

Cairns, H. & Harney, I, B. (2014) Four Circles – Customs that are Law in an Aboriginal Cosmoscape: Justice, Mercy and Survival in Bill Harney’s Imulun Wardaman Aboriginal Spiritual Law. (A Northern Australian People with their Intellectual World of Law in the Four Circles Tradition.) Published by Alan Mogridge of Excell Printing Group, Merimbula; Australia.

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Preliminary Notes: This review is written, September 2016, (in the U.K.), from a Living Theory and Action Research perspective with embodied values, and is posted on a Living Theory website with reach to specific global networks. (nb. It has been slightly modified, June 2017). It is for general readers as well as research-practitioners working in the field/the Academy. We append a short note on Action-Research which might be helpful for any review reader working in the interfaces with/relating to Indigenous people who may wish to further improve practice/deepen understanding with Living Theories.

Ken Masters is related to Hugh Cairns, and has published in this field. He was privileged to see an early Draft of Four Circles and commented; but has had no hand in the conversations that led to its completion in this, substantially revised form. He and Jack Whitehead were also privileged to receive copies of the first, privately circulated, limited edition of this text; this review, initiated by Jack Whitehead, has been brewing since Jan. 2015. It has been checked: a highly necessary precaution for both authors and readers.

Your reviewers remain entirely responsible for their own, ongoing reflective-practice in writing it.

Review: 'There can be a really good ending in Imulun in Australia', (heading, p.201).

This book does not fall readily into any single genre (or other)-category, which is part of its very real interest. There is something significant and appealing here for anyone, based on Four Circles's deep humanity and spirituality; however it is especially for those with an interest in, and concern for the immediate and long-term future of 'Two-Worlds' Aboriginal and other Indigenous peoples, within the apparently 'assimilation-based' Justice system in Northern Territory.

Without detailed knowledge, e.g. of formal Australian law and related practice, and as outsiders, there is much that we are not qualified to comment on or discuss. However, we can attempt to illustrate how the voices of Bill Idumduma Harney and Hugh Cairns sit within 'Living-Theory' Action-Research practice, and present and consider, in outline only, the case they make for an appreciative and deep valuing of their Marriage and Family Customary Law; and for its approach to redeeming their miscreants to be more widely adopted.

The context in which we write this review is one of deep distress on all sides, as a Royal Commission is being set up to investigate the various forms of extreme abuse, including tear-gassing of young Aboriginal boys in the 'Don Dale' Juvenile Detention Centre in N.T.. From what we can gather on-line, this is now deeply political. Bill Idumduma Harney, and Four Circles, may have an explicit role in the investigations and recommendations.

Deneulin, S, (2014), introduces a Peruvian lady who 'had to stop her (environmental) activism out of fear (of severe intimidation)', (p.80). She goes on to say, 'This lack of capacity to express one's emotions and suffering severely affects the capability for voice and political participation'. There is 'capable', carefully-considered truth-telling about suffering in Four Circles from both authors, which seems to us to be highly relevant in our context, with a valuable constructive approach. The Royal Commission could provide a constitutional setting for direct, politically-relevant participation. Four Circles is far from being a political diatribe; rather, a strongly-voiced expression of pain. It seems to us to be a strong and well-considered offering of an essential, practical, value-based way forward which demands attention, rather than an 'attacking' text. It is based on trust that the book will help the 'White Man' to 'wise-up', and do the right thing in the best interests of all. In recommending the book, we are aligning ourselves with this tone.

The book's Dedication, to be found at the end, (p.210), is therefore significant:

It is dedicated to the indigenous people of the Australian continent: with praise for their courage in keeping to the road of freedom, equality and community; and with prayers for the fulfillment of their hopes and expectations in Australia where their land is loved, their families are nurtured, and their spiritual Life and Law given freedom under a spiritual Sovereign, under a Parliament and Government elected to govern for all the people, in honour and respect for the lives and cultures and persons of everyone: Originals, Settlers and New. (p. 210)

