Keesing (1983) notwithstanding. We accept the arguments of Shaw (1984) against Keesing's plea for a more literary 'translation' of Aboriginal English, but favour an approach which is even less compromising than his in its faithfulness to the oral texts. Cf. the remarks by an Aboriginal working party for the Bicentennial History Project: 'When the cues, the repetitions, the language, the distinctively Aboriginal evocations of our experience are removed from the recitals of our people, the truth is lost to us' ('A Black View of History, Culture'. *The Age* 13/2/81.)

⁶ Stephen first saw examples of Tedlock's work in 1984.

long been in use for the printing of poetry and plays – western genres with which Aboriginal oral narrative has far more in common than it does with written prose.

The most basic collocational unit which is evident from the *sound* of those narratives (as opposed to their grammar) is not the clause or the sentence, but what Tedlock calls the *line*:⁷ a stretch of speech which is bounded on both ends by silence.⁸ Tedlock represents every such 'line' in one line of print beginning at the left margin of the page. Where the spoken line is too long to fit into one line of print, it is continued in an indented one(s). Here we will adopt Tedlock's procedure, with one difference, as per Muecke (1982:187-8). In our scheme, not every pause will be considered to terminate a line. This is because some pauses (a fairly small minority of them) in our tape recordings can clearly be distinguished as hesitations. These sound very different from deliberate pauses because after the pause, the voice begins at the same pitch at which it left off, and continues the pre-pause contour rather than starting a new one. In our scheme, unlike Tedlock's, these *hesitation* pauses will be considered to fall within the line. All other pauses will be taken as boundary markers between lines.⁹ Pauses within the line will be represented by hyphens.

As in Tedlock's scheme, we indicate prosodic prominence by capitalisation, e.g.: '... and he told him to GET OUT of it.' (When the word 'I' is prominent, this will be shown by bold-face.) Another prosodic feature which figures in the Aboriginal texts (and in oral performance generally) is the 'stylistic' use of over-lengthening. We indicate this by repeating letters in proportion to audible length, e.g., if the 'o' in 'long' is held to three times its normal length, we would write it 'looong'.

Other paralinguistic or prosodic information (including specification of extra long pauses) is occasionally¹⁰ provided in parentheses, as per standard practice for indicating 'stage

⁷ This is roughly the same unit which is referred to in Muecke 1982 as a 'narrative clause'. Because the latter term could easily be confused with 'clause' as a *grammatical* unit, we will abandon it in favour of Tedlock's term 'line'. But see below for a (minor) difference in what qualifies for us as a line.

⁸ These silences are usually at least half a second long, and must be distinguished from the much briefer ones which occur, e.g., during the occlusion of some stop consonants. The latter are not heard as pauses, partly because of their brevity and partly because of the intonational factors discussed below.

⁹ Note that, although every line break falls at a break between intonation contours, not every contour is coterminous with a line, since the contour boundaries are not always accompanied by a pause. Cf. Halliday 1985, who speaks of tone groups as information units 'one following the other in unbroken succession with no pause or discontinuity between them' (p.274). But although this is often true, it is readily apparent from his examples (pp.274-286) that when a pause *does* occur it is almost always at the beginning or end of a tone group. Thus on formal grounds it seems reasonable to propose that the line as we have defined it is a higher level unit on the same prosodic hierarchy to which Halliday's 'foot' and 'tone group' also belong (though its *functional* relationship to the tone group is far from clear). Note that only by excluding hesitation breaks at line markers can this proposal be sustained.

¹⁰ Obviously the details which are specified in this way are only a small subset of the ones which could have been noted. Since we have at our disposal no rigorous functional theory on which to base such a selection, we must rely solely upon our *sense* of what is significant, according to our experience as interlocutors in oral text productions of this kind. Regarding the length of pauses between lines, we now consider Muecke 1982 and Tedlock 1983 to have unduly complicated the transcription by specifying this 'etically' throughout (Muecke in whole-second intervals and Tedlock by specially marking all pauses over two seconds long). Since our experience suggests that not every long pause is *ipso facto* especially significant, we now specify 'long pause' optionally in parentheses. Our deliberations on this matter owe much to the advice of Bill McGregor, whose help we gratefully acknowledge.

directions', e.g., (in a soft voice), (points west), (closes eyes) etc.

