

an alternate generations system; the first in the area north of the MacDonnell Ranges, and the other (usually called the Ngalea) in the country immediately north of the Nullarbor plain in western South Australia. Reporting of this kind may do more harm than service in the study of aboriginal institutions and behavior unless the prior history of the individuals studied is on record. One of my more volatile friends suggested that if earlier anthropologists had behaved according to modern methods, the aboriginal Bennelong of the Eora tribe, Sydney, interviewed in London nearly two centuries ago would have been reported as "Bennelong of the Eora tribe, London." While this is absurd it does make a point that when dealing with any people the basis of good reporting is accurate localization.

In the early days of white contact there was a compulsion to try and find major units in Australia of the kinds familiar to the people of Europe. Layman recorders were not satisfied to accept the autonomous tribal units that they were in contact with as the largest ones present. Soon several tribes extending along the south coast of New South Wales were treated together as the "Yuin," because they were all familiar with the word as meaning "man." When the first anthropologists began work, they still felt the need for such major groupings. George Taplin (1874) in search of a general name for the people of the lower Murray River and Lake Alexandrina area of South Australia selected Narrinyeri, a contraction of the term *Komarrinyeri* "belonging to men" as distinct from others. With the delicacy characteristic of missionaries of the period, he failed to indicate that the "others" were the traditional enemies of the river people who lived on the western side of the Mount Lofty Ranges and were feared because they practiced circumcision on their young men with attendant secret rites to which they—the Narinjeri—were not admitted. The western people asserted that "easterners" were not men because they did not conform.

By the time of John Fraser (Threlkeld, 1892: Introd.) there was such a literary need for major groupings that he set out to provide them for New South Wales, coining entirely artificial terms for his "Great tribes." These were not based on field research and lacked aboriginal support. He regarded the autonomous units of tribal type as subdivisions or subtribes of his artificial greater ones. His terms such as Yunggai, Wachigari, and Yakkajari can be ignored as artifacts.

During the 1890s the idea spread and soon there was a rash of such terms, especially in Victoria and New South Wales. Some of these have entered, unfortunately, into popular literature, despite their dubious origins. I list some of them for the guidance of those interested:

Bangarang Nation—Victoria
 Boondik Nation—Victoria and South Australia
 Barkunjee Nation—New South Wales
 Kurnai Nation—Victoria
 Thurrawal Nation—New South Wales
 Wiradjuri Nation—New South Wales
 Malegoondeet Nation—Victoria

In addition nationlike status was assigned to blocks of tribes in the western parts of New South Wales. Some of these overlapped others.

Itchumundi—a loose term applied to four tribes, Wiljakali, Danggali, Maljangapa, and Wanjiwalku. Two practiced circumcision and the others did not; there were few grounds for the artificial aggregate.

Karamundi—comprised four or more tribes along the middle course of the Darling River, including the Barkindji, Naualko, Baranbinja, and the Kula.

Mathews (1900 [GR.6524]), who had earlier been responsible for some of these names, listed twenty-three major groupings of tribes that he called "nations" and provided a map of Australia showing their locations. He based his aggregates on types of social structure he had identified. Usually, he arbitrarily selected a name of one of the tribes to represent the whole. In the instance of two Western Australia tribes, he was without a tribal name and therefore had to adopt for one a station or ranch name on the Fitzroy River, namely Yeeda, and for the other in the southwest of Western Australia a family name, Tardarick.

A. W. Howitt (1904), summing up his own work over several decades during which he had devoted attention to the identification of these major units, stressed the difficulties of finding hordal and tribal names that were valid among the many that had been suggested. His work on the larger group of people whom he called the Kurnai helped to obscure what should be evident: there were five discrete tribes hidden in this name, which had little more validity than the geographical term Gippsland used as a marker for the same region in our society.

John Mathew (1911) was one of the last to contribute to the "nations" concept. He used the aboriginal term for man in the southeastern part of Australia and erected six groupings of tribes: Wotjo, Baang, Trual, Maara, Konai, and Kuli. He ignored the early one Yuin. He attempted to establish wide linkages for these groupings. To him the terms we find to be of tribal status were of narrow value, indicating smaller communities by certain peculiarities of their dialect. He used as illustration the several tribes along the upper Murray River who use their word for "no" to distinguish their own tribe from the next; for example, Watiwati, Latjalatji, Wembawemba, and so on. He failed to appreciate that the very way in which these