The Wardaman people are Indigenous Australians, with Idumduma's clan living about 200km South-West of Katherine in Australian's Northern Territory. Bill Idumduma Harney is Senior Law Man Elder. Hugh Cairns has worked with Bill Harney since 1997, and as he says, carries

an ancient British culture, and a Christian upbringing's deep empathy. Both authors believe that it would hugely benefit those Aboriginal people deemed in breach of Customary Law whilst living on their own, (regained), Lands to be contained and redeemed with the Justice and Mercy of their traditional, challenging sentencing and other procedures, developed over millennia. It becomes evident that survival in a harsh environment, is at stake. However, it also becomes evident that when the Law, Spiritually-derived, is followed, there is also 'thrival', (see Rayner, 1997). Cultural 'Survival', including their ways of perceiving 'reality' and related modes of being and becoming, is, however, what the people seem to us to need now, especially when confronted with the apparent gross failures of the 'White' legal system and its detention modes, in their 'assimilation' context. However, the Dedication offers a vision where other Indigenous/Aboriginal Communities could also benefit. If they benefit, and the Land benefits, perhaps all Australians, 'Originals', 'Settlers' and 'New' would also benefit....

Important antecedents to Four Circles can be found in 'Dark Sparklers', (Cairns & Harney, 2003/4) with its introduction to the Cosmoscape/related Ceremonies. Dark Sparklers broke new ground in many respects, including detailed exposition of Aboriginal astronomical knowledge, within Dreamtime Song-Lines, fully embodied in Spiritual, lived-experience today. The book, for us, shows that 'Two-Worlds' Aboriginal people can function sufficiently well in both to thrive, (to mutual advantage), given the School of the Air, (now no longer operating), at Menngen, and space to breathe within their own Lands, recovered largely through the 'capacity' of Bill Idumduma Harney. (Sen, A., 1999; Deneulin, S, 2014).

Four Circles, building on Dark Sparklers, also breaks ground in that it shares much new, insightful material on Redemptive Aboriginal Family Law, as practised within the Imulun, (Four Circles) tradition and openly addresses, from within, many of the issues of being a 'Two-Worlds' Aboriginal people in the relatively remote bush.

'Cosmoscape' in the Title is a term coined by Bill Idumduma Harney in 2002, (Dark Sparklers Glossary, p. xvii), to assist young people returning to their Lands in preparation for Traditional Initiation. It is described there as, 'visible, observed, concrete landscape and night sky perceived as a whole and seen and reflected on all together.' It is key to understanding the Wardaman lived-in intellectual world/cosmos-view. 'Four Circles' refers to specific ancient engraved and ochre painted circles in rock overhangs which embody the entire Family-Law tradition, and are derived from the perceived Cosmoscape and its still-living, non-reified, Dreamtime Mythology/Stories. The page-heading to p.121 gives us the flavour of 'Cosmoscape': '....Sky and Earth together'. 'Without the Cosmic sense that involves us in the night sky and the sweeping immensity of landscapes in Australia, we miss Wardaman Spirituality, Wonder and Awe that is the very essence of original, pre-urban peoples'.

In addition to a 'Preface', (p. v), headed 'Balance, Complexity and Integrity in the Voice of Bill Harney', and an Epilogue of 'Reflections and thoughts on the Imulun Painting and Imulun Spiritual Law', the book Four Circles is made up of six chapters on:

1. 10 years of Adult Learning: The Initiated Stockman in Two Worlds in his country – the storyteller, lecturer, researcher, writer, musician and family man in a whole life.

2. The Childhood of Today's Idumduma Bill Harney: Laws in the Customs of the Spiritual.
3. Education in Two Worlds: The People, the Law Man on the Cattle station.
4. Signs, Signals and Symbols: Imulun Law in Wardaman Creation Story Country.
5. Cosmos, Cosmospace and Cosмосcape in the Landscape of Law. The Spiritual in the Imulun Law within the experienced Wardaman World. Cosmic Expressions in Painting.
6. The Spiritualities of Aboriginal Law in the Wardaman Imulun Tradition: Bill Harney's Imulun painting.

This is a beautifully presented text, also rich with photographs of relevant Rock Art and the extraordinary paintings of Bill Idumduma Harney, that will repay close attention, and study of the communications from both authors. However, in writing this review we are bearing in mind the following point, on page 169, that suggests some limitations in our capacity, as non-initiates, fully to understand.