Where there is a change of speaker, the new speaker is identified by initials at the left margin, followed by a colon. The speakers so identified in the texts below are Banjo Wirrunmarra, Alan Rumsey, and Stephen Muecke. Contra the practice of most writers of 'oral history',¹¹ but in common with Tedlock (1983:285-343), we think it is important to represent something of the fundamentally dialogic ground of oral texts, fully acknowledging in this case that they are the product of interaction between non-Aboriginal, academic investigators and an Aboriginal 'informant' of considerable skill and experience, both in that role and as a 'story man'.

For spelling Wirrunmarra's English, we have kept as close as possible to standard English orthography. Wirrunmarra's English in these texts is not the stabilised Kriol of Sandefur (1979), but a more-or-less idiosyncratic lect which is generally close enough to Australian colloquial English to be intelligible to English speakers who have no familiarity with Kriol. Where this is not the case, the Aboriginal forms in question are glossed in footnotes.

The above conventions provide what we think is a good compromise between richness of prosodic and contextual detail, and simplicity. Much more phonetic and choreographic detail could have been included, but this would have made the transcripts too complex to be performable in real time and/or readily intelligible to non-linguists. The system which we are advocating here is one which we hope will not only make texts such as the following ones readily available to a non-academic audience, but will facilitate the transcription and publication of them by literate speakers of Aboriginal English with little or no special training in linguistics.

An added advantage of presenting just *these* audible features is that it then becomes possible to translate (non-English) Aboriginal language texts in such a way as to preserve some of their most important aural features in the English renditions. For line breaks, line-level prosodic prominence, stylistic vowel lengthening, and many paralinguistic features of Aboriginal-language texts (unlike their segmental-phonological and word-level supra-segmental features) have functional values which are largely preserved when these features are incorporated directly into the English-language scripts.¹² Furthermore, the uses of these features in Aboriginal English are almost identical to their uses in 'traditional' Aboriginal languages. This is well exemplified by the first text below. It starts out in the Ungarinyin Language (see Rumsey (1982) re Ungarinyin grammar; Blake (1981) for orthography), for each line of which we have provided an English translation which carries over the prosodic features notated as per the discussion above. After line 40, the tape recorder was switched off. A few minutes later, it was switched on again, and Wirrunmarra picked up the story where he had left off — now in a variety of Aboriginal English. Note the similarity in average line length, in the uses of prosodic prominence, and in *what* gets put into a single line.

¹¹ Cf., e.g., Shaw and Sullivan 1979:97, who apologise for the fact that 'parts of the narrative are responses to questions', and delete the questions from the published 'narrative'.

¹² It is no accident that Tedlock's system of notation is useful in just this way, for the 'translation of style' from American Indian languages into English was just the purpose for which Tedlock developed the system.

THE TEXTS.

The following two texts about Pigeon were recorded seven years apart — the first by Alan Rumsey in 1984, the second by Stephen Muecke in 1977.

We have chosen to present *both* of these texts in order to provide an example of the nature and extent of the continuity of an Aboriginal oral tradition, as held by a particular story-teller. You can see how some details in the narrated events — e.g. the topographic ones discussed in footnote 26 — are reproduced exactly even after seven years, and others, such as the number of funnels on the Koombana, are slightly altered. An advantage of the system of transcription we are using here is that it also gives you some idea of the enduring particularity of Wirrunmarra's craftsmanship as a shaper of oral history. We will here refrain from detailed comparison of his version of the story with other accounts (but cf. Muecke 1983a), since our aim is not to add to or improve upon Pederson's admirable work of compilation (1980, 1984) but rather to let Wirrunmarra (whom Pederson (1984:14, footnote 7) describes as 'custodian of the Pigeon story') speak as directly as possible to our readers. Where extra background information may be required in order to follow what he is saying, this will be given in footnotes rather than in a concluding section, in order to let BW have the last word.

TEXT 1: THE STORY OF JANDAMARRA, ALIAS PIGEON, AS TOLD TO ALAN
RUMSEY BY BANJO WIRRUNMARRA, AUGUST, 1984.

<i>As told in Ungarinyin</i>	<i>English Translation</i>
anggalu <i>policemana</i>	the policeman came
warraj amanga	he picked him up
Jandamarra	Jandamarra
biyinggerri	the two of them went
5 brrru gugudu burrinyirri	they chased blackfellas
burrarda bundumangerri, joli	they chained up the lot of
bundumindanirri	them and brought them back
Limalwurru-gu	to Lillamaloorra ¹³
AR: Limalwurru	Lillamaloorra
10 BW: e e	yes
di-yu NGARD amanga	then he ASKED him
yali ngawurr ongond	'I want to kill some kangaroo for them'
amara	he said
and malngarri-nangga	and the white man said 'o.k.
15 amara, aga	
yone nyindi di winjangun	you know where the rifle is,
arrungu di larrug uma	hanging up there
umara amara	take it', he said
di umanga	so he took it
20 arri <i>cleaner</i> -gu buluba	he looked around for rifle
angga, malyan	cleaner, 'there's none'

¹³ This is the name of an old police station near where the Lennard River breaks through the Napier Range (see map). Its stone ruins can still be seen. Note that in line 48, after Wirrunmarra has switched to English, he uses the anglicised version of the name.

	amara	he said
	winingara werri	he put in one
	wumen	bullet
25	ngawurr on mindi-nga	he shot him right there
	jinda <i>policeman</i>	that policeman
	galumun-nangga-gurde di	from before, that one
	NYADAGA WULUN	'OUR WOMEN
	gugudu biji nyindi	you chase after
30	waga	why
	ngawurr anjawu budmaranangga	why don't you shoot him?', they
	(long pause)	said to him (long pause)
	di-yu NGAWURR oni	so he SHOT him
	di andu yu	then he himself
	andumindanina	he took them
35	<i>Windjana Gorge</i>	to Windjana Gorge
	darag andumindani	he took them in
	mindi-yu andiyilani	and he kept the lot of them
	burrardangarri	right there
	<i>right</i>	
40	FINISH	
	(tape off for a few minutes)	
	When you ready	
	AR: oh, you ready?	
	BW: you ready?	
	AR: um	
45	BW: right	
	what he done when he shot that man	
	ah, the place	
	Lillamaloora	
	he WENT	
50	he was on that cave	
	in Windjana	
	AR: Jandamarra jirri (Ungarinyin: 'Jandamarra, that one')	
	BW: Jandamarra	
	that Pigeon Hole	
55	old Grandfather Blythe came with a . . .? calf	
	weaners	
	water'm in Windjana Gorge	
	when he stoop down and getta water	
	in Gorge	
60	and he told him to GET OUT of it	
	old Blythe take his, take his TIME to get out of the water	
	they was that many CATTLE there	
	anyhow he fired a shot and he KNOCK his THUMB off	
	old fella jump up	

PIGEON THE OUTLAW

- 65 all the cattle rush
to the bank
he take'm to the open
and THEN
that was that — JANDamarra
- 70 he wasn't a friend of anybody now¹⁴
he was on his own
he was a outlaw
and AGAIN
he shot, the young policeman
- 75 my father
he was runnin' over, what?
one mile
in the plain
Plum plain
- 80 shot him in the fingers
AR: your father?
BW: my r'own¹⁵
and he got into the spring there
Ninety Two Spring he bin get in there
- 85 BROAD DAYLIGHT
he had 'nother shot
in the YARD
the old fella still run along
the kid got onto the HORSE
- 90 go down to Fitzroy Crossin'
tell the police THERE
his BOSS got shot
so he went tooo Oscar Range
when he got into Oscar Range
- 95 he shot the manager
Doug Waley
one MORNIN'
and he went from there
to King Leopold
- 100 he had many fight with the Aborigine people up there
they couldn't KILL him
'cause he was a OUTLAW
Jandamarra

¹⁴ Here and elsewhere, Wirrunmarra uses the word 'now' to mean 'at this point in the narrated event' rather than 'at the time of this speech event'. This is a standard feature of Kriol and Kimberley Aboriginal English.