Strictly speaking, Law paintings, like Minunga lines, are not generally decipherable by the non-initiate: museums and government researchers are stymied because, in Aboriginal thinking, outsiders are deemed 'blind' until (perhaps) they are ready, allowed to see. But for the initiate, it is a straightforward matter of being called directly: 'Pay Attention to the Word! Listen!' But marks on rock, stone and body keep the Original First Imulun Law in motion, making sure every Wardaman generation knows their land of cultural, spiritual and biological birth.

Four Circles is a heart-felt and strong opening-up and sharing of what we need to know, and can be told us. We identify this book as a mode of mediating, and democratising knowledge.

In Dark Sparklers, Hugh Cairns quotes Bill Harney very extensively, but absorbs those quotations within his own text. This is not the case here.

In the valuable, highly innovative textual methodology of Four Circles, care is taken to separate Bill Harney's voice, (given from oral transcription), from Hugh Cairns' interpretative/extending writing; often a parallel text, with page-headings giving us a more or less related theme. English is not Idumduma's first language, and as his mother rescued him from the missionaries, he was never schooled in reading and writing. This does not prevent him from being expressive, economic, graphically to the point, which we much appreciate. On most pages, Bill Harney's voice is presented in bold, with Cairns' reflections/footnotes beneath in different type-faces. It would thus be possible for Aboriginal readers to follow his text as continuous narrative throughout a Chapter. It can be approached, also assisted by the page-headings, with advantage by people of most levels of education. Because Idumduma's voice is so distinctive and strong, and we have Cairns' co-creative authorship, it is not standard Ethnography, (without any rationalizing, objectifying comment 'about'). We 'White' readers hear Idumduma's voice as well as Hugh Cairns'. In this, it commands the respect, in our ongoing conversations, owed to Bill Idumduma for bringing his own extended voicing and message into full public view in this way.

Hugh Cairns' and Bill Harney's own practice in carefully agreeing every word of text and shaping the book, (through an iterative reflective process, reading every draft out-loud), and jointly publishing this text, and Bill Harney's own Living Theory embodiment of life-

enhancing values are exemplar-evident, and awe-inspiring in their commitment. I, (K.M.), have introduced Bill Harney as 'Educational' in a Living-Theory sense, in everything he undertakes, (see BERA Research Intelligence, Issue 117, Spring 2012). One page heading, (p.193), offers 'Education in Law as a Function of the Spiritual', and the book is 'educational' throughout. We note that he is now sometimes referred to with great respect as a 'Bush Professor', which his depth and extent of knowledge, linguistic ability, (six languages), a curious mind open to science, and intellectual capacity evidenced here, surely merit. Cairns does not go beyond what Bill Harney, with others, wants him to say, including on sensitive gender issues. Cairns describes his own process of writing as having an intuitive aspect, responding to 'successive gestalten'. This book therefore requires some intuitive attention, capacity to shift focus, and sense meaning in the interplay between its two main texts, in its readers. These authors, extraordinary in their co-creation as well as the material they offer, deserve to be taken seriously by everyone.

Four Circles focuses on Imulun Customary Law presented in Bill Idumduma Harney's (the Wardaman Senior Elder), own words and pictures with additional, clear and informative commentary from Hugh Cairns. It enhances awareness of differences between Australian laws and the spiritual Imulun Law. In response to the differences, Bill Harney expresses, in the eyes of these beholders, the embodied values of **Reconciliation, Transformation, Co-creation and synergistic Community**. These, and other generally-embodied, life-enhancing values are there in a culture whose sense of the inter-connectivity of all far transcends the competitive individualism/atomisation of modern society. The paintings by Bill Harney and others highlight the importance of visual media for communicating Wardaman spirituality and understandings, such as **Empathy**, through picture, activity and word. Hugh Cairns, when summarizing the book with the question, 'What is the Spiritual in Law?', offers another page-heading, describing his co- author, in his clan, with the Imulun Law effective: 'Passionate energy. Companionship. Lovingkindness. Love.' (p.203).