¹⁵ 'rown' is the equivalent of standard English 'own' as in 'my own'. It is common in Kimberley and Top End Aboriginal English, and probably has arisen from a re-segmentation in the analogic base provided by the phrases 'her own', 'their own', 'our own', 'your own', etc.

- and he went 'round again
 105 go back to Windjana
 stay around there and he came back to Tunnel¹⁶
 he bin LIVE around there
 and
 Pilmer¹⁷ got on to him AGAIN
 110 so HE shot one police boy in town
 so Pilmer got upset
 he wanted to FIGHT him
 but MANY police
 and the stock
 115 bin chasing up Jandamarra
 but that wasn't good enough
 but he was lettin' them go
 he didn't want to take the life of man
 but YET
 120 Minko Mick
 he sailed all the way from
 Roebourne
 with Koombana¹⁸
 see Koombana was a four-funnel
 125 big ship
 he landed in Derby
 so they got a mail coaches
 mail coach bin take him from Derby to Meda
 and he got on that other one again take him to Kimberley Down
 130 and he got on that 'nother one took him to Fairfield
 and he — got on to horse
 ride over to Tunnel
 put on his — belt
 he walked down there
 135 he nearly shot one old fella
 two kid was giggling there
 and he shot the — ground for 'em
 they roll down
 and Minko Mick said 'there, right

¹⁶ The reference here is to Tunnel Creek (see map), a cave where Pigeon hid out. This is the same place which in Idriess 1952 is called the 'Cave of Bats'.

¹⁷ Pilmer was the constable at Fitzroy Crossing.

¹⁸ Cf. the *Weekend Australian* (April 13-14, 1985, p.3): 'High Tech Search for the Cursed Koombana', which reports that the Koombana was built in Glasgow in 1908 and lost at sea somewhere between Port Hedland and Broome in 1912. She is described as having been the 'pride of the Adelaide Steamship Company's passenger fleet' and as having had a 'distinctive tall funnel'.

PIGEON THE OUTLAW

- 140 you can have this belt' he just put one slug in
and he follow the river up
and he found him in the
behind the boab tree
he was up into the hill
- 145 somebody else fire a shot from 'nother end
he turn around
and Minko Mick
straightaway
he shot him in the THUMB
- 150 his THUMB
and there was, his LIFE was in the thumb
and that's — he beat him there
he was a — a wit doctor¹⁹
AR: witch doctor
- 155 BW: um — Minko Mick
AR: um — he KNEW that
BW: yeah he knew that
AR: about that THUMB
BW: that's it
- 160 AR: yeah
BW: that's all the story — Rumsey
AR: yeah?
why did that — ah — Pigeon — how did he know how to — put his life
into his THUMB like that?
- 165 where did he learn all that stuff?
BW: well only you and I say this
murlal jirri²⁰ (‘he was incestuous’)
AR: um
BW: ngawi-nangga (‘his father’s sister’)
- 170 lala-nangga (‘his sister’)
walma-nangga (‘his wife’s mother’)
gugudu inyi (‘he chased after’)
AR: he went with every kind of relation
BW: yeah well that's it

¹⁹ ‘wit doctor’ is probably a re-etymologised version of the English ‘witch doctor’ (cf. Rumsey 1983). In the following line, A.R., who had not noticed this usage before, seeks confirmation that B.W. has in fact said ‘witch doctor’. But instead of giving it, B.W. apparently understands A.R. to be asking ‘Which doctor?’ He responds by repeating the man’s name, ‘Minko Mick’, and then goes on to use the term ‘wit doctor’, in lines 177, 277.

²⁰ Here BW switches the Ungarinyin language — which he knows to be the one AR understands best — in order to explain how Pigeon gained special powers by breaking the Aboriginal ‘law’. Cf. lines 101-2: ‘they couldn’t KILL him / ‘cause he was a OUTLAW’, which set up an interesting relationship between Jandamarra/Pigeon’s positions vis à vis the Aboriginal ‘law’ and the European one.

- 175 AR: and that's
 BW: SO the life was come OON and OON and OON
 so — that way he was sort of a WIT doctor
 but he was a OUTLAW
 because he had his life in his thumb
- 180 AR: ah yeah
 BW: and when they finish — SHOT him there
 and they cut that THUMB there
 they can see that little HEART was there
 AR: ah yeah
- 185 BW: I don't know HOW they PUT it there
 AR: yeah
 but you reckon that murlal
 BW: um
 AR: made him,
- 190 BW: yowe
 TOO CLOSE
 murlal too close²¹
 AR: and — why did all the Aborigines wanna shoot Pigeon too?
 BW: well they didn't understand him
- 195 why he done it because
 way back
 Pilmer and Billy Richardson²² was SHOOTING PEOPLE
 THOUSANDS and THOUSANDS of people, they start from
 from
- 200 eastern state right down
 to north
 right up — to west
 AR: yeah
 BW: they were killin'm THOOOUSANDS and THOOOUSANDS of BLACKFELLAS
- 205 AR: yeah?
 BW: but he heard that and some of his people bin get killed too
 some of OUR people bin get killed
 AR: yeah
 BW: so only one man
- 210 he had a feeling for his own people
 AR: yeah?

²¹ In other words, the women whom Pigeon 'chased' were not only of the wrong classificatory kin categories, they were also among his 'close' relatives within those categories, which means they were doubly proscribed for sex or marriage (cf Rumsey 1981:183,190-1).

²² Richardson is the 'policeman', 'the white man' referred to lines 1-32 above. It seems interesting that he is never referred to by name there, but only after we have shifted from Aboriginal-language narrative to an English-language 'interview' situation.

PIGEON THE OUTLAW

BW: that Pilmer
and Richardson
THEY done it
215 but — SO he had to pay back for that
AR: well at first he was WORKING for that Richardson
BW: yeah with Billy Richardson he was WORKIN' for him AFTERWARD
because he bin shooting people first
him and — Pilmer
220 and after all when Pigeon
get a bit OLDER
come back and work with the POLICE
PATROLLING
so
225 he got a chance then
AR: was he just waiting for that chance the whole time or,
BW: (overlap with end of line above above) MMAYBE
AR: what made him change his mind?
BW: but — somehow that thing bin come, we, I don't know
230 AR: yeah
BW: I can't follow up
AR: do you know of any other people working with Pigeon or was
he all by himself?
BW: he had his mate, they call him name Captain
235 AR: Captain
oh yeah
BW: blackfella
and he's the fella
he had — he had a thought
240 'oh — police bin kill'm people'
but they always be talk about
'why these black— blackfellas get shot'
AR: yeah
BW: 'by one man
245 thousands of people
WHY?'
AR: yeah
BW: everyone lookin' at
their own people droppin' down with one — slug
250 AR: yeah
BW: one man standin' up there loading gun just like— somebody
blind or— dumb sittin' up
AR: yeah
BW: and they all get shot
255 so
I think Pigeon had a feeling