The specific focus is on Family Law, and those areas where most clashes with Australian Common and Statute Law lie. Issues about 'Promised' (first) Marriage are opened-up and discussed, as they are in relation to the nature of the penalties incurred for breaches. Also, because with a Cosmospa understanding nothing is separate, Law relating to Land and the environment are also evident. If the Family, Imulun law is 'Right', and is practiced properly within an environmental context, with all Ceremonies, Courts, sentencing and punishment processes correct, then the Land, and all its flora and fauna will be happy and flourish. Bill Harney does not remain quiet when confronted with environmental degradation via NT technological 'modernisation'. He noticed, for instance, the destruction of barramundi breeding areas when road teams exploded the river for their fish meals, and rock-falls that destroyed rock art, when they seemed to coincide with military exercises producing sound-barrier bursts near Katherine. The bombing-range rumble bursts 'without explosives' were dismissed in 2009 by Authority when a government 'sacred sites' official was alerted to this possibility. We celebrate here the capacity of one arm of Government effectively to correct what another arm is doing, in this respect.

The early Chapters are essential reading for understanding Bill Harney's background and early life, his/ Wardaman experience of 'White' Settlers and their sometimes apparently Spiritually deficient law and 'governance'. In turn, this experience, and the Initiation involved

in becoming a full adult, cannot be understood without knowledge of Wardaman (un-reified) Creation Mythology, which lives within daily 'practice', and is manifested coherently in Family and Marriage Law. These Stories as 'Living', now, may require some suspension of disbelief by readers grounded in scientific rationality, monotheistic religion, or even holism. Giving Bill Harney space to make his Spiritual case without instant dismissal on these or other similar grounds, is vital for appreciating what happens in the implementing of the Imulun, and its effectiveness on every level. I, (K.M.) have addressed such issues in my e-Essay, 'Reading Dark Sparklers,' (2010). There, I introduced radical evolutionary UK biologist Alan Rayner, subsequently known to research-practitioners in Australia through his presentations at the ALARA, (Action-Learning and Action-Research Australia) Conference in Melbourne, 2010. His new-paradigm perspective of 'Natural Inclusion' helps the Aboriginal case, those working to support it, those challenged by it. (See footnote below.)

We found Chapters Five and Six particularly helpful in understanding Wardaman Spirituality. Chapter Five focused on the Cosmos and Cosmospa in the landscape of Law with cosmic expressions in painting. Chapter Six focused on Bill Harney's specific Imulun Law painting in which the meanings of Law are expressed in the Spiritualities of art, story, imagination, knowledge, music, ceremony, community, justice system, curiosity, intellectual reflection, survival and living Law.

Samantha Wortelhock's painting 'Circles' on page 150 is accompanied by the caption:

Many indigenous societies still suffer under inadequate laws, inadequate sciences, inadequate education, inadequate will and vision in government, inadequate spirituality in all the people.

Some of these inadequacies, that are felt in different cultures throughout the world, are grounded in Australian culture in a fundamental difference between the Imulun and Australian Law:

...the Imulun is personal, leads to education and restoration, and is restored in group process, in survival-mode memory. So the truth is perceived by trained Elders known to everyone, trust is personal and is achieved by experience, in time, in Imulun processes, and honesty and whole knowledge is a result reflecting and stemming from the Creation Story. This asserts the oneness of the Human-group Mankind, and provides cosmic laws (Imulun) which work in the Wardaman world. But incoming Common laws brought in by strangers never met before, all written from that culture's memories, was, in its results, soon not to be trusted. Even a normal Appeal today refers back to historical Precedents often in the other country, to local facts from another land, to actions under Parliamentary Statutes from another governing system and bureaucratic-imperial ethos of Law... and not respecting the Wardaman. (cf. H. Davidson 1995; D. Goodhart, 2013). (p.5, footnote.)

Whilst not all Wardaman today choose to further the Imulun as Universal Spiritual Law, present day and future Australia for overcoming the inadequacies listed above. We are also suggesting that the text resonates with values and understandings that carry hope for the future of humanity. We are thinking particularly of the:

Freedom of spirit within freedom-equality-justice-fairness-happiness, in democratic Australian, will allow old people, the sick, the young to receive the traditional goodnesses of the Ancients – the fulfilled, respected, acknowledged, care-for Life. Young will learn life/language/behavior in the Man-And-Woman home, boys' proper planned education from

the Men Elders, girls from the Women Elders. Hard work, skills, endurance and individual spirit will nourish communal creativity; and the happiness of learning – the intellectual and personal curiosity so clear in Aboriginal young people today – will nourish ancient transformations of extended family... no one lost in prison, all learning, community growing. Family-Community-In-Imulun. (p. viii).