- after that
and he bin keep PICTURING, you know?
and maybe
- 260 that's how that thing been comin' to him
and so when he got a chance
so HE had to do it
AR: when he was— when Pigeon was hiding out did he have any woman with him
or— just Captain?²³
- 265 BW: he had himself, noobody else
he— he done his own battle
AR: yeah
BW: he didn't want to bring anybody in
see, he was goin' to try
- 270 do it as a THEY done it
same thing well he wanted to do the same thing
give it back to them
one man one man
so he's no friend there
- 275 AR: yeah
BW: but I— where— I don't understand
why this— wit doctor went up there
this is the thing that I don't understand
AR: yeah
- 280 BW: and he bin take a life of BLACK man and BLACK man been get shot by
WHITE people WHY couldn't he leave ALONE?
AR: yeah
BW: that was the story that I understand, you know
AR: if he LEFT it alone what do you think would have happened?
- 285 BW: well he had ta been a
king of Australia
and everything would have been come back — right way
AR: you reckon?
BW: I reckon
- 290 AR: all right
BW: he 'ant to been big fella
go on
(grins) might be we been talkin' tooooo faar?

²³ Idriess 1952 portrays Pigeon as having been accompanied by his mother and a young wife 'Cangam-
vara' (a most unlikely-looking word for Kimberley Aboriginal languages).

PIGEON THE OUTLAW

TEXT 2: *PIGEON STORY, AS TOLD TO STEPHEN MUECKE BY BANJO
WIRRUNMARRA, 1977*

- 1 BW: now
PIGEON
Pigeon START OFF
him bin
- 5 I talk to you
with the Pidgin English, pidgin²⁴
white man tongue pidgin
he bin start off got
breakin' in HORSES
- 10 him bin SHEARER
shearin' sheep
with a BLADE
not a machine
'cos those days they had a blade (SM: yeah)
- 15 so he bin work on that one
shearin' blade
he bin work Quanbun
Noonkenbah
Liveringa then he went back to Kimberley Down²⁵
- 20 he work there
an' he went back to p'lice camp
then he start p'trol
he went for p'trol
look around some BLACKFELLAS inna bush
- 25 he tracking (long pause)
what they done?
they killed two white man
in Mount Broome
then p'lice went up to find him
- 30 so they pick-im-up
Pigeon the outlaw
they take-im in
up on the range
then Pigeon walk up
- 35 an' he got a MOB
an' he bring them back
SOME was there
right one
that bin kill the white man

²⁴ The narrator distinguishes Pigeon's name from that of the variety of Aboriginal English.

²⁵ Names of Kimberley stations.

- 40 but he didn't know who he was
take him to Windjana Gorge
tie them there
an' Pigeon
they turn around tell'im Pigeon 'alright you wanna get a — kangaroo
- 45 for us?
we can't jus' sittin' down here starve hungry on the chain
you bin bring us
so you mus' FEED us'
so
- 50 Pigeon turn around and see boss
the boss (. . .?) 'I wanna get a — kangaroo for these prisoners'
'Alright you know where the rifle'
so he went up and get the rifle
'stead of he go for -KANGAROO he shot his boss
- 55 in Windjana
Lillamaloora
that was a p'lice station
(softly) anyhow
he went there
- 60 got the mob
take-im off from chain
an'
he bin
go in the hill
- 65 everyone followed him up there
but he the one done all the FIGHTING
an' this OTHERS didn't understand him
(softly) they never have-im fight
anyhow
- 70 he went across to Ninety Two
he shot one white man there
then he went to Oscar
Oscar Range
station
- 75 he shot one white man there
early mornin'
then he went down to Plum Plain
he see MOB comin-up gotta horse
stockboys and the p'liceman they ALL come
- 80 look for Pigeon
then he take off
from that big plain
Plum Plain
they chased him