No wonder Idumduma Harney wants it back! (p. viii)

There are references to Circle Courts and Sentencing in Four Circles, together with their comparative lack of development in N.T. to date; but these, and related specific legal issues of how the clash of personal, redemptive Spiritual Law with impersonal, non-spiritual, non-redemptive Common Law as practiced can be overcome more broadly on the ground, are hopefully being more fully addressed within Australian conversations, as we write. Here, we are led to understand the prime benefit of 'Clearance'. 'Clearance' is very, very important in this Law; and marks a significant difference between Aboriginal culture and 'White' law which has no apparent way of making this 'utterly fresh-start' happen'.

Four Circles is thus essential initial reading for any educational, legal, political, social, International Development researcher/practitioner who is concerned with the experience of Aboriginal people, in a Justice system all too easily seen to be abusive; and with an interest in spiritual-practical ways forward by legal innovation. On page 151 there is a happy photo of some of Bill Harney's young family clambering over a red car in the bush. 'The saddest thing is that the clever boy was killed in a car accident, the clever girl was wrecked in an inadequate white school far away from home, the boy full of promise was severely wounded while wrongly in prison, without charge. But a great hope arose when the (now) Chief Justice Riley chose the Imulun Law as more appropriate for this other boy 'learning under discipline' instead of in white prison; and that this boy is able to work properly in modern society. The other girl here is relishing the family with her children, now, looking after her aging parents/grandparents.'

So we hope to learn of more examples of such 'White' legal confidence in the rigorous Imulun approach, and trust, with Four Circles understanding, that this can be generally adopted where 'Two Worlds' Customary Law 'miscreants' of either, or both genders-together, are involved.

Aboriginal and other Indigenous readers will know how to handle all matters within their own same- and cross-gender conversations. (nb. Bill Idumduma does not speak, (nor does Cairns write), from an exclusively male or female perspective.) We note that in the Circle, the Elders of both genders consider all the circumstances of youngsters accused, together, of breaches of Customary Law. Redemptive, re-educative, 'punishments' are then handled separately, in gender-specific ways, (ie. male with males; female with female with females), with final, restitutive 'Clearance' and full re-emergence into the entire Community. However, in interfaces with formal Australian Law contexts, there may be a significant need for research about whether protocols are being, could or should be used to ease cross-gender/cross-cultural communication, eg in investigations.

Aspects of western, gender-related legal protocols are complex. Urban institutional worlds rely on written frameworks that are not family-clan based or in clan languages; however, female researchers listening to the Senior Elders will be valuable even if also coming from a written Law. It is particularly important to recognize that with all references to Women's as

well as Men's Family Law already in the public domain, Dark Sparklers and Four Circles, as especially accredited texts, can therefore be read and discussed across-genders, by us all ... but carefully and respectfully. Thus protocols for the dissemination of important data may be discussed and clarified, a plurality of clan discussions too, without any compromise or judgment gaining an emotional pseudo-objectivity within any rationalistic ideology.

So aspects of the way sentencing and redemptive re-education are carried out seem now important subjects for research, with any Justice System for Men and Women needing to be in Community- accountable hands as to investigation, sentencing and supervision of what follows.

Imulun Law begins with Law Story within Creation. It confirms the qualities of Wardaman Law and life which we summarise: male and female are equal and free, each in their own way; the Law is of basic importance for a proper life; do not break the traditional law ... or Wardaman (human and cosmic) integrity and peace will be broken.

Professor Claire Smith of Adelaide University goes on to say (Cairns & Harney, 2004 p. 18),:

...the administrative veiling of violence against indigenous peoples was normal procedure during the early years of settlement in northern Australia. The lives of Aboriginal people were not thought to be valuable.