PIGEON THE OUTLAW

- 85 when he got into the HILL country
he look back he knock that hats off the p'liceman
take his hat off
(knocks table) one bullet
he ask that p'liceman he says
- 90 'You want you life or you wanta dead?'
p'liceman said 'No I wanta life'
'You go back'
so
he just taste 'im but if he wanted-im he hadda kill-im then
- 95 anyhow he let-im go
he went to Brooking Gorge
corner of Brook or Leopold
an' he went tooo
(long pause followed by brief inaudible section)
- 100 he went to King Leopold
he get a mob of blackfella there big tribe
they start fight there
they take-it-away one woman from there
young girl
- 105 they couldn't fight-im
they couldn't foller-im
went back to Windjana
he bin fight for SIX YEARS
and ah
- 110 governor or government went up there and said
he went up he get up he's there Pigeon 'You there?', 'Yes
I'm here'
'Ah'
well we all friend now you'll have to come down'
- 115 so Pigeon didn't take a risk
so he knock his hat
said 'you better go off'
said 'ah I don't want to (almost inaudible) ...'
knock his hat off this government bloke whatever he was
- 120 anyhow he went back again
so (laugh)
(. . .?) stay there too long
anyhow they follered-im up — so LAS' he felt himself
- 125 he was
he was losing hope
they can put a bullet right across here
shootin-im in here
nothing can come out
not even water

- 130 not even a drop of blood
 (softly) nothin' doin'
 no matter how many shot he used to take here nothing doin'
 THAT didn't put him back
 anyhow
- 135 one
 maban blackfella witdoctor
 come from ROEBOURNE
 they used to call'im ah Minko Mick
 he got onto the boat
- 140 in
 Roebourne
 or Onslow
 boat call — er name ah
 Koombana
- 145 three funnel
 come right up to Derby landed
 anyhow blackfella got onto — mail coaches
 they take-im to Meda and from Meda to Kimberley Downs and from Kimberley
 Downs to Fairfield²⁶
- 150 then he ride across with horse
 horseback
 went to Tunnel
 he SLEEP one night there
 he didn't go fast
- 155 but next mornin'
 they stirred'im Pigeon up
 so he got up
 to start shooting — but this bloke seen his life
 soo
- 160 witdoctor told them boys
 'Alright
 I know' he said
 'I take jus' one bullet in my rifle' he said 'I'll kill'im an' you fellas can go an' pick 'im
 up

²⁶ Compare lines 135-52 here with lines 120-32 in text 1. It seems that one form for the 'correct rendering' of an Aboriginal history of Pigeon is the enunciation of series of correctly ordered place names for the movements of the main participants of the events, in this case Pigeon and Minko Mick. The two narratives from BW separated by *seven years* maintain this correct ordering. Also, when historical accounts are collectively constructed by Aborigines, a (perhaps *the*) major task is to establish the names of places and the right sequence of movements among them. This textual and rhetorical feature is in marked contrast to 'Western' historical texts, which instead are periodised around linear time intervals, dates. Obviously, neither historical form relates directly to Truth, but they represent the work of authority in the text and the codification of appropriate knowledges. In this connection, note also the appearance of a place name at the end of this story as an important datum about this particular text production and/or its producer. Pandanus Park is a market garden-cum-Aboriginal settlement along the Fitzroy River, of which BW is identified as the founder. This text was recorded there.

PIGEON THE OUTLAW

- 165 cut his HEAD off
 so this Pigeon went up ah
 Minko Mick
 followed the river up
 he got into the boab tree
- 170 he look up
 upwards
 Pigeon was right on top in the cliff
 so he FIRE ONE shot he knock him in his thumb²⁷ — so he fell down an' he sing out
 'I shoot'im, you can go in and pick'im up whenever you want
- 175 very fright they said 'NO we can't run up to pick'im up'
 'NO — you go in an' see'im'
 'he's finished'
 'alright'
 oh well they didn't argue with'im all them fellas run up there
- 180 and see
 sure enough Pigeon laying there
 smashed up
 'is thumb
 (pause for tape change)
 so when Minko Mick — went up there he looked 'is — thumb he found
- 185 a little
 little heart²⁸
 like a fish
 in his thumb here (shows thumb)
 that where he shot
- 190 an' that was the end of the old Pigeon story
 SM: Oh good
 BW: it's from Banjo
 Pandanus Park

²⁷ In other Aboriginal accounts, Pigeon's 'Achilles' heel' is variously hand, foot, or thumb.

²⁸ A common practice for Aboriginal 'doctors' was (or is) to appear to remove small pieces of quartz, etc. from sick people. 'Little heart' may relate to this practice.

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