Hugh Cairns adds that:

...we have to view the 2007 Intervention in similar terms....politicians may desire an 'empty north' for Mining, Defence, Agriculture, Nuclear waste, Detention Centres, Tourism, Overseas Trade, perhaps using sexual accusations 'in the National Interest'; or perhaps not realising that to destroy basic Aboriginal Tradition for 'Family Kinship', makes Aborigines, as a group, Human Rights victims when their kinship flow is gone. (p. 110 footnote)

And he continues:

Finally, what if the Imulun was allowed to return to return to Wardaman communities on their own land. With Imulun returned, the noise and fighting problems in camp could be controlled again, the peaceful community would return to its normal obeying of the Law; with all the spiritual creativity of the ceremonial beauties of Imulun it would reappear, with its Practitioner Elders and its Learning Students keeping the Imulun's whole-life future in their envisioning mind. Today, in the new Law Courts of Australia where Circle Sentencing Courts of whole-reality testing are allowed to live, the humble, spiritual architecture of the Imulun could nourish land and people itself', (p201). Page- heading: 'There can be a really good ending in Imulun in Australia.'

Bill Idumduma Harney explains his extraordinary Imulun painting, under page-heading, p.195, 'The Whole picture, is Community Law: the Symbol of the Circle as Learning Community':

I've painted the Imulun to bring in the 'circle' way of doing the Law, to have the Spirituals in amongst the Law, to keep us whole as well as practical, and good. This is where the paintings get us: they show we're here! They show that our ways are hard; that it's truthful and good-shows (a specific 'Spiritual' is) smiling when we do it well, that it's personal for us, and we can be proper in the town, and town ways nowadays. So many problems mean we've to keep working, get ourselves straight, do our bit helping the white man—they need us to do it right for them! That's how we can work together, get proper—keep Australia good!

It could be seriously misleading, even damaging to use this review in any political debate or on-going conversations in any context, apart from the book itself. We have produced a mere outline of the Wardaman case for the Imulun, quoting at any length mostly from the Preface, (illustrating the author's constructive orientation), summary statements from both authors, and Dedication. But just what is the nature of the Spiritual Family and Marriage Law? What is the History? How can issues arising from clashes with 'White' law best be approached? What does the Imulun painting signify? What are the penalties, and why/how is it 'redemptive? The only fair way to decide whether the case has been sufficiently made here for reflective action on the ground in relation to Justice policy and practice, is to first to read Four Circles, delve-in, and ponder its riches.

Bill Idumduma Harney has an already outstanding reputation throughout Australia. This book will enhance it. When he dies, the last fully-initiated Elder will have left us. There is all the more reason to listen to his urgency and respond. There are other Aboriginal 'Tribal' Communities in NT who suffer the same pressure from the Justice System. He can speak formally for himself and the Wardaman. However, following a millennia of traditions of living together, and much present day inter-Community co-creation, we believe that he is in an excellent position to represent the views of 'Two-World' Aboriginal people, and even those who are in the process of acculturation right now.

This is a seriously engaging, significant book, spiritually-deep, practical and inspiring which, with the 'cutting edge' approach of Bill Harney, could make a significant difference to developing Australian Justice. It could become a 'working-model' for other Indigenous peoples who have not yet become so acculturated as to lose not only their Law but the essence of their entire traditional lived-in experience. We, too, have to deep-listen to reflect the quality of what he and Hugh Cairns, as (elderly and wise) Elders within their respective Communities within Australia have to say!

Ken Masters and Jack Whitehead

Footnote: Alan Rayner, 'Natural Inclusion' and the Wardaman: a brief account of relevance.

Rayner's most recent book, (2016, *The Origin of Life Patterns*, in press), written for both scientists and lay-persons, gives 'An account of the mutual inclusion of receptive space and informative energetic flux in the evolutionary origin of all distinguishable phenomena....how this differs from Darwinian Evolutionary Theory.' This profound formal statement can lead us into many issues relevant here. The ineffable and teleological imagined process of 'Natural Selection', dubiously translated into the 'survival of the fittest', can be used ideologically in modern society to justify the cultural genocide of Indigenous Cultures and the social structures/process that support them, in the name of evolutionary 'progress' or 'destiny', (plus the interests of global capitalism, even 'mission'-ising). (I note, in passing, the sub-title of Amartya Sen's (2006) book, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*; and (p.39), 'Important choices have to be made even when crucial discoveries occur. Life is not mere destiny.') Rayner, working from first principles, with recast principles of quantum mechanics and evidence 'fitting', claims that 'co-evolution', happening via 'mutual influence', better fits observable reality than 'Natural Selection'. A recent 'tweet' gives us: 'Energy flows where it is called-for. Evolution is induced by receptive influence, not by

external force'. (Cultural genocide is, thus, profoundly un-natural change.). You can access more of Rayner's writings at:

<https://www.bestthinking.com/thinkers/permalink/3080?title=alan-rayner>

'Mutual-influence', through boundaries never fully impermeable, is very close to the traditional Aboriginal sense that 'nothing is separate', which pervades both Dark Sparklers and Four Circles. 'Sky and Earth together', i.e. the Cosmoscape, see above, are in mutual influence/inclusion as well as people and the contextual animate and inanimate ecology on a cosmic scale. Rayner's concept of 'Nature's Scope' is virtually identical, (see above). 'Natural Inclusion' as a dawning, serious new-science paradigm, is gaining traction from physics to ecology/social-ecology and in other fields. The frictionless 'receptive', intangible quality of space challenges us to stop regarding 'it' as merely 'no-thing'. This quality, as a mutual-inclusion of very strong 'energetic flux', creates 'material form' by induction, and leads everything that is, including ourselves, to comprise both 'intangible' and 'tangible' 'presences'.

'Natural Inclusion' helps us to understand and appreciate much in Four Circles. It may also help research-practitioners, to work-with a 'Living-Theory' approach (Whitehead, 1989) with clients with whom 'mutual-influence' applies, recognized or not. As a 'culturally-intermediating Science', it could even be taught to Aboriginal children in School as a viable critique of neo-Darwinism. Supported by 'One-World' Aboriginal scientists/ecologists, it could produce ecological studies maybe key to Indigenous futures, (e.g. on safe levels of water-supply/extraction), with a methodology that always takes full account of context. As Rayner says, a river is a mutual inclusion of its banks.

K.M.

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Notes on Action-Research: All modalities share a reflection-action-reflection cycle in professional practice. This helps ensure that practitioners do not fall into the trap of inappropriate, formulaic practice that cannot adapt to the specific situation and its requirements. 'Living-Theory' Action-Research, as developed by Jack Whitehead and others, brings in an additional level of evidence and individual-peer accountability. Firstly, there is available evidence, (often using media to show client responses), of the development and practice of fully- embodied, life-enhancing values offered to clients with integrity. It is especially important to 'come' clean about practice dilemmas, and show evidence of how they are handled, and the effects; and of reflective learning. Secondly, practitioner-knowledge is appreciated, and is available to help formulate policy in an organization from the bottom-up, and then has the potential for being recognized within the Academy as shown in the living-theory accounts at <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml> .

If any Agency-policy, eg in 'Justice', anywhere, is repressive, non-redemptive, requires Imperialistic assimilation of traditional Indigenous Communities to 'White' norms in all respects and is, in effect committing cultural genocide, then this will be reflected in its practitioners. If Four Circles is listened to, then perhaps the value-base will shift in critical ways. In that case, the involvement of practitioners at every level in a Living-Theory Action-Research approach (see <http://www.actionresearch.net>) should help embody and embed the necessary shifts.

In Australia, ALARA, the Action-Learning and Action-Research Australia network, can be contacted via their website at <http://alarassociation.org/> . I am not a member, and do not speak for them.

A Senior Law-Woman Elder from another Community in Queensland tells me that one of the most de-grading experiences for Indigenous peoples is being talked about from a lofty and ignorant height, their knowledge appropriated into academic, religious and political intellectual frames and agendas that are not their own. This can happen at Conferences, Symposia etc.. This is why, when presenting Four Circles, in any context, it is vital to work from/with the book available, not just this or any other revue. Bill Harney's (and Hugh Cairns's) exceptional voice, extended in Four Circles, are the knowledge -- not convenient abstraction from text, which can lead to dangerous misunderstanding and counter-productive meddling.

K.